PLATO'S

PHAEDRUS
and
SYMPOSIUM

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PHAEDRUS

FOREWORD

Phaedrus is commonly paired on the one hand with *Gorgias* and on the other with *Symposium*—with the former in sharing its principal theme, the nature and limitations of rhetoric, with the latter in containing speeches devoted to the nature and value of erotic love. Here the two interests combine in manifold ways. Socrates, a city dweller little experienced in the pleasures of the country, walks out from Athens along the river Ilisus, alone with his friend Phaedrus, an impassioned admirer of oratory, for a private conversation: in Plato most of his conversations take place in a larger company, and no other in the private beauty of a rural retreat. There he is inspired to employ his knowledge of philosophy in crafting two speeches on the subject of erotic love, to show how paltry is the best effort on the same subject of the best orator in Athens, Lysias, who knows no philosophy. In the second half of the dialogue he explains to Phaedrus exactly how philosophical understanding of the truth about any matter discoursed upon, and about the varieties of human soul and their rhetorical susceptibilities, is an indispensable basis for a rhetorically accomplished speech—such as he himself delivered in the first part of the dialogue. By rights, Phaedrus' passionate admiration for oratory ought therefore to be transformed into an even more passionate love of philosophical knowledge, fine oratory's essential prerequisite. Socrates' own speeches about erotic love and his dialectical presentationof rhetoric's subservience to philosophy are both aimed at persuading Phaedrus to this transformation.

In his great second speech Socrates draws upon the psychological theory of the *Republic* and the metaphysics of resplendent Forms common to that dialogue and several others (notably *Phaedo* and *Symposium*) to inspire in Phaedrus a love for philosophy. By contrast, the philoso-

phy drawn upon in the second, dialectical, half of the dialogue is linked closely to the much more austere, logically oriented investigations via the 'method of divisions' that we find in *Sophist*, *Statesman*, and *Philebus*—where the grasp of any important philosophical idea (any Form) proceeds by patient, detailed mapping of its relations to other concepts and to its own subvarieties, not through an awe-inspiring vision of a self-confined, single brilliant entity. One of Socrates' central claims in the second part of the dialogue is that a rhetorical composition, of which his second speech is a paragon, must construct in words mere resemblances of the real truth, ones selected to appeal to the specific type of 'soul' that its hearers possess, so as to draw them on toward knowledge of the truth—or else to disguise it! A rhetorical composition does not actually convey the truth; the truth is known only through philosophical study—of the sort whose results are presented in the second half of the dialogue. So Socrates himself warns us that the 'philosophical theories' embodied in his speech are resemblances only, motivated in fact by his desire to win Phaedrus away from an indiscriminate love of rhetoric to a controlled but elevated love of philosophical study.

— John M. Cooper

PHAEDRUS

SOCRATES Phaedrus, my friend! Where have you been? And where are you going? *227*

PHAEDRUS I was with Lysias, the son of Cephalus,[1] Socrates, and I am going for a walk outside the city walls because I was with him for a long time, sitting there the whole morning. You see, I'm keeping in mind the advice of our mutual friend Acumenus,[2] who says it's more refreshing to walk along country roads than city streets. *b*

SOCRATES He is quite right, too, my friend. So Lysias, I take it, is in the city?

PHAEDRUS Yes, at the house of Epicrates, which used to belong to Morychus,[3] near the temple of the Olympian Zeus.

SOCRATES What were you doing there? Oh, I know: Lysias must have been entertaining you with a feast of eloquence.

PHAEDRUS You'll hear about it, if you are free to come along and listen.

SOCRATES What? Don't you think I would consider it "more important than the most pressing engagement," as Pindar says, to hear how you and Lysias spent your time?[4]

PHAEDRUS Lead the way, then.

SOCRATES If only you will tell me. *c*

PHAEDRUS In fact, Socrates, you're just the right person to hear the speech that occupied us, since, in a roundabout way, it was about love. It is aimed at seducing a beautiful boy, but the speaker is not in love with him—this is actually what is so clever and elegant about it: Lysias argues that it is better to give your favors to someone who does not love you than to someone who does.

SOCRATES What a wonderful man! I wish he would write that you

d should give your favors to a poor rather than to a rich man, to an older rather than to a younger one—that is, to someone like me and most other people: then his speeches would be really sophisticated, and they'd contribute to the public good besides! In any case, I am so eager to hear it that I would follow you even if you were walking all the way to Megara, as Herodicus recommends, to touch the wall and come back again.[5]

PHAEDRUS What on earth do you mean, Socrates? Do you think
228 that a mere dilettante like me could recite from memory in a manner worthy of him a speech that Lysias, the best of our writers, took such time and trouble to compose? Far from it—though actually I would rather be able to do that than come into a large fortune!

SOCRATES Oh, Phaedrus, if I don't know my Phaedrus I must be forgetting who I am myself—and neither is the case. I know very well that he did not hear Lysias' speech only once: he asked him to repeat it over and over again, and Lysias was eager to oblige. But not even that
b was enough for him. In the end, he took the book himself and pored over the parts he liked best. He sat reading all morning long, and when he got tired, he went for a walk, having learned—I am quite sure—the whole speech by heart, unless it was extraordinarily long. So he started for the country, where he could practice reciting it. And running into a man who is sick with passion for hearing speeches, seeing him—just seeing him—he was filled with delight: he had found a partner for his
c frenzied dance, and he urged him to lead the way. But when that lover of speeches asked him to recite it, he played coy and pretended that he did not want to. In the end, of course, he was going to recite it even if he had to force an unwilling audience to listen. So, please, Phaedrus, beg him to do it right now. He'll do it soon enough anyway.

PHAEDRUS Well, I'd better try to recite it as best I can: you'll obviously not leave me in peace until I do so one way or another.

SOCRATES You are absolutely right.

PHAEDRUS That's what I'll do, then. But, Socrates, it really is true *d*
that I did not memorize the speech word for word; instead, I will give a careful summary of its general sense, listing all the ways he said the lover differs from the non-lover, in the proper order.

SOCRATES Only if you first show me what you are holding in your left hand under your cloak, my friend. I strongly suspect you have the speech itself. And if I'm right, you can be sure that, though I love you dearly, I'll never, as long as Lysias himself is present, allow you to prac- *e*
tice your own speechmaking on me. Come on, then, show me.

PHAEDRUS Enough, enough. You've dashed my hopes of using you as my training partner, Socrates. All right, where do you want to sit while we read?

SOCRATES Let's leave the path here and walk along the Ilisus; then *229*
we can sit quietly wherever we find the right spot.

PHAEDRUS How lucky, then, that I am barefoot today—you, of course, are always so. The easiest thing to do is to walk right in the stream; this way, we'll also get our feet wet, which is very pleasant, especially at this hour and season.

SOCRATES Lead the way, then, and find us a place to sit.

PHAEDRUS Do you see that very tall plane tree?

SOCRATES Of course.

PHAEDRUS It's shady, with a light breeze; we can sit or, if we prefer, *b*
lie down on the grass there.

SOCRATES Lead on, then.

PHAEDRUS Tell me, Socrates, isn't it from somewhere near this stretch of the Ilisus that people say Boreas carried Orithuia away?[6]

SOCRATES So they say.

PHAEDRUS Couldn't this be the very spot? The stream is lovely, pure and clear: just right for girls to be playing nearby.

c SOCRATES No, it is two or three hundred yards farther downstream, where one crosses to get to the district of Agra. I think there is even an altar to Boreas there.

PHAEDRUS I hadn't noticed it. But tell me, Socrates, in the name of Zeus, do you really believe that that legend is true?

SOCRATES Actually, it would not be out of place for me to reject it, as our intellectuals do. I could then tell a clever story: I could claim that a gust of the North Wind blew her over the rocks where she was playing with Pharmaceia; and once she was killed that way people said she
d had been carried off by Boreas—or was it, perhaps, from the Areopagus? The story is also told that she was carried away from there instead. Now, Phaedrus, such explanations are amusing enough, but they are a job for a man I cannot envy at all. He'd have to be far too ingenious and work too hard—mainly because after that he will have to go on and give a rational account of the form of the Hippocentaurs, and then of the
e Chimera; and a whole flood of Gorgons and Pegasuses and other monsters, in large numbers and absurd forms, will overwhelm him. Anyone who does not believe in them, who wants to explain them away and make them plausible by means of some sort of rough ingenuity, will need a great deal of time.

But I have no time for such things; and the reason, my friend, is this.
230 I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to me ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that. This is why I do not concern myself with them. I accept what is generally believed, and, as I was just saying, I look not into them but into my own self: Am I a beast more complicated and savage than Typhon,[7] or am I a tamer, simpler animal with a share in a divine and gentle nature? But look, my friend—while we were talking, haven't we reached the tree you were taking us to?

b PHAEDRUS That's the one.

SOCRATES By Hera, it really is a beautiful resting place. The plane

tree is tall and very broad; the chaste-tree, high as it is, is wonderfully shady, and since it is in full bloom, the whole place is filled with its fragrance. From under the plane tree the loveliest spring runs with very cool water—our feet can testify to that. The place appears to be dedicated to Achelous and some of the Nymphs, if we can judge from the statues and votive offerings.[8] Feel the freshness of the air; how pretty *c*
and pleasant it is; how it echoes with the summery, sweet song of the cicadas' chorus! The most exquisite thing of all, of course, is the grassy slope: it rises so gently that you can rest your head perfectly when you lie down on it. You've really been the most marvelous guide, my dear Phaedrus.

PHAEDRUS And you, my remarkable friend, appear to be totally out of place. Really, just as you say, you seem to need a guide, not to be *d*
one of the locals. Not only do you never travel abroad—as far as I can tell, you never even set foot beyond the city walls.

SOCRATES Forgive me, my friend. I am devoted to learning; landscapes and trees have nothing to teach me—only the people in the city can do that. But you, I think, have found a potion to charm me into leaving. For just as people lead hungry animals forward by shaking *e*
branches of fruit before them, you can lead me all over Attica or anywhere else you like simply by waving in front of me the leaves of a book containing a speech. But now, having gotten as far as this place this time around, I intend to lie down; so choose whatever position you think will be most comfortable for you, and read on.

PHAEDRUS Listen, then:

"You understand my situation: I've told you how good it would be for us, in my opinion, if this worked out. In any case, I don't think I *231*
should lose the chance to get what I am asking for, merely because I don't happen to be in love with you.

A man in love will wish he had not done you any favors once his desire dies down, but the time will never come for a man who's not in

love to change his mind. That is because the favors he does for you are not forced but voluntary; and he does the best that he possibly can for you, just as he would for his own business.

Besides, a lover keeps his eye on the balance sheet—where his inter-
b ests have suffered from love, and where he has done well; and when he adds up all the trouble he has taken, he thinks he's long since given the boy he loved a fair return. A non-lover, on the other hand, can't complain about love's making him neglect his own business; he can't keep a tab on the trouble he's been through, or blame you for the quarrels he's had with his relatives. Take away all those headaches and there's nothing left for him to do but put his heart into whatever he thinks will give pleasure.

c Besides, suppose a lover does deserve to be honored because, as they say, he is the best friend his loved one will ever have, and he stands ready to please his boy with all those words and deeds that are so annoying to everyone else. It's easy to see (if he is telling the truth) that the next time he falls in love he will care more for his new love than for the old one, and it's clear he'll treat the old one shabbily whenever that will please the new one.

And anyway, what sense does it make to throw away something like
d that on a person who has fallen into such a miserable condition that those who have suffered it don't even try to defend themselves against it? A lover will admit that he's more sick than sound in the head. He's well aware that he is not thinking straight; but he'll say he can't get himself under control. So when he does start thinking straight, why would he stand by decisions he had made when he was sick?

Another point: if you were to choose the best of those who are in love with you, you'd have a pretty small group to pick from; but you'll have a large group if you don't care whether he loves you or not and just pick the one who suits you best; and in that larger pool you'll have
e a much better hope of finding someone who deserves your friendship.

Now suppose you're afraid of conventional standards and the stigma that will come to you if people find out about this. Well, it stands to reason that a lover—thinking that everyone else will admire him for his success as much as he admires himself—will fly into words and proudly declare to all and sundry that his labors were not in vain. Someone who does not love you, on the other hand, can control himself and will choose to do what is best, rather than seek the glory that comes from popular reputation. *232*

Besides, it's inevitable that a lover will be found out: many people will see that he devotes his life to following the boy he loves. The result is that whenever people see you talking with him they'll think you are spending time together just before or just after giving way to desire. But they won't even begin to find fault with people for spending time together if they are not lovers; they know one has to talk to someone, either out of friendship or to obtain some other pleasure. *b*

Another point: have you been alarmed by the thought that it is hard for friendships to last? Or that when people break up, it's ordinarily just as awful for one side as it is for the other, but when you've given up what is most important to you already, then your loss is greater than his? If so, it would make more sense for you to be afraid of lovers. For a lover is easily annoyed, and whatever happens, he'll think it was designed to hurt him. That is why a lover prevents the boy he loves from spending time with other people. He's afraid that wealthy men will outshine him with their money, while men of education will turn out to have the advantage of greater intelligence. And he watches like a hawk everyone who may have any other advantage over him! Once he's persuaded you to turn those people away, he'll have you completely isolated from friends; and if you show more sense than he does in looking after your own interests, you'll come to quarrel with him. *c* *d*

But if a man really does not love you, if it is only because of his excellence that he got what he asked for, then he won't be jealous of

the people who spend time with you. Quite the contrary! He'll hate anyone who does not want to be with you; he'll think they look down
e on him while those who spend time with you do him good; so you should expect friendship, rather than enmity, to result from this affair.

Another point: lovers generally start to desire your body before they know your character or have any experience of your other traits, with the result that even they can't tell whether they'll still want to be
233 friends with you after their desire has passed. Non-lovers, on the other hand, are friends with you even before they achieve their goal, and you've no reason to expect that benefits received will ever detract from their friendship for you. No, those things will stand as reminders of more to come.

Another point: you can expect to become a better person if you are won over by me, rather than by a lover. A lover will praise what you say and what you do far beyond what is best, partly because he is afraid
b of being disliked, and partly because desire has impaired his judgment. Here is how love draws conclusions: When a lover suffers a reverse that would cause no pain to anyone else, love makes him think he's accursed! And when he has a stroke of luck that's not worth a moment's pleasure, love compels him to sing its praises. The result is, you should feel sorry for lovers, not admire them.

If my argument wins you over, I will, first of all, give you my time with no thought of immediate pleasure; I will plan instead for the ben-
c efits that are to come, since I am master of myself and have not been overwhelmed by love. Small problems will not make me very hostile, and big ones will make me only gradually, and only a little, angry. I will forgive you for unintentional errors and do my best to keep you from going wrong intentionally. All this, you see, is the proof of a friendship that will last a long time.

Have you been thinking that there can be no strong friendship in the
d absence of erotic love? Then you ought to remember that we would

not care so much about our children if that were so, or about our fathers and mothers. And we wouldn't have had any trustworthy friends, since those relationships did not come from such a desire but from doing quite different things.

Besides, if it were true that we ought to give the biggest favor to those who need it most, then we should all be helping out the very poorest people, not the best ones, because people we've saved from the worst troubles will give us the most thanks. For instance, the right *e*
people to invite to a dinner party would be beggars and people who need to sate their hunger, because they're the ones who'll be fond of us, follow us, knock on our doors,[9] take the most pleasure with the deepest gratitude, and pray for our success. No, it's proper, I suppose, to grant your favors to those who are best able to return them, not to those in the direst need—that is, not to those who merely desire the thing, but to those who really deserve it—not to people who will take *234*
pleasure in the bloom of your youth, but to those who will share their goods with you when you are older; not to people who achieve their goal and then boast about it in public, but to those who will keep a modest silence with everyone; not to people whose devotion is short-lived, but to those who will be steady friends their whole lives; not to the people who look for an excuse to quarrel as soon as their desire has passed, but to those who will prove their worth when the bloom *b*
of your youth has faded. Now, remember what I said and keep this in mind: friends often criticize a lover for bad behavior; but no one close to a non-lover ever thinks that desire has led him into bad judgment about his interests.

And now I suppose you'll ask me whether I'm urging you to give your favors to everyone who is not in love with you. No. As I see it, a lover would not ask you to give in to all your lovers either. You would *c*
not, in that case, earn as much gratitude from each recipient, and you would not be able to keep one affair secret from the others in the same

way. But this sort of thing is not supposed to cause any harm, and really should work to the benefit of both sides.

Well, I think this speech is long enough. If you are still longing for more, if you think I have passed over something, just ask."

How does the speech strike you, Socrates? Don't you think it's simply superb, especially in its choice of words?

d SOCRATES It's a miracle, my friend; I'm in ecstasy. And it's all your doing, Phaedrus: I was looking at you while you were reading and it seemed to me the speech had made you radiant with delight; and since I believe you understand these matters better than I do, I followed your lead, and following you I shared your Bacchic frenzy.

PHAEDRUS Come, Socrates, do you think you should joke about this?

SOCRATES Do you really think I am joking, that I am not serious?

e PHAEDRUS You are not at all serious, Socrates. But now tell me the truth, in the name of Zeus, god of friendship: Do you think that any other Greek could say anything more impressive or more complete on this same subject?

SOCRATES What? Must we praise the speech even on the ground that its author has said what the situation demanded, and not instead simply on the ground that he has spoken in a clear and concise manner, with a precise turn of phrase? If we must, I will have to go along for
235 your sake, since—surely because I am so ignorant—that passed me by. I paid attention only to the speech's style. As to the other part, I wouldn't even think that Lysias himself could be satisfied with it. For it seemed to me, Phaedrus—unless, of course, you disagree—that he said the same things two or even three times, as if he really didn't have much to say about the subject, almost as if he just weren't very interested in it. In fact, he seemed to me to be showing off, trying to demonstrate that he could say the same thing in two different ways, and say it just as well both times.

PHAEDRUS You are absolutely wrong, Socrates. That is in fact the *b*
best thing about the speech: He has omitted nothing worth mentioning about the subject, so that no one will ever be able to add anything of value to complete what he has already said himself.

SOCRATES You go too far: I can't agree with you about that. If, as a favor to you, I accept your view, I will stand refuted by all the wise men and women of old who have spoken or written about this subject.

PHAEDRUS Who are these people? And where have you heard any- *c*
thing better than this?

SOCRATES I can't tell you offhand, but I'm sure I've heard better somewhere; perhaps it was the lovely Sappho or the wise Anacreon or even some writer of prose. So, what's my evidence? The fact, my dear friend, that my breast is full and I feel I can make a different speech, even better than Lysias'. Now I am well aware that none of these ideas can have come from me—I know my own ignorance. The only other possibility, I think, is that I was filled, like an empty jar, by the words *d*
of other people streaming in through my ears, though I'm so stupid that I've even forgotten where and from whom I heard them.

PHAEDRUS But, my dear friend, you couldn't have said a better thing! Don't bother telling me when and from whom you've heard this, even if I ask you—instead, do exactly what you said: You've just promised to make another speech making more points, and better ones, without repeating a word from my book. And I promise you that, like the Nine Archons, I shall set up in return a life-sized golden statue at Delphi, not only of myself but also of you.[10] *e*

SOCRATES You're a real friend, Phaedrus, good as gold, to think I'm claiming that Lysias failed in absolutely every respect and that I can make a speech that is different on every point from his. I am sure that that couldn't happen even to the worst possible author. In our own case, for example, do you think that anyone could argue that one should favor the non-lover rather than the lover without praising the *236*

former for keeping his wits about him or condemning the latter for losing his—points that are essential to make—and still have something left to say? I believe we must allow these points, and concede them to the speaker. In their case, we cannot praise their novelty but only their skillful arrangement; but we can praise both the arrangement and the novelty of the nonessential points that are harder to think up.

PHAEDRUS I agree with you; I think that's reasonable. This, then, is
b what I shall do. I will allow you to presuppose that the lover is less sane than the non-lover—and if you are able to add anything of value to complete what we already have in hand, you will stand in hammered gold beside the offering of the Cypselids in Olympia.[11]

SOCRATES Oh, Phaedrus, I was only criticizing your beloved in order to tease you—did you take me seriously? Do you think I'd really try to match the product of his wisdom with a fancier speech?

PHAEDRUS Well, as far as that goes, my friend, you've fallen into
c your own trap. You have no choice but to give your speech as best you can: otherwise you will force us into trading vulgar jibes the way they do in comedy. Don't make me say what you said: "Socrates, if I don't know my Socrates, I must be forgetting who I am myself," or "He wanted to speak, but he was being coy." Get it into your head
d that we shall not leave here until you recite what you claimed to have "in your breast." We are alone, in a deserted place, and I am younger and stronger. From all this, "take my meaning"[12] and don't make me force you to speak when you can do so willingly.

SOCRATES But, my dear Phaedrus, I'll be ridiculous—a mere dilettante, improvising on the same topics as a seasoned professional!

PHAEDRUS Do you understand the situation? Stop playing hard to get! I know what I can say to make you give your speech.

SOCRATES Then please don't say it!

PHAEDRUS Oh, yes, I will. And what I say will be an oath. I swear
e to you—by which god, I wonder? How about this very plane tree?—I

swear in all truth that, if you don't make your speech right next to this tree here, I shall never, never again recite another speech for you—I shall never utter another word about speeches to you!

SOCRATES My oh my, what a horrible man you are! You've really found the way to force a lover of speeches to do just as you say!

PHAEDRUS So why are you still twisting and turning like that?

SOCRATES I'll stop—now that you've taken this oath. How could I possibly give up such treats?

PHAEDRUS Speak, then. *237*

SOCRATES Do you know what I'll do?

PHAEDRUS What?

SOCRATES I'll cover my head while I'm speaking. In that way, as I'm going through the speech as fast as I can, I won't get embarrassed by having to look at you and lose the thread of my argument.

PHAEDRUS Just give your speech! You can do anything else you like.

SOCRATES Come to me, O you clear-voiced Muses, whether you are called so because of the quality of your song or from the musical people of Liguria,[13] "come, take up my burden" in telling the tale that this fine fellow forces upon me so that his companion may now seem to him even more clever than he did before: *b*

There once was a boy, a youth rather, and he was very beautiful, and had very many lovers. One of them was wily and had persuaded him that he was not in love, though he loved the lad no less than the others. And once in pressing his suit to him, he tried to persuade him that he ought to give his favors to a man who did not love him rather than to one who did. And this is what he said:

"If you wish to reach a good decision on any topic, my boy, there is only one way to begin: You must know what the decision is about, *c* or else you are bound to miss your target altogether. Ordinary people cannot see that they do not know the true nature of a particular subject, so they proceed as if they did; and because they do not work out

an agreement at the start of the inquiry, they wind up as you would expect—in conflict with themselves and each other. Now you and I had better not let this happen to us, since we criticize it in others. Because you and I are about to discuss whether a boy should make friends with
d a man who loves him rather than with one who does not, we should agree on defining what love is and what effects it has. Then we can look back and refer to that as we try to find out whether to expect benefit or harm from love. Now, as everyone plainly knows, love is some kind of desire; but we also know that even men who are not in love have a desire for what is beautiful. So how shall we distinguish between a man who is in love and one who is not? We must realize that each of us is ruled by two principles which we follow wherever they lead: one is our inborn desire for pleasures, the other is our acquired judgment that pursues what is best. Sometimes these two are in agreement; but
e there are times when they quarrel inside us, and then sometimes one of them gains control, sometimes the other. Now when judgment is in control and leads us by reasoning toward what is best, that sort of
238 self-control is called 'being in your right mind'; but when desire takes command in us and drags us without reasoning toward pleasure, then its command is known as 'outrageousness'.[14] Now outrageousness has as many names as the forms it can take, and these are quite diverse.[15] Whichever form stands out in a particular case gives its name to the person who has it—and that is not a pretty name to be called, not worth earning at all. If it is desire for food that overpowers a person's rea-
b soning about what is best and suppresses his other desires, it is called gluttony and it gives him the name of a glutton, while if it is desire for drink that plays the tyrant and leads the man in that direction, we all know what name we'll call him then! And now it should be clear how to describe someone appropriately in the other cases: call the man by that name—sister to these others—that derives from the sister of these desires that controls him at the time. As for the desire that has led us

to say all this, it should be obvious already, but I suppose things said are always better understood than things unsaid: The unreasoning desire that overpowers a person's considered impulse to do right and is *c*
driven to take pleasure in beauty, its force reinforced by its kindred desires for beauty in human bodies—this desire, all-conquering in its forceful drive, takes its name from the word for force (*rhōmē*) and is called *erōs*."

There, Phaedrus my friend, don't you think, as I do, that I'm in the grip of something divine?

PHAEDRUS This is certainly an unusual flow of words for you, Socrates.

SOCRATES Then be quiet and listen. There's something really divine about this place, so don't be surprised if I'm quite taken by the *d*
Nymphs' madness as I go on with the speech. I'm on the edge of speaking in dithyrambs[16] as it is.

PHAEDRUS Very true!

SOCRATES Yes, and you're the cause of it. But hear me out; the attack may yet be prevented. That, however, is up to the god; what we must do is face the boy again in the speech:

"All right then, my brave friend, now we have a definition for the subject of our decision; now we have said what it really is; so let us keep *e*
that in view as we complete our discussion. What benefit or harm is likely to come from the lover or the non-lover to the boy who gives him favors? It is surely necessary that a man who is ruled by desire and is a slave to pleasure will turn his boy into whatever is most pleasing to himself. Now a sick man takes pleasure in anything that does not resist him, but sees anyone who is equal or superior to him as an enemy. *239*
That is why a lover will not willingly put up with a boyfriend who is his equal or superior, but is always working to make the boy he loves weaker and inferior to himself. Now, the ignorant man is inferior to the wise one, the coward to the brave, the ineffective speaker to the

trained orator, the slow-witted to the quick. By necessity, a lover will be delighted to find all these mental defects and more, whether acquired or innate in his boy; and if he does not, he will have to supply them or else lose the pleasure of the moment. The necessary conse-
b quence is that he will be jealous and keep the boy away from the good company of anyone who would make a better man of him; and that will cause him a great deal of harm, especially if he keeps him away from what would most improve his mind—and that is, in fact, divine philosophy, from which it is necessary for a lover to keep his boy a great distance away, out of fear the boy will eventually come to look down on him. He will have to invent other ways, too, of keeping the boy in total ignorance and so in total dependence on himself. That
c way the boy will give his lover the most pleasure, though the harm to himself will be severe. So it will not be of any use to your intellectual development to have as your mentor and companion a man who is in love.

"Now let's turn to your physical development. If a man is bound by necessity to chase pleasure at the expense of the good, what sort of shape will he want you to be in? How will he train you, if he is in charge? You will see that what he wants is someone who is soft, not muscular, and not trained in full sunlight but in dappled shade—someone who has never worked out like a man, never touched hard, sweaty
d exercise. Instead, he goes for a boy who has known only a soft unmanly style of life, who makes himself pretty with cosmetics because he has no natural color at all. There is no point in going on with this description: it is perfectly obvious what other sorts of behavior follow from this. We can take up our next topic after drawing all this to a head: the sort of body a lover wants in his boy is one that will give confidence to the enemy in a war or other great crisis while causing alarm to friends and even to his lovers. Enough of that; the point is obvious.

e "Our next topic is the benefit or harm to your possessions that will

come from a lover's care and company. Everyone knows the answer, especially a lover: His first wish will be for a boy who has lost his dearest, kindliest and godliest possessions—his mother and father and other close relatives. He would be happy to see the boy deprived of them, since he would expect them either to block him from the sweet pleasure of the boy's company or to criticize him severely for taking it. What is more, a lover would think any money or other wealth the boy owns would only make him harder to snare and, once snared, harder to handle. It follows by absolute necessity that wealth in a boyfriend will cause his lover to envy him, while his poverty will be a delight. Furthermore, he will wish for the boy to stay wifeless, childless, and homeless for as long as possible, since that's how long he desires to go on plucking his sweet fruit. *240*

"There are other troubles in life, of course, but some divinity has mixed most of them with a dash of immediate pleasure. A flatterer, *b* for example, may be an awful beast and a dreadful nuisance, but nature makes flattery rather pleasant by mixing in a little culture with its words. So it is with a mistress—for all the harm we accuse her of causing—and with many other creatures of that character, and their callings: at least they are delightful company for a day. But besides being harmful to his boyfriend, a lover is simply disgusting to spend the *c* day with. 'Youth delights youth,' as the old proverb runs—because, I suppose, friendship grows from similarity, as boys of the same age go after the same pleasures. But you can even have too much of people your own age. Besides, as they say, it is miserable for anyone to be forced into anything by necessity—and this (to say nothing of the age difference) is most true for a boy with his lover. The older man clings to the younger day and night, never willing to leave him, driven by ne- *d* cessity and goaded on by the sting that gives him pleasure every time he sees, hears, touches, or perceives his boy in any way at all, so that he follows him around like a servant, with pleasure.

"As for the boy, however, what comfort or pleasure will the lover give to him during all the time they spend together? Won't it be disgusting in the extreme to see the face of that older man who's lost his looks? And everything that goes with that face—why, it is a misery
e even to hear them mentioned, let alone actually handle them, as you would constantly be forced to do! To be watched and guarded suspiciously all the time, with everyone! To hear praise of yourself that is out of place and excessive! And then to be falsely accused—which is unbearable when the man is sober and not only unbearable but positively shameful when he is drunk and lays into you with a pack of wild barefaced insults!

"While he is still in love he is harmful and disgusting, but after his love fades he breaks his trust with you for the future, in spite of all the
241 promises he has made with all those oaths and entreaties which just barely kept you in a relationship that was troublesome at the time, in hope of future benefits. So, then, by the time he should pay up, he has made a change and installed a new ruling government in himself: right-minded reason in place of the madness of love. The boy does not even realize that his lover is a different man. He insists on his reward for past favors and reminds him of what they had done and said before—as if he were still talking to the same man! The lover, however, is so ashamed that he does not dare tell the boy how much he has changed or that there is no way, now that he is in his right mind and under control
b again, that he can stand by the promises he had sworn to uphold when he was under that old mindless regime. He is afraid that if he acted as he had before he would turn out the same and revert to his old self. So now he is a refugee, fleeing from those old promises on which he must default by necessity; he, the former lover, has to switch roles and flee, since the coin has fallen the other way, while the boy must chase after him, angry and cursing. All along he has been completely unaware that
c he should never have given his favors to a man who was in love—and

who therefore had by necessity lost his mind. He should much rather have done it for a man who was not in love and had his wits about him. Otherwise it follows necessarily that he'd be giving himself to a man who is deceitful, irritable, jealous, disgusting, harmful to his property, harmful to his physical fitness, and absolutely devastating to the cultivation of his soul, which truly is, and will always be, the most valuable thing to gods and men.

"These are the points you should bear in mind, my boy. You should know that the friendship of a lover arises without any good will at all. No, like food, its purpose is to sate hunger. 'Do wolves love lambs? *d*
That's how lovers befriend a boy!' "

That's it, Phaedrus. You won't hear another word from me, and you'll have to accept this as the end of the speech.

PHAEDRUS But I thought you were right in the middle—I thought you were about to speak at the same length about the non-lover, to list his good points and argue that it's better to give one's favors to him. So why are you stopping now, Socrates?

SOCRATES Didn't you notice, my friend, that even though I am *e*
criticizing the lover, I have passed beyond lyric into epic poetry?[17] What do you suppose will happen to me if I begin to praise his opposite? Don't you realize that the Nymphs to whom you so cleverly exposed me will take complete possession of me? So I say instead, in a word, that every shortcoming for which we blamed the lover has its contrary advantage, and the non-lover possesses it. Why make a long speech of it? That's enough about them both. This way my story will meet the end it deserves, and I will cross the river and leave before you *242*
make me do something even worse.

PHAEDRUS Not yet, Socrates, not until this heat is over. Don't you see that it is almost exactly noon, "straight-up" as they say? Let's wait and discuss the speeches, and go as soon as it turns cooler.

SOCRATES You're really superhuman when it comes to speeches,

Phaedrus; you're truly amazing. I'm sure you've brought into being
b more of the speeches that have been given during your lifetime than anyone else, whether you composed them yourself or in one way or another forced others to make them; with the single exception of Simmias the Theban, you are far ahead of the rest.[18] Even as we speak, I think, you're managing to cause me to produce yet another one.

PHAEDRUS Oh, how wonderful! But what do you mean? What speech?

SOCRATES My friend, just as I was about to cross the river, the fa-
c miliar divine sign came to me which, whenever it occurs, holds me back from something I am about to do. I thought I heard a voice coming from this very spot, forbidding me to leave until I made atonement for some offense against the gods. In effect, you see, I am a seer, and though I am not particularly good at it, still—like people who are just barely able to read and write—I am good enough for my own purposes. I recognize my offense clearly now. In fact, the soul too, my friend, is itself a sort of seer; that's why, almost from the beginning
d of my speech, I was disturbed by a very uneasy feeling, as Ibycus puts it, that "for offending the gods I am honored by men."[19] But now I understand exactly what my offense has been.

PHAEDRUS Tell me, what is it?

SOCRATES Phaedrus, that speech you carried with you here—it was horrible, as horrible as the speech you made me give.

PHAEDRUS How could that be?

SOCRATES It was foolish, and close to being impious. What could be more horrible than that?

PHAEDRUS Nothing—if, of course, what you say is right.

SOCRATES Well, then? Don't you believe that Love is the son of Aphrodite? Isn't he one of the gods?

PHAEDRUS This is certainly what people say.

SOCRATES Well, Lysias certainly doesn't and neither does your

speech, which you charmed me through your potion into delivering myself. But if Love is a god or something divine—which he is—he can't *e*
be bad in any way; and yet our speeches just now spoke of him as if he were. That is their offense against Love. And they've compounded it with their utter foolishness in parading their dangerous falsehoods *243*
and preening themselves over perhaps deceiving a few silly people and coming to be admired by them.

And so, my friend, I must purify myself. Now for those whose offense lies in telling false stories about matters divine, there is an ancient rite of purification—Homer did not know it, but Stesichorus did. When he lost his sight for speaking ill of Helen, he did not, like Homer, remain in the dark about the reason why. On the contrary, true follower of the Muses that he was, he understood it and immediately composed these lines:

There's no truth to that story:
You never sailed that lovely ship,
You never reached the tower of Troy. *b*

And as soon as he completed the poem we call the Palinode, he immediately regained his sight. Now I will prove to be wiser than Homer and Stesichorus to this small extent: I will try to offer my Palinode to Love before I am punished for speaking ill of him—with my head bare, no longer covered in shame.

PHAEDRUS No words could be sweeter to my ears, Socrates.

SOCRATES You see, my dear Phaedrus, you understand how *c*
shameless the speeches were, my own as well as the one in your book. Suppose a noble and gentle man, who was (or had once been) in love with a boy of similar character, were to hear us say that lovers start serious quarrels for trivial reasons and that, jealous of their beloved, they do him harm—don't you think that man would think we had been

d brought up among the most vulgar of sailors, totally ignorant of love among the freeborn? Wouldn't he most certainly refuse to acknowledge the flaws we attributed to Love?

PHAEDRUS Most probably, Socrates.

SOCRATES Well, that man makes me feel ashamed, and as I'm also afraid of Love himself, I want to wash out the bitterness of what we've *e* heard with a more tasteful speech. And my advice to Lysias, too, is to write as soon as possible a speech urging one to give similar favors to a lover rather than to a non-lover.

PHAEDRUS You can be sure he will. For once you have spoken in praise of the lover, I will most definitely make Lysias write a speech on the same topic.

SOCRATES I do believe you will, so long as you are who you are.

PHAEDRUS Speak on, then, in full confidence.

SOCRATES Where, then, is the boy to whom I was speaking? Let him hear this speech, too. Otherwise he may be too quick to give his favors to the non-lover.

PHAEDRUS He is here, always right by your side, whenever you want him.

244 SOCRATES You'll have to understand, beautiful boy, that the previous speech was by Phaedrus, Pythocles' son, from Myrrhinus, while the one I am about to deliver is by Stesichorus, Euphemus' son, from Himera.[20] And here is how the speech should go:

"'There's no truth to that story'—that when a lover is available you should give your favors to a man who doesn't love you instead, because he is in control of himself while the lover has lost his head. That would have been fine to say if madness were bad, pure and simple; but in fact the best things we have come from madness, when it is given as a gift of the god.

b The prophetess of Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona are out of their minds when they perform that fine work of theirs for all of

Greece, either for an individual person or for a whole city, but they accomplish little or nothing when they are in control of themselves. We will not mention the Sybil or the others who foretell many things by means of god-inspired prophetic trances and give sound guidance to many people—that would take too much time for a point that's obvious to everyone. But here's some evidence worth adding to our case: The people who designed our language in the old days never thought of madness as something to be ashamed of or worthy of blame; otherwise they would not have used the word 'manic' for the finest experts of all—the ones who tell the future—thereby weaving insanity into *c*
prophecy. They thought it was wonderful when it came as a gift of the god, and that's why they gave its name to prophecy; but nowadays people don't know the fine points, so they stick in a 't' and call it '*mantic*.' Similarly, the clear-headed study of the future, which uses birds and other signs, was originally called *oionoïstic*, since it uses reasoning to bring intelligence (*nous*) and learning (*historia*) into human thought; but now modern speakers call it *oiōnistic*, putting on airs with *d*
their long '*ō*'. To the extent, then, that prophecy, *mantic*, is more perfect and more admirable than sign-based prediction, *oiōnistic*, in both name and achievement, madness (*mania*) from a god is finer than self-control of human origin, according to the testimony of the ancient language givers.

Next, madness can provide relief from the greatest plagues of trouble that beset certain families because of their guilt for ancient crimes: it turns up among those who need a way out; it gives prophecies and *e*
takes refuge in prayers to the gods and in worship, discovering mystic rites and purifications that bring the man it touches through to safety for this and all time to come. So it is that the right sort of madness finds relief from present hardships for a man it has possessed.

Third comes the kind of madness that is possession by the Muses, *245*
which takes a tender virgin soul and awakens it to a Bacchic frenzy of

songs and poetry that glorifies the achievements of the past and teaches them to future generations. If anyone comes to the gates of poetry and expects to become an adequate poet by acquiring expert knowledge of the subject without the Muses' madness, he will fail, and his self-controlled verses will be eclipsed by the poetry of men who have been driven out of their minds.

b There you have some of the fine achievements—and I could tell you even more—that are due to god-sent madness. We must not have any fear on this particular point, then, and we must not let anyone disturb us or frighten us with the claim that you should prefer a friend who is in control of himself to one who is disturbed. Besides proving that point, if he is to win his case, our opponent must show that love is not sent by the gods as a benefit to a lover and his boy. And we, for our part, must prove the opposite, that this sort of madness is given us by *c* the gods to ensure our greatest good fortune. It will be a proof that convinces the wise if not the clever.

Now we must first understand the truth about the nature of the soul, divine or human, by examining what it does and what is done to it. Here begins the proof:

Every soul[21] is immortal. That is because whatever is always in motion is immortal, while what moves, and is moved by, something else stops living when it stops moving. So it is only what moves itself that never desists from motion, since it does not leave off being itself. In fact, this self-mover is also the source and spring of motion in every-*d* thing else that moves; and a source has no beginning. That is because anything that has a beginning comes from some source, but there is no source for this, since a source that got its start from something else would no longer be the source. And since it cannot have a beginning, then necessarily it cannot be destroyed. That is because if a source were destroyed it could never get started again from anything else and nothing else could get started from it—that is, if everything gets started from

a source. This then is why a self-mover is a source of motion. And *that* is incapable of being destroyed or starting up; otherwise all heaven and *e*
everything that has been started up would collapse, come to a stop, and never have cause to start moving again. But since we have found that a self-mover is immortal, we should have no qualms about declaring that this is the very essence and principle of a soul, for every bodily object that is moved from outside has no soul, while a body whose motion comes from within, from itself, does have a soul, that being the nature of a soul; and if this is so—that whatever moves itself is essentially a soul—then it follows necessarily that soul should have neither birth nor death.

That, then, is enough about the soul's immortality. Now here is *246*
what we must say about its structure. To describe what the soul actually is would require a very long account, altogether a task for a god in every way; but to say what it is like is humanly possible and takes less time. So let us do the second in our speech. Let us then liken the soul to the natural union of a team of winged horses and their charioteer. The gods have horses and charioteers that are themselves all good and come from good stock besides, while everyone else has a mixture. To *b*
begin with, our driver is in charge of a pair of horses; second, one of his horses is beautiful and good and from stock of the same sort, while the other is the opposite and has the opposite sort of bloodline. This means that chariot-driving in our case is inevitably a painfully difficult business.

And now I should try to tell you why living things are said to include both mortal and immortal beings. All soul looks after all that lacks a soul, and patrols all of heaven, taking different shapes at different times. *c*
So long as its wings are in perfect condition it flies high, and the entire universe is its dominion; but a soul that sheds its wings wanders until it lights on something solid, where it settles and takes on an earthly body, which then, owing to the power of this soul, seems to move itself. The

whole combination of soul and body is called a living thing, or animal, and has the designation 'mortal' as well. Such a combination cannot be immortal, not on any reasonable account. In fact it is pure fiction,
d based neither on observation nor on adequate reasoning, that a god is an immortal living thing which has a body and a soul, and that these are bound together by nature for all time—but of course we must let this be as it may please the gods, and speak accordingly.

Let us turn to what causes the shedding of the wings, what makes them fall away from a soul. It is something of this sort: By their nature wings have the power to lift up heavy things and raise them aloft where the gods all dwell, and so, more than anything that pertains to the body,
e they are akin to the divine, which has beauty, wisdom, goodness, and everything of that sort. These nourish the soul's wings, which grow best in their presence; but foulness and ugliness make the wings shrink and disappear.

Now Zeus, the great commander in heaven, drives his winged chariot first in the procession, looking after everything and putting all things
247 in order. Following him is an army of gods and spirits arranged in eleven sections. Hestia is the only one who remains at the home of the gods; all the rest of the twelve are lined up in formation, each god in command of the unit to which he is assigned. Inside heaven are many wonderful places from which to look and many aisles which the blessed gods take up and back, each seeing to his own work, while anyone who is able and wishes to do so follows along, since jealousy
b has no place in the gods' chorus. When they go to feast at the banquet they have a steep climb to the high tier at the rim of heaven; on this slope the gods' chariots move easily, since they are balanced and well under control, but the other chariots barely make it. The heaviness of the bad horse drags its charioteer toward the earth and weighs him down if he has failed to train it well, and this causes the most extreme toil and struggle that a soul will face. But when the souls we call im-

mortals reach the top, they move outward and take their stand on the high ridge of heaven, where its circular motion carries them around as *c* they stand while they gaze upon what is outside heaven.

The place beyond heaven—none of our earthly poets has ever sung or ever will sing its praises enough! Still, this is the way it is—risky as it may be, you see, I must attempt to speak the truth, especially since the truth is my subject. What is in this place is without color and without shape and without solidity, a being that really is what it is, the subject of all true knowledge, visible only to intelligence, the soul's steersman. *d* Now a god's mind is nourished by intelligence and pure knowledge, as is the mind of any soul that is concerned to take in what is appropriate to it, and so it is delighted at last to be seeing what is real and watching what is true, feeding on all this and feeling wonderful, until the circular motion brings it around to where it started. On the way around it has a view of Justice as it is; it has a view of Self-control; it has a view of Knowledge—not the knowledge that is close to change, that becomes different as it knows the different things which we consider real down *e* here. No, it is the knowledge of what really is what it is. And when the soul has seen all the things that are as they are and feasted on them, it sinks back inside heaven and goes home. On its arrival, the charioteer stables the horses by the manger, throws in ambrosia, and gives them nectar to drink besides.

Now that is the life of the gods. As for the other souls, one that fol- *248* lows a god most closely, making itself most like that god, raises the head of its charioteer up to the place outside and is carried around in the circular motion with the others. Although distracted by the horses, this soul does have a view of Reality, just barely. Another soul rises at one time and falls at another, and because its horses pull it violently in different directions, it sees some real things and misses others. The remaining souls are all eagerly straining to keep up, but are unable to rise; they are carried around below the surface, trampling and strik-

ing one another as each tries to get ahead of the others. The result is
b terribly noisy, very sweaty, and disorderly. Many souls are crippled by the incompetence of the drivers, and many wings break much of their plumage. After so much trouble, they all leave without having seen reality, uninitiated, and when they have gone they will depend on what they think is nourishment—their own opinions.

The reason there is so much eagerness to see the plain where truth
c stands is that this pasture has the grass that is the right food for the best part of the soul, and it is the nature of the wings that lift up the soul to be nourished by it. Besides, the law of Destiny is this: If any soul becomes a companion to a god and catches sight of any true thing, it will be unharmed until the next circuit; and if it is able to do this every time, it will always be safe. If, on the other hand, it does not see anything true because it could not keep up, and by some accident takes on a burden of forgetfulness and wrongdoing, then it is weighed down,
d sheds its wings and falls to earth. At that point, according to the law, the soul is not born into a wild animal in its first incarnation; but a soul that has seen the most will be planted in the seed of a man who will become a lover of wisdom[22] or of beauty, or who will be cultivated in the arts and prone to erotic love. The second sort of soul will be put into someone who will be a lawful king or warlike commander; the third, a statesman, a manager of a household, or a financier; the fourth will be a trainer who loves exercise or a doctor who cures the body;
e the fifth will lead the life of a prophet or priest of the mysteries. To the sixth the life of a poet or some other representational artist is properly assigned; to the seventh the life of a manual laborer or farmer; to the eighth the career of a sophist or demagogue, and to the ninth a tyrant.

Of all these, any who have led their lives with justice will change to a better fate, and any who have led theirs with injustice, to a worse one. In fact, no soul returns to the place from which it came for ten
249 thousand years, since its wings will not grow before then, except for

the soul of a man who practices philosophy without guile or who loves boys philosophically. If, after the third cycle of one thousand years, the last-mentioned souls have chosen such a life three times in a row, they grow their wings back, and they depart in the three-thousandth year. As for the rest, once their first life is over, they come to judgment; and, once judged, some are condemned to go to places of punishment beneath the earth and pay the full penalty for their injustice, while the others are lifted up by justice to a place in heaven where they live in *b* the manner the life they led in human form has earned them. In the thousandth year both groups arrive at a choice and allotment of second lives, and each soul chooses the life it wants. From there, a human soul can enter a wild animal, and a soul that was once human can move from an animal to a human being again. But a soul that never saw the truth cannot take a human shape, since a human being must understand speech in terms of general forms, proceeding to bring many perceptions *c* together into a reasoned unity. That process is the recollection of the things our soul saw when it was traveling with god, when it disregarded the things we now call real and lifted up its head to what is truly real instead.

For just this reason it is fair that only a philosopher's mind grows wings, since its memory always keeps it as close as possible to those realities by being close to which the gods are divine. A man who uses reminders of these things correctly is always at the highest, most perfect level of initiation, and he is the only one who is perfect as perfect can be. He stands outside human concerns and draws close to the divine; *d* ordinary people think he is disturbed and rebuke him for this, unaware that he is possessed by god. Now this takes me to the whole point of my discussion of the fourth kind of madness—that which someone shows when he sees the beauty we have down here and is reminded of true beauty; then he takes wing and flutters in his eagerness to rise up, but is unable to do so; and he gazes aloft, like a bird, paying no attention to

e what is down below—and that is what brings on him the charge that he has gone mad. This is the best and noblest of all the forms that possession by god can take for anyone who has it or is connected to it, and when someone who loves beautiful boys is touched by this madness he
250 is called a lover. As I said, nature requires that the soul of every human being has seen reality; otherwise, no soul could have entered this sort of living thing. But not every soul is easily reminded of the reality there by what it finds here—not souls that got only a brief glance at the reality there, not souls who had such bad luck when they fell down here that they were twisted by bad company into lives of injustice so that they forgot the sacred objects they had seen before. Only a few remain whose memory is good enough; and they are startled when they see an image of what they saw up there. Then they are beside themselves, and their experience is beyond their comprehension because they cannot
b fully grasp what it is that they are seeing.

Justice and self-control do not shine out through their images down here, and neither do the other objects of the soul's admiration; the senses are so murky that only a few people are able to make out, with difficulty, the original of the likenesses they encounter here. But beauty was radiant to see at that time when the souls, along with the glorious chorus (we[23] were with Zeus, while others followed other gods), saw that blessed and spectacular vision and were ushered into the mystery that we may rightly call the most blessed of all. And we
c who celebrated it were wholly perfect and free of all the troubles that awaited us in time to come, and we gazed in rapture at sacred revealed objects that were perfect, and simple, and unshakeable and blissful. That was the ultimate vision, and we saw it in pure light because we were pure ourselves, not buried in this thing we are carrying around now, which we call a body, locked in it like an oyster in its shell.

Well, all that was for love of a memory that made me stretch out
d my speech in longing for the past. Now beauty, as I said, was radiant

among the other objects; and now that we have come down here we grasp it sparkling through the clearest of our senses. Vision, of course, is the sharpest of our bodily senses, although it does not see wisdom. It would awaken a terribly powerful love if an image of wisdom came through our sight as clearly as beauty does, and the same goes for the other objects of inspired love. But now beauty alone has this privilege, *e*
to be the most clearly visible and the most loved. Of course a man who was initiated long ago or who has become defiled is not to be moved abruptly from here to a vision of Beauty itself when he sees what we call beauty here; so instead of gazing at the latter reverently, he surrenders to pleasure and sets out in the manner of a four-footed beast, eager to make babies; and, wallowing in vice, he goes after unnatural pleasure too, without a trace of fear or shame. A recent initiate, how- *251*
ever, one who has seen much in heaven—when he sees a godlike face or bodily form that has captured Beauty well, first he shudders and a fear comes over him like those he felt at the earlier time; then he gazes at him with the reverence due a god, and if he weren't afraid people would think him completely mad, he'd even sacrifice to his boy as if he were the image of a god. Once he has looked at him, his chill gives way *b*
to sweating and a high fever, because the stream of beauty that pours into him through his eyes warms him up and waters the growth of his wings. Meanwhile, the heat warms him and melts the places where the wings once grew, places that were long ago closed off with hard scabs to keep the sprouts from coming back; but as nourishment flows in, the feather shafts swell and rush to grow from their roots beneath every part of the soul (long ago, you see, the entire soul had wings). Now the whole soul seethes and throbs in this condition. Like a child *c*
whose teeth are just starting to grow in, and its gums are all aching and itching—that is exactly how the soul feels when it begins to grow wings. It swells up and aches and tingles as it grows them. But when it looks upon the beauty of the boy and takes in the stream of parti-

cles flowing into it from his beauty (that is why this is called 'desire'[24]),
d when it is watered and warmed by this, then all its pain subsides and is replaced by joy. When, however, it is separated from the boy and runs dry, then the openings of the passages in which the feathers grow are dried shut and keep the wings from sprouting. Then the stump of each feather is blocked in its desire and it throbs like a pulsing artery while the feather pricks at its passageway, with the result that the whole soul is stung all around, and the pain simply drives it wild—but then, when it remembers the boy in his beauty, it recovers its joy. From the outlandish mix of these two feelings—pain and joy—comes anguish and
e helpless raving: in its madness the lover's soul cannot sleep at night or stay put by day; it rushes, yearning, wherever it expects to see the person who has that beauty. When it does see him, it opens the sluicegates of desire and sets free the parts that were blocked up before. And now that the pain and the goading have stopped, it can catch its breath and once more suck in, for the moment, this sweetest of all pleasures.
252 This it is not at all willing to give up, and no one is more important to it than the beautiful boy. It forgets mother and brothers and friends entirely and doesn't care at all if it loses its wealth through neglect. And as for proper and decorous behavior, in which it used to take pride, the soul despises the whole business. Why, it is even willing to sleep like a slave, anywhere, as near to the object of its longing as it is allowed to
b get! That is because in addition to its reverence for one who has such beauty, the soul has discovered that the boy is the only doctor for all that terrible pain.

This is the experience we humans call love, you beautiful boy (I mean the one to whom I am making this speech). You are so young that what the gods call it is likely to strike you as funny. Some of the successors of Homer, I believe, report two lines from the less well known poems, of which the second is quite indecent and does not scan very well. They praise love this way:

Yes, mortals call him powerful winged 'Love';
But because of his need to thrust out the wings,
the gods call him 'Shove'.[25]

You may believe this or not as you like. But, seriously, the cause of *c*
love is as I have said, and this is how lovers really feel.

If the man who is taken by love used to be an attendant on Zeus, he will be able to bear the burden of this feathered force with dignity. But if it is one of Ares' troops who has fallen prisoner of love—if that is the god with whom he took the circuit—then if he has the slightest suspicion that the boy he loves has done him wrong, he turns murderous, and he is ready to make a sacrifice of himself as well as the boy.

So it is with each of the gods: everyone spends his life honoring the *d*
god in whose chorus he danced, and emulates that god in every way he can, so long as he remains undefiled and in his first life down here. And that is how he behaves with everyone at every turn, not just with those he loves. Everyone chooses his love after his own fashion from among those who are beautiful, and then treats the boy like his very own god, *e*
building him up and adorning him as an image to honor and worship. Those who followed Zeus, for example, choose someone to love who is a Zeus himself in the nobility of his soul. So they make sure he has a talent for philosophy and the guidance of others, and once they have found him and are in love with him they do everything to develop that talent. If any lovers have not yet embarked on this practice, then they start to learn, using any source they can and also making progress on their own. They are well equipped to track down their god's true nature with their own resources because of their driving need to gaze *253*
at the god, and as they are in touch with the god by memory they are inspired by him and adopt his customs and practices, so far as a human being can share a god's life. For all of this they know they have the

boy to thank, and so they love him all the more; and if they draw their inspiration from Zeus, then, like the Bacchants,[26] they pour it into the soul of the one they love in order to help him take on as much of
b their own god's qualities as possible. Hera's followers look for a kingly character, and once they have found him they do all the same things for him. And so it is for followers of Apollo or any other god: They take their god's path and seek for their own a boy whose nature is like the god's; and when they have got him they emulate the god, convincing the boy they love and training him to follow their god's pattern and way of life, so far as is possible in each case. They show no envy, no mean-spirited lack of generosity, toward the boy, but make every possible
c effort to draw him into being totally like themselves and the god to whom they are devoted. This, then, is any true lover's heart's desire: if he follows that desire in the manner I described, this friend who has been driven mad by love will secure a consummation for the one he has befriended that is as beautiful and blissful as I said—if, of course, he captures him. Here, then, is how the captive is caught:

Remember how we divided each soul in three at the beginning of
d our story—two parts in the form of horses and the third in that of a charioteer? Let us continue with that. One of the horses, we said, is good, the other not; but we did not go into the details of the goodness of the good horse or the badness of the bad. Let us do that now. The horse that is on the right, or nobler, side is upright in frame and well jointed, with a high neck and a regal nose; his coat is white, his eyes are black, and he is a lover of honor with modesty and self-control; companion to true glory, he needs no whip, and is guided by verbal
e commands alone. The other horse is a crooked great jumble of limbs with a short bull-neck, a pug nose, black skin, and bloodshot white eyes; companion to wild boasts and indecency, he is shaggy around the ears—deaf as a post—and just barely yields to horsewhip and goad combined. Now when the charioteer looks in the eye of love, his en-

tire soul is suffused with a sense of warmth and starts to fill with tingles and the goading of desire. As for the horses, the one who is obedient to the charioteer is still controlled, then as always, by its sense of shame, *254* and so prevents itself from jumping on the boy. The other one, however, no longer responds to the whip or the goad of the charioteer; it leaps violently forward and does everything to aggravate its yokemate and its charioteer, trying to make them go up to the boy and suggest to him the pleasures of sex. At first the other two resist, angry in their *b* belief that they are being made to do things that are dreadfully wrong. At last, however, when they see no end to their trouble, they are led forward, reluctantly agreeing to do as they have been told. So they are close to him now, and they are struck by the boy's face as if by a bolt of lightning. When the charioteer sees that face, his memory is carried back to the real nature of Beauty, and he sees it again where it stands on the sacred pedestal next to Self-control. At the sight he is frightened, falls over backwards awestruck, and at the same time has to pull the *c* reins back so fiercely that both horses are set on their haunches, one falling back voluntarily with no resistance, but the other insolent and quite unwilling. They pull back a little further; and while one horse drenches the whole soul with sweat out of shame and awe, the other—once it has recovered from the pain caused by the bit and its fall—bursts into a torrent of insults as soon as it has caught its breath, accusing its charioteer and yokemate of all sorts of cowardice and unmanliness for *d* abandoning their position and their agreement. Now once more it tries to make its unwilling partners advance, and gives in grudgingly only when they beg it to wait till later. Then, when the promised time arrives, and they are pretending to have forgotten, it reminds them; it struggles, it neighs, it pulls them forward and forces them to approach the boy again with the same proposition; and as soon as they are near, it drops its head, straightens its tail, bites the bit, and pulls without any shame at all. The charioteer is now struck with the same feelings as *e*

before, only worse, and he's falling back as he would from a starting gate; and he violently yanks the bit back out of the teeth of the insolent horse, only harder this time, so that he bloodies its foul-speaking tongue and jaws, sets its legs and haunches firmly on the ground, and 'gives it over to pain.' When the bad horse has suffered this same thing time after time, it stops being so insolent; now it is humble enough to follow the charioteer's warnings, and when it sees the beautiful boy it dies of fright, with the result that now at last the lover's soul follows its boy in reverence and awe.

255 And because he is served with all the attentions due a god by a lover who is not pretending otherwise but is truly in the throes of love, and because he is by nature disposed to be a friend of the man who is serving him (even if he has already been set against love by school friends or others who say that it is shameful to associate with a lover, and initially rejects the lover in consequence), as time goes forward he is brought
b by his ripening age and a sense of what must be to a point where he lets the man spend time with him. It is a decree of fate, you see, that bad is never friends with bad, while good cannot fail to be friends with good. Now that he allows his lover to talk and spend time with him, and the man's good will is close at hand, the boy is amazed by it as he realizes that all the friendship he has from his other friends and relatives put together is nothing compared to that of this friend who is inspired by a god.

After the lover has spent some time doing this, staying near the boy (and even touching him during sports and on other occasions), then
c the spring that feeds the stream Zeus named 'Desire' when he was in love with Ganymede begins to flow mightily in the lover and is partly absorbed by him, and when he is filled it overflows and runs away outside him. Think how a breeze or an echo bounces back from a smooth solid object to its source; that is how the stream of beauty goes back to the beautiful boy and sets him aflutter. It enters through his eyes,

which are its natural route to the soul; there it waters the passages for *d*
the wings, starts the wings growing, and fills the soul of the loved one with love in return. Then the boy is in love, but has no idea what he loves. He does not understand, and cannot explain, what has happened to him. It is as if he had caught an eye disease from someone else, but could not identify the cause; he does not realize that he is seeing himself in the lover as in a mirror. So when the lover is near, the boy's pain is relieved just as the lover's is, and when they are apart he yearns as much as he is yearned for, because he has a mirror image of love in *e*
him—'backlove'—though he neither speaks nor thinks of it as love, but as friendship. Still, his desire is nearly the same as the lover's, though weaker: he wants to see, touch, kiss, and lie down with him; and of course, as you might expect, he acts on these desires soon after they occur.

When they are in bed, the lover's undisciplined horse has a word to say to the charioteer—that after all its sufferings it is entitled to a little *256*
fun. Meanwhile, the boy's bad horse has nothing to say, but swelling with desire, confused, it hugs the lover and kisses him in delight at his great good will. And whenever they are lying together it is completely unable, for its own part, to deny the lover any favor he might beg to have. Its yokemate, however, along with its charioteer, resists such requests with modesty and reason. Now if the victory goes to the better elements in both their minds, which lead them to follow the assigned regimen of philosophy, their life here below is one of bliss and *b*
shared understanding. They are modest and fully in control of themselves now that they have enslaved the part that brought trouble into the soul and set free the part that gave it virtue. After death, when they have grown wings and become weightless, they have won the first of three rounds in these, the true Olympic Contests. There is no greater good than this that either human self-control or divine madness can offer a man. If, on the other hand, they adopt a lower way of living,

c with ambition in place of philosophy, then pretty soon when they are careless because they have been drinking or for some other reason, the pair's undisciplined horses will catch their souls off guard and together bring them to commit that act which ordinary people would take to be the happiest choice of all; and when they have consummated it once, they go on doing this for the rest of their lives, but sparingly, since they have not approved of what they are doing with their whole minds. So these two also live in mutual friendship (though weaker than that of *d* the philosophical pair), both while they are in love and after they have passed beyond it, because they realize they have exchanged such firm vows that it would be forbidden for them ever to break them and become enemies. In death they are wingless when they leave the body, but their wings are bursting to sprout, so the prize they have won from the madness of love is considerable, because those who have begun the sacred journey in lower heaven may not by law be sent into darkness *e* for the journey under the earth; their lives are bright and happy as they travel together, and thanks to their love they will grow wings together when the time comes.

These are the rewards you will have from a lover's friendship, my boy, and they are as great as divine gifts should be. A non-lover's companionship, on the other hand, is diluted by human self-control; all it pays are cheap, human dividends, and though the slavish attitude it en-*257* genders in a friend's soul is widely praised as virtue, it tosses the soul around for nine thousand years on the earth and leads it, mindless, beneath it.

So now, dear Love, this is the best and most beautiful palinode we could offer as payment for our debt, especially in view of the rather poetical choice of words Phaedrus made me use. Forgive us our earlier speeches in return for this one; be kind and gracious toward my expertise at love, which is your own gift to me: do not, out of anger, *b* take it away or disable it; and grant that I may be held in higher esteem

than ever by those who are beautiful. If Phaedrus and I said anything that shocked you in our earlier speech, blame it on Lysias, who was its father, and put a stop to his making speeches of this sort; convert him to philosophy like his brother Polemarchus so that his lover here may no longer play both sides as he does now, but simply devote his life to Love through philosophical discussions."

PHAEDRUS I join you in your prayer, Socrates. If this is really best *c*
for us, may it come to pass. As to your speech, I admired it from the moment you began: You managed it much better than your first one. I'm afraid that Lysias' effort to match it is bound to fall flat, if of course he even dares to try to offer a speech of his own. In fact, my marvelous friend, a politician I know was only recently taking Lysias to task for just that reason: All through his invective, he kept calling him a "speech writer." So perhaps his pride will keep him from writing this speech for us.

SOCRATES Ah, what a foolish thing to say, young man. How wrong *d*
you are about your friend: he can't be intimidated so easily! But perhaps you thought the man who was taking him to task meant what he said as a reproach?

PHAEDRUS He certainly seemed to, Socrates. In any case, you are surely aware yourself that the most powerful and renowned politicians are ashamed to compose speeches or leave any writings behind; they are afraid that in later times they may come to be known as "sophists."

SOCRATES Phaedrus, you don't understand the expression "Pleas- ant Bend"—it originally referred to the long bend of the Nile.[27] And, *e*
besides the bend, you also don't understand that the most ambitious politicians love speechwriting and long for their writings to survive. In fact, when they write one of their speeches, they are so pleased when people praise it that they add at the beginning a list of its admirers everywhere.

PHAEDRUS What do you mean? I don't understand.

258 SOCRATES Don't you know that the first thing politicians put in their writings is the names of their admirers?

PHAEDRUS How so?

SOCRATES "Resolved," the author often begins, "by the Council" or "by the People" or by both, and "So-and-so said"[28]—meaning himself, the writer, with great solemnity and self-importance. Only then does he go on with what he has to say, showing off his wisdom to his admirers, often composing a very long document. Do you think there's any difference between that and a written speech?

b PHAEDRUS No, I don't.

SOCRATES Well, then, if it remains on the books, he is delighted and leaves the stage a poet. But if it is struck down, if he fails as a speech writer and isn't considered worthy of having his work written down, he goes into deep mourning, and his friends along with him.

PHAEDRUS He certainly does.

SOCRATES Clearly, then, they don't feel contempt for speechwriting; on the contrary, they are in awe of it.

PHAEDRUS Quite so.

c SOCRATES There's this too. What of an orator or a king who acquires enough power to match Lycurgus, Solon, or Darius as a lawgiver[29] and acquires immortal fame as a speech writer in his city? Doesn't he think that he is equal to the gods while he is still alive? And don't those who live in later times believe just the same about him when they behold his writings?

PHAEDRUS Very much so.

SOCRATES Do you really believe then that any one of these people, whoever he is and however much he hates Lysias, would reproach him for being a writer?

PHAEDRUS It certainly isn't likely in view of what you said, for he would probably be reproaching his own ambition as well.

d SOCRATES This, then, is quite clear: Writing speeches is not in itself a shameful thing.

PHAEDRUS How could it be?

SOCRATES It's not speaking or writing well that's shameful; what's really shameful is to engage in either of them shamefully or badly.

PHAEDRUS That is clear.

SOCRATES So what distinguishes good from bad writing? Do we need to ask this question of Lysias or anyone else who ever did or will write anything—whether a public or a private document, poetic verse or plain prose?

PHAEDRUS You ask if we need to? Why else should one live, I say, *e*
if not for pleasures of this sort? Certainly not for those you cannot feel unless you are first in pain, like most of the pleasures of the body, and which for this reason we call the pleasures of slaves.

SOCRATES It seems we clearly have the time. Besides, I think that the cicadas, who are singing and carrying on conversations with one *259*
another in the heat of the day above our heads, are also watching us. And if they saw the two of us avoiding conversation at midday like most people, diverted by their song and, sluggish of mind, nodding off, they would have every right to laugh at us, convinced that a pair of slaves had come to their resting place to sleep like sheep gathering around the spring in the afternoon. But if they see us in conversation, steadfastly *b*
navigating around them as if they were the Sirens, they will be very pleased and immediately give us the gift from the gods they are able to give to mortals.

PHAEDRUS What is this gift? I don't think I have heard of it.

SOCRATES Everyone who loves the Muses should have heard of this. The story goes that the cicadas used to be human beings who lived before the birth of the Muses. When the Muses were born and song was created for the first time, some of the people of that time were so overwhelmed with the pleasure of singing that they forgot to eat or *c*
drink; so they died without even realizing it. It is from them that the race of the cicadas came into being; and, as a gift from the Muses, they have no need of nourishment once they are born. Instead, they imme-

diately burst into song, without food or drink, until it is time for them to die. After they die, they go to the Muses and tell each one of them which mortals have honored her. To Terpsichore they report those
d who have honored her by their devotion to the dance and thus make them dearer to her. To Erato, they report those who honored her by dedicating themselves to the affairs of love, and so too with the other Muses, according to the activity that honors each. And to Calliope, the oldest among them, and Urania, the next after her, who preside over the heavens and all discourse, human and divine, and sing with the sweetest voice, they report those who honor their special kind of music by leading a philosophical life.

There are many reasons, then, why we should talk and not waste our afternoon in sleep.

PHAEDRUS By all means, let's talk.

e SOCRATES Well, then, we ought to examine the topic we proposed just now: When is a speech well written and delivered, and when is it not?

PHAEDRUS Plainly.

SOCRATES Won't someone who is to speak well and nobly have to have in mind the truth about the subject he is going to discuss?

PHAEDRUS What I have actually heard about this, Socrates, my
260 friend, is that it is not necessary for the intending orator to learn what is really just, but only what will seem just to the crowd who will act as judges. Nor again what is really good or noble, but only what will seem so. For that is what persuasion proceeds from, not truth.

SOCRATES Anything that wise men say, Phaedrus, "is not lightly to be cast aside";[30] we must consider whether it might be right. And what you just said, in particular, must not be dismissed.

PHAEDRUS You're right.

SOCRATES Let's look at it this way, then.

PHAEDRUS How?

Socrates Suppose I were trying to convince you that you should *b*
fight your enemies on horseback, and neither one of us knew what a horse is, but I happened to know this much about you, that Phaedrus believes a horse is the tame animal with the longest ears—

Phaedrus But that would be ridiculous, Socrates.

Socrates Not quite yet, actually. But if I were seriously trying to convince you, having composed a speech in praise of the donkey in which I called it a horse and claimed that having such an animal is of immense value both at home and in military service, that it is good for fighting and for carrying your baggage and that it is useful for much else besides— *c*

Phaedrus Well, that would be totally ridiculous.

Socrates Well, which is better? To be ridiculous and a friend? Or clever and an enemy?

Phaedrus The former.

Socrates And so, when a rhetorician who does not know good from bad addresses a city which knows no better and attempts to sway it, not praising a miserable donkey as if it were a horse, but bad as if it were good, and, having studied what the people believe, persuades them to do something bad instead of good—with that as its seed, what *d*
sort of crop do you think rhetoric can harvest?

Phaedrus A crop of really poor quality.

Socrates But could it be, my friend, that we have mocked the art of speaking more rudely than it deserves? For it might perhaps reply, "What bizarre nonsense! Look, I am not forcing anyone to learn how to make speeches without knowing the truth; on the contrary, my advice, for what it is worth, is to take me up only after mastering the truth. But I do make this boast: even someone who knows the truth couldn't produce conviction on the basis of a systematic art without me."

Phaedrus Well, is that a fair reply? *e*

Socrates Yes, it is—if, that is, the arguments now advancing upon

rhetoric testify that it is an art. For it seems to me as if I hear certain arguments approaching and protesting that that is a lie and that rhetoric is not an art but an artless practice.[31] As the Spartan said, there is no genuine art of speaking without a grasp of truth, and there never will be.

261 PHAEDRUS We need to hear these arguments, Socrates. Come, produce them, and examine them: What is their point? How do they make it?

SOCRATES Come to us, then, noble creatures; convince Phaedrus, him of the beautiful offspring,[32] that unless he pursues philosophy properly he will never be able to make a proper speech on any subject either. And let Phaedrus be the one to answer.

PHAEDRUS Let them put their questions.

SOCRATES Well, then, isn't the rhetorical art, taken as a whole, a way of directing the soul by means of speech, not only in the lawcourts and on other public occasions but also in private? Isn't it one and the *b* same art whether its subject is great or small, and no more to be held in esteem—if it is followed correctly—when its questions are serious than when they are trivial? Or what have you heard about all this?

PHAEDRUS Well, certainly not what *you* have! Artful speaking and writing is found mainly in the lawcourts; also perhaps in the Assembly. That's all I've heard.

SOCRATES Well, have you only heard of the rhetorical treatises of Nestor and Odysseus—those they wrote in their spare time in Troy? Haven't you also heard of the works of Palamedes?[33]

c PHAEDRUS No, by Zeus, I haven't even heard of Nestor's—unless by Nestor you mean Gorgias, and by Odysseus, Thrasymachus or Theodorus.[34]

SOCRATES Perhaps. But let's leave these people aside. Answer this question yourself: What do adversaries do in the lawcourts? Don't they speak on opposite sides? What else can we call what they do?

PHAEDRUS That's it, exactly.

SOCRATES About what is just and what is unjust?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES And won't whoever does this artfully make the same *d*
thing appear to the same people sometimes just and sometimes, when he prefers, unjust?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES And when he addresses the Assembly, he will make the city approve a policy at one time as a good one, and reject it—the very same policy—as just the opposite at another.

PHAEDRUS Right.

SOCRATES Now, don't we know that the Eleatic Palamedes is such an artful speaker that his listeners will perceive the same things to be both similar and dissimilar, both one and many, both at rest and also in motion?[35]

PHAEDRUS Most certainly.

SOCRATES We can therefore find the practice of speaking on op- posite sides not only in the lawcourts and in the Assembly. Rather, it *e*
seems that one single art—if, of course, it is an art in the first place—governs all speaking. By means of it one can make out as similar anything that can be so assimilated, to everything to which it can be made similar, and expose anyone who tries to hide the fact that that is what he is doing.

PHAEDRUS What do you mean by that?

SOCRATES I think it will become clear if we look at it this way. Where is deception most likely to occur—regarding things that differ much or things that differ little from one another?

PHAEDRUS Regarding those that differ little. *262*

SOCRATES At any rate, you are more likely to escape detection, as you shift from one thing to its opposite, if you proceed in small steps rather than in large ones.

PHAEDRUS Without a doubt.

SOCRATES Therefore, if you are to deceive someone else and to avoid deception yourself, you must know precisely the respects in which things are similar and dissimilar to one another.

PHAEDRUS Yes, you must.

SOCRATES And is it really possible for someone who doesn't know what each thing truly is to detect a similarity—whether large or small—between something he doesn't know and anything else?

b PHAEDRUS That is impossible.

SOCRATES Clearly, therefore, the state of being deceived and holding beliefs contrary to what is the case comes upon people by reason of certain similarities.

PHAEDRUS That is how it happens.

SOCRATES Could someone, then, who doesn't know what each thing is ever have the art to lead others little by little through similarities away from what is the case on each occasion to its opposite? Or could he escape this being done to himself?

PHAEDRUS Never.

c SOCRATES Therefore, my friend, the art of a speaker who doesn't know the truth and chases opinions instead is likely to be a ridiculous thing—not an art at all!

PHAEDRUS So it seems.

SOCRATES So, shall we look for instances of what we called the artful and the artless in the speech of Lysias you carried here and in our own speeches?

PHAEDRUS That's the best thing to do—because, as it is, we are talking quite abstractly, without enough examples.

SOCRATES In fact, by some chance the two speeches do, as it seems,

d contain an example of the way in which someone who knows the truth can toy with his audience and mislead them. For my part, Phaedrus, I hold the local gods responsible for this—also, perhaps, the messengers

of the Muses who are singing over our heads may have inspired me with this gift: certainly *I* don't possess any art of speaking.

PHAEDRUS Fine, fine. But explain what you mean.

SOCRATES Come, then—read me the beginning of Lysias' speech.

PHAEDRUS "You understand my situation: I've told you how good *e* it would be for us, in my opinion, if we could work this out. In any case, I don't think I should lose the chance to get what I am asking for, merely because I don't happen to be in love with you. A man in love will wish he had not done you any favors—"

SOCRATES Stop. Our task is to say how he fails and writes artlessly. Right?

PHAEDRUS Yes. *263*

SOCRATES Now isn't this much absolutely clear: We are in accord with one another about some of the things we discourse about and in discord about others?

PHAEDRUS I think I understand what you are saying; but, please, can you make it a little clearer?

SOCRATES When someone utters the word "iron" or "silver," don't we all think of the same thing?

PHAEDRUS Certainly.

SOCRATES But what happens when we say "just" or "good"? Doesn't each one of us go in a different direction? Don't we differ with one another and even with ourselves?

PHAEDRUS We certainly do.

SOCRATES Therefore, we agree about the former and disagree *b* about the latter.

PHAEDRUS Right.

SOCRATES Now in which of these two cases are we more easily deceived? And when does rhetoric have greater power?

PHAEDRUS Clearly, when we wander in different directions.

SOCRATES It follows that whoever wants to acquire the art of

rhetoric must first make a systematic division and grasp the particular character of each of these two kinds of thing, both the kind where most people wander in different directions and the kind where they do not.

c PHAEDRUS What a splendid thing, Socrates, he will have understood if he grasps *that!*

SOCRATES Second, I think, he must not be mistaken about his subject; he must have a sharp eye for the class to which whatever he is about to discuss belongs.

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Well, now, what shall we say about love? Does it belong to the class where people differ or to that where they don't?

PHAEDRUS Oh, surely the class where they differ. Otherwise, do you think you could have spoken of it as you did a few minutes ago, first saying that it is harmful both to lover and beloved and then immediately afterward that it is the greatest good?

d SOCRATES Very well put. But now tell me this—I can't remember at all because I was completely possessed by the gods: Did I define love at the beginning of my speech?

PHAEDRUS Oh, absolutely, by Zeus, you most certainly did.

SOCRATES Alas, how much more artful with speeches the Nymphs, daughters of Achelous, and Pan, son of Hermes, are, according to what you say, than Lysias, son of Cephalus! Or am I wrong? Did Lysias too, at
e the start of his love-speech, compel us to assume that love is the single thing that he himself wanted it to be? Did he then complete his speech by arranging everything in relation to that? Will you read its opening once again?

PHAEDRUS If you like. But what you are looking for is not there.

SOCRATES Read it, so that I can hear it in his own words.

PHAEDRUS "You understand my situation: I've told you how good it would be for us, in my opinion, if we could work this out. In any

case, I don't think I should lose the chance to get what I am asking for, merely because I don't happen to be in love with you. A man in love will wish he had not done you any favors, once his desire dies down—" 264

SOCRATES He certainly seems a long way from doing what we wanted. He doesn't even start from the beginning but from the end, making his speech swim upstream on its back. His first words are what a lover would say to his boy as he was concluding his speech. Am I wrong, Phaedrus, dear heart?

PHAEDRUS Well, Socrates, that was the end for which he gave the speech! b

SOCRATES And what about the rest? Don't the parts of the speech appear to have been thrown together at random? Is it evident that the second point had to be made second for some compelling reason? Is that so for any of the parts? I at least—of course I know nothing about such matters—thought the author said just whatever came to mind next, though not without a certain noble willfulness. But you, do you know any principle of speech-composition compelling him to place these things one after another in this order?

PHAEDRUS It's very generous of you to think that I can understand his reasons so clearly. c

SOCRATES But surely you will admit at least this much: Every speech must be put together like a living creature, with a body of its own; it must be neither without head nor without legs; and it must have a middle and extremities that are fitting both to one another and to the whole work.

PHAEDRUS How could it be otherwise?

SOCRATES But look at your friend's speech: Is it like that or is it otherwise? Actually, you'll find that it's just like the epigram people say is inscribed on the tomb of Midas the Phrygian.

PHAEDRUS What epigram is that? And what's the matter with it? d

SOCRATES It goes like this:

A maid of bronze am I, on Midas' tomb I lie
As long as water flows, and trees grow tall
Shielding the grave where many come to cry
That Midas rests here I say to one and all.

e I'm sure you notice that it makes no difference at all which of its verses comes first, and which last.

PHAEDRUS You are making fun of our speech, Socrates.

SOCRATES Well, then, if that upsets you, let's leave that speech aside—even though I think it has plenty of very useful examples, provided one tries to emulate them as little as possible—and turn to the others. I think it is important for students of speechmaking to pay attention to one of their features.

265 PHAEDRUS What do you mean?

SOCRATES They were in a way opposite to one another. One claimed that one should give one's favors to the lover; the other, to the non-lover.

PHAEDRUS Most manfully, too.

SOCRATES I thought you were going to say "madly," which would have been the truth, and is also just what I was looking for: We did say, didn't we, that love is a kind of madness?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES And that there are two kinds of madness, one produced by human illness, the other by a divinely inspired release from normally accepted behavior?

b PHAEDRUS Certainly.

SOCRATES We also distinguished four parts within the divine kind and connected them to four gods. Having attributed the inspiration of the prophet to Apollo, of the mystic to Dionysus, of the poet to the Muses, and the fourth part of madness to Aphrodite and to Love,

we said that the madness of love is the best. We used a certain sort of image to describe love's passion; perhaps it had a measure of truth in it, though it may also have led us astray. And having whipped up a not altogether implausible speech, we sang playfully, but also appropriately *c* and respectfully, a story-like hymn to my master and yours, Phaedrus—to Love, who watches over beautiful boys.

PHAEDRUS And I listened to it with the greatest pleasure.

SOCRATES Let's take up this point about it right away: How was the speech able to proceed from censure to praise?

PHAEDRUS What exactly do you mean by that?

SOCRATES Well, everything else in it really does appear to me to have been spoken in play. But part of it was given with Fortune's guidance, and there were in it two kinds of things the nature of which it *d* would be quite wonderful to grasp by means of a systematic art.

PHAEDRUS Which things?

SOCRATES The first consists in seeing together things that are scattered about everywhere and collecting them into one kind, so that by defining each thing we can make clear the subject of any instruction we wish to give. Just so with our discussion of love: Whether its definition was or was not correct, at least it allowed the speech to proceed clearly and consistently with itself.

PHAEDRUS And what is the other thing you are talking about, Socrates?

SOCRATES This, in turn, is to be able to cut up each kind according *e* to its species along its natural joints, and to try not to splinter any part, as a bad butcher might do. In just this way, our two speeches placed all mental derangements into one common kind. Then, just as each single *266* body has parts that naturally come in pairs of the same name (one of them being called the right-hand and the other the left-hand one), so the speeches, having considered unsoundness of mind to be by nature one single kind within us, proceeded to cut it up—the first speech cut

its left-hand part, and continued to cut until it discovered among these parts a sort of love that can be called "left-handed," which it correctly denounced; the second speech, in turn, led us to the right-hand part of madness; discovered a love that shares its name with the other but is actually divine; set it out before us, and praised it as the cause of our
b greatest goods.

PHAEDRUS You are absolutely right.

SOCRATES Well, Phaedrus, I am myself a lover of these divisions and collections, so that I may be able to think and to speak; and if I believe that someone else is capable of discerning a single thing that is also by nature capable of encompassing many, I follow "straight behind, in his tracks, as if he were a god."[36] God knows whether this is the right
c name for those who can do this correctly or not, but so far I have always called them "dialecticians." But tell me what I must call them now that we have learned all this from Lysias and you. Or is it just that art of speaking that Thrasymachus and the rest of them use, which has made them masters of speechmaking and capable of producing others like them—anyhow those who are willing to bring them gifts and to treat them as if they were kings?

PHAEDRUS They may behave like kings, but they certainly lack the knowledge you're talking about. No, it seems to me that you are right in calling the sort of thing you mentioned dialectic; but, it seems to me, rhetoric still eludes us.

d SOCRATES What are you saying? Could there be anything valuable which is independent of the methods I mentioned and is still grasped by art? If there is, you and I must certainly honor it, and we must say what part of rhetoric it is that has been left out.

PHAEDRUS Well, there's quite a lot, Socrates: everything, at any rate, written up in the books on the art of speaking.

SOCRATES You were quite right to remind me. First, I believe, there is the Preamble with which a speech must begin. This is what you mean, isn't it—the fine points of the art?

PHAEDRUS Yes. *e*

SOCRATES Second come the Statement of Facts and the Evidence of Witnesses concerning it; third, Indirect Evidence; fourth, Claims to Plausibility. And I believe at least that excellent Byzantine word-wizard adds Confirmation and Supplementary Confirmation.

PHAEDRUS You mean the worthy Theodorus?

SOCRATES Quite. And he also adds Refutation and Supplementary *267*
Refutation, to be used both in prosecution and in defense. Nor must we forget the most excellent Evenus of Paros,[37] who was the first to discover Covert Implication and Indirect Praise and who—some say—has even arranged Indirect Censures in verse as an aid to memory: a wise man indeed! And Tisias[38] and Gorgias? How can we leave them out when it is they who realized that what is likely must be held in higher honor than what is true; they who, by the power of their language, make small things appear great and great things small; they who *b*
express modern ideas in ancient garb, and ancient ones in modern dress; they who have discovered how to argue both concisely and at infinite length about any subject? Actually, when I told Prodicus[39] this last, he laughed and said that only he had discovered the art of proper speeches: What we need are speeches that are neither long nor short but of the right length.

PHAEDRUS Brilliantly done, Prodicus!

SOCRATES And what about Hippias?[40] How can we omit him? I am sure our friend from Elis would cast his vote with Prodicus.

PHAEDRUS Certainly.

SOCRATES And what shall we say of the whole gallery of terms Polus[41] set up—speaking with Reduplication, Speaking in Maxims, Speak- *c*
ing in Images—and of the terms Licymnius gave him as a present to help him explain Good Diction?[42]

PHAEDRUS But didn't Protagoras actually use similar terms?[43]

SOCRATES Yes, Correct Diction, my boy, and other wonderful things. As to the art of making speeches bewailing the evils of poverty

and old age, the prize, in my judgment, goes to the mighty Chalcedon-
d ian.[44] He it is also who knows best how to inflame a crowd and, once they are inflamed, how to hush them again with his words' magic spell, as he says himself. And let's not forget that he is as good at producing slander as he is at refuting it, whatever its source may be.

As to the way of ending a speech, everyone seems to be in agreement, though some call it Recapitulation and others by some other name.

PHAEDRUS You mean, summarizing everything at the end and reminding the audience of what they've heard?

SOCRATES That's what I mean. And if you have anything else to add about the art of speaking—

PHAEDRUS Only minor points, not worth making.

268 SOCRATES Well, let's leave minor points aside. Let's hold what we do have closer to the light so that we can see precisely the power of the art these things produce.

PHAEDRUS A very great power, Socrates, especially in front of a crowd.

SOCRATES Quite right. But now, my friend, look closely: Do you think, as I do, that its fabric is a little threadbare?

PHAEDRUS Can you show me?

SOCRATES All right, tell me this. Suppose someone came to your friend Eryximachus or his father Acumenus and said: "I know treat-
b ments to raise or lower (whichever I prefer) the temperature of people's bodies; if I decide to, I can make them vomit or make their bowels move, and all sorts of things. On the basis of this knowledge, I claim to be a physician; and I claim to be able to make others physicians as well by imparting it to them." What do you think they would say when they heard that?

PHAEDRUS What could they say? They would ask him if he also knew to whom he should apply such treatments, when, and to what extent.

SOCRATES What if he replied, "I have no idea. My claim is that whoever learns from me will manage to do what you ask on his own"? *c*

PHAEDRUS I think they'd say the man's mad if he thinks he's a doctor just because he read a book or happened to come across a few potions; he knows nothing of the art.

SOCRATES And suppose someone approached Sophocles and Euripides and claimed to know how to compose the longest passages on trivial topics and the briefest ones on topics of great importance, that he could make them pitiful if he wanted, or again, by contrast, terrifying and menacing, and so on. Suppose further that he believed that by teaching this he was imparting the knowledge of composing tragedies— *d*

PHAEDRUS Oh, I am sure they too would laugh at anyone who thought a tragedy was anything other than the proper arrangement of these things: They have to fit with one another and with the whole work.

SOCRATES But I am sure they wouldn't reproach him rudely. They would react more like a musician confronted by a man who thought he had mastered harmony because he was able to produce the highest and lowest notes on his strings. The musician would not say fiercely, "You stupid man, you are out of your mind!" As befits his calling, he would speak more gently: "My friend, though that too is necessary for understanding harmony, someone who has gotten as far as you have may still know absolutely nothing about the subject. What you know is what it's necessary to learn before you study harmony, but not harmony itself." *e*

PHAEDRUS That's certainly right.

SOCRATES So Sophocles would also tell the man who was showing off to them that he knew the preliminaries of tragedy, but not the art of tragedy itself. And Acumenus would say his man knew the preliminaries of medicine, but not medicine itself. *269*

PHAEDRUS Absolutely.

SOCRATES And what if the "honey-tongued Adrastus" (or perhaps Pericles)[45] were to hear of all the marvelous techniques we just discussed—Speaking Concisely and Speaking in Images and all the rest
b we listed and proposed to examine under the light? Would he be angry or rude, as you and I were, with those who write of those techniques and teach them as if they are rhetoric itself, and say something coarse to them? Wouldn't he—being wiser than we are—reproach us as well and say, "Phaedrus and Socrates, you should not be angry with these people—you should be sorry for them. The reason they cannot define rhetoric is that they are ignorant of dialectic. It is their ignorance that makes them think they have discovered what rhetoric is when they
c have mastered only what it is necessary to learn as preliminaries. So they teach these preliminaries and imagine their pupils have received a full course in rhetoric, thinking the task of using each of them persuasively and putting them together into a whole speech is a minor matter, to be worked out by the pupils from their own resources"?

PHAEDRUS Really, Socrates, the art these men present as rhetoric in their courses and handbooks is no more than what you say. In my
d judgment, at least, your point is well taken. But how, from what source, could one acquire the art of the true rhetorician, the really persuasive speaker?

SOCRATES Well, Phaedrus, becoming good enough to be an accomplished competitor is probably—perhaps necessarily—like everything else. If you have a natural ability for rhetoric, you will become a famous rhetorician, provided you supplement your ability with knowledge and practice. To the extent that you lack any one of them, to that extent you will be less than perfect. But, insofar as there is an art of rhetoric, I don't believe the right method for acquiring it is to be found in the direction Lysias and Thrasymachus have followed.

PHAEDRUS Where can we find it then?

SOCRATES My dear friend, maybe we can see now why Pericles was *e*
in all likelihood the greatest rhetorician of all.

PHAEDRUS How is that?

SOCRATES All the great arts require endless talk and ethereal spec- *270*
ulation about nature: This seems to be what gives them their lofty point of view and universal applicability. That's just what Pericles mastered—besides having natural ability. He came across Anaxagoras, who was just that sort of man, got his full dose of ethereal speculation, and understood the nature of mind and mindlessness—just the subject on which Anaxagoras had the most to say. From this, I think, he drew for the art of rhetoric what was useful to it.

PHAEDRUS What do you mean by that?

SOCRATES Well, isn't the method of medicine in a way the same as *b*
the method of rhetoric?

PHAEDRUS How so?

SOCRATES In both cases we need to determine the nature of something—of the body in medicine, of the soul in rhetoric. Otherwise, all we'll have will be an empirical and artless practice. We won't be able to supply, on the basis of an art, a body with the medicines and diet that will make it healthy and strong, or a soul with the reasons and customary rules for conduct that will impart to it the convictions and virtues we want.

PHAEDRUS That is most likely, Socrates.

SOCRATES Do you think, then, that it is possible to reach a seri- *c*
ous understanding of the nature of the soul without understanding the nature of the world as a whole?

PHAEDRUS Well, if we're to listen to Hippocrates, Asclepius' descendant,[46] we won't even understand the body if we don't follow that method.

SOCRATES He speaks well, my friend. Still, Hippocrates aside, we must consider whether argument supports that view.

PHAEDRUS I agree.

SOCRATES Consider, then, what both Hippocrates and true argu-
d ment say about nature. Isn't this the way to think systematically about the nature of anything? First, we must consider whether the object regarding which we intend to become experts and capable of transmitting our expertise is simple or complex. Then, if it is simple, we must investigate its power: What things does it have what natural power of acting upon? By what things does it have what natural disposition to be acted upon? If, on the other hand, it takes many forms, we must enumerate them all and, as we did in the simple case, investigate how each is naturally able to act upon what and how it has a natural disposition to be acted upon by what.

PHAEDRUS It seems so, Socrates.

e SOCRATES Proceeding by any other method would be like walking with the blind. Conversely, whoever studies anything on the basis of an art must never be compared to the blind or the deaf. On the contrary, it is clear that someone who teaches another to make speeches as an art will demonstrate precisely the essential nature of that to which speeches are to be applied. And that, surely, is the soul.

PHAEDRUS Of course.

271 SOCRATES This is therefore the object toward which the speaker's whole effort is directed, since it is in the soul that he attempts to produce conviction. Isn't that so?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES Clearly, therefore, Thrasymachus and anyone else who teaches the art of rhetoric seriously will, first, describe the soul with absolute precision and enable us to understand what it is: whether it is one and homogeneous by nature or takes many forms, like the shape of bodies, since, as we said, that's what it is to demonstrate the nature of something.

PHAEDRUS Absolutely.

SOCRATES Second, he will explain how, in virtue of its nature, it acts and is acted upon by certain things.

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Third, he will classify the kinds of speech and of soul *b* there are, as well as the various ways in which they are affected, and explain what causes each. He will then coordinate each kind of soul with the kind of speech appropriate to it. And he will give instructions concerning the reasons why one kind of soul is necessarily convinced by one kind of speech while another necessarily remains unconvinced.

PHAEDRUS This, I think, would certainly be the best way.

SOCRATES In fact, my friend, no speech will ever be a product of art, whether it is a model or one actually given, if it is delivered or written in any other way—on this or on any other subject. But those *c* who now write *Arts of Rhetoric*—we were just discussing them—are cunning people: they hide the fact that they know very well everything about the soul. Well, then, until they begin to speak and write in this way, we mustn't allow ourselves to be convinced that they write on the basis of the art.

PHAEDRUS What way is that?

SOCRATES It's very difficult to speak the actual words, but as to how one should write in order to be as artful as possible—that I am willing to tell you.

PHAEDRUS Please do.

SOCRATES Since the nature of speech is in fact to direct the soul, *d* whoever intends to be a rhetorician must know how many kinds of soul there are. Their number is so-and-so many; each is of such-and-such a sort; hence some people have such-and-such a character and others have such-and-such. Those distinctions established, there are, in turn, so-and-so many kinds of speech, each of such-and-such a sort. People of such-and-such a character are easy to persuade by speeches of such-and-such a sort in connection with such-and-such an issue for

this particular reason, while people of such-and-such another sort are difficult to persuade for those particular reasons.

The orator must learn all this well, then put his theory into prac-
e tice and develop the ability to discern each kind clearly as it occurs in the actions of real life. Otherwise he won't be any better off than he was when he was still listening to those discussions in school. He will now not only be able to say what kind of person is convinced by what
272 kind of speech; on meeting someone he will be able to discern what he is like and make clear to himself that the person actually standing in front of him is of just this particular sort of character he had learned about in school—to that he must now apply speeches of such-and-such a kind in this particular way in order to secure conviction about such-and-such an issue. When he has learned all this—when, in addition, he has grasped the right occasions for speaking and for holding back; and when he has also understood when the time is right for Speaking Concisely or Appealing to Pity or Exaggeration or for any other of the kinds of speech he has learned and when it is not—then, and only then, will he have finally mastered the art well and completely. But if his
b speaking, his teaching, or his writing lacks any one of these elements and he still claims to be speaking with art, you'll be better off if you don't believe him.

"Well, Socrates and Phaedrus," the author of this discourse might say, "do you agree? Could we accept an art of speaking presented in any other terms?"

PHAEDRUS That would be impossible, Socrates. Still, it's evidently rather a major undertaking.

SOCRATES You're right. And that's why we must turn all our argu-
c ments every which way and try to find some easier and shorter route to the art: we don't want to follow a long rough path for no good reason when we can choose a short smooth one instead.

Now, try to remember if you've heard anything helpful from Lysias or anybody else. Speak up.

PHAEDRUS It's not for lack of trying, but nothing comes to mind right now.

SOCRATES Well, then, shall I tell you something I've heard people say who care about this topic?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES We do claim, after all, Phaedrus, that it is fair to give the wolf's side of the story as well.

PHAEDRUS That's just what you should do. *d*

SOCRATES Well, these people say that there is no need to be so solemn about all this and stretch it out to such lengths. For the fact is, as we said ourselves at the beginning of this discussion, that one who intends to be an able rhetorician has no need to know the truth about the things that are just or good or yet about the people who are such either by nature or upbringing. No one in a lawcourt, you see, cares at all about the truth of such matters. They only care about what is convincing. This is called "the likely," and that is what a man who intends *e* to speak according to art should concentrate on. Sometimes, in fact, whether you are prosecuting or defending a case, you must not even say what actually happened, if it was not likely to have happened—you must say something that is likely instead. Whatever you say, you should pursue what is likely and leave the truth aside: the whole art consists in cleaving to that throughout your speech. *273*

PHAEDRUS That's an excellent presentation of what people say who profess to be expert in speeches, Socrates. I recall that we raised this issue briefly earlier on, but it seems to be their single most important point.

SOCRATES No doubt you've churned through Tisias' book quite carefully. Then let Tisias tell us this also: By "the likely" does he mean *b* anything but what is accepted by the crowd?

PHAEDRUS What else?

SOCRATES And it's likely it was when he discovered this clever and artful technique that Tisias wrote that if a weak but spunky man is

taken to court because he beat up a strong but cowardly one and stole his cloak or something else, neither one should tell the truth. The coward must say that the spunky man didn't beat him up all by himself,
c while the latter must rebut this by saying that only the two of them were there, and fall back on that well-worn plea, "How could a man like me attack a man like him?" The strong man, naturally, will not admit his cowardice, but will try to invent some other lie, and may thus give his opponent the chance to refute him. And in other cases, speaking as the art dictates will take similar forms. Isn't that so, Phaedrus?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Phew! Tisias—or whoever else it was and whatever name he pleases to use for himself[47]—seems to have discovered an art which he has disguised very well! But now, my friend, shall we or shall we not say to him—

d PHAEDRUS What?

SOCRATES This: "Tisias, some time ago, before you came into the picture, we were saying that people get the idea of what is likely through its similarity to the truth. And we just explained that in every case the person who knows the truth knows best how to determine similarities. So, if you have something new to say about the art of speaking, we shall listen. But if you don't, we shall remain convinced by the explanations we gave just before: No one will ever possess the art of speaking, to the extent that any human being can, unless he ac-
e quires the ability to enumerate the sorts of characters to be found in any audience, to divide everything according to its kinds, and to grasp each single thing firmly by means of one form. And no one can acquire these abilities without great effort—a laborious effort a sensible man will make not in order to speak and act among human beings, but so as to be able to speak and act in a way that pleases the gods as much as possible. Wiser people than ourselves, Tisias, say that a reasonable man must put his mind to being pleasant not to his fellow slaves (though this

may happen as a side effect) but to his masters, who are wholly good. *274*
So, if the way round is long, don't be astonished: we must make this detour for the sake of things that are very important, not for what you have in mind. Still, as our argument asserts, if that is what you want, you'll get it best as a result of pursuing our own goal.

PHAEDRUS What you've said is wonderful, Socrates—if only it could be done!

SOCRATES Yet surely whatever one must go through on the way to *b*
an honorable goal is itself honorable.

PHAEDRUS Certainly.

SOCRATES Well, then, that's enough about artfulness and artlessness in connection with speaking.

PHAEDRUS Quite.

SOCRATES What's left, then, is aptness and ineptness in connection with writing: What feature makes writing good, and what inept? Right?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES Well, do you know how best to please god when you either use words or discuss them in general?

PHAEDRUS Not at all. Do you?

SOCRATES I can tell you what I've heard the ancients said, though *c*
they alone know the truth. However, if we could discover that ourselves, would we still care about the speculations of other people?

PHAEDRUS That's a silly question. Still, tell me what you say you've heard.

SOCRATES Well, this is what I've heard. Among the ancient gods of Naucratis[48] in Egypt there was one to whom the bird called the ibis is sacred. The name of that divinity was Theuth,[49] and it was he who *d*
first discovered number and calculation, geometry and astronomy, as well as the games of checkers and dice, and, above all else, writing.

Now the king of all Egypt at that time was Thamus,[50] who lived in

the great city in the upper region that the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes; Thamus they call Ammon.[51] Theuth came to exhibit his arts to him and urged him to disseminate them to all the Egyptians. Thamus asked him
e about the usefulness of each art, and while Theuth was explaining it, Thamus praised him for whatever he thought was right in his explanations and criticized him for whatever he thought was wrong.

The story goes that Thamus said much to Theuth, both for and against each art, which it would take too long to repeat. But when they came to writing, Theuth said: "O King, here is something that, once learned, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memory; I have discovered a potion for memory and for wisdom." Thamus, however, replied: "O most expert Theuth, one man can give birth to the elements of an art, but only another can judge how they
275 can benefit or harm those who will use them. And now, since you are the father of writing, your affection for it has made you describe its effects as the opposite of what they really are. In fact, it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own. You have not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding; you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality. Your invention will enable them to hear many things without being properly taught, and they will imagine that they have come to
b know much while for the most part they will know nothing. And they will be difficult to get along with, since they will merely appear to be wise instead of really being so."

PHAEDRUS Socrates, you're very good at making up stories from Egypt or wherever else you want!

SOCRATES But, my friend, the priests of the temple of Zeus at Dodona say that the first prophecies were the words of an oak. Every-

one who lived at that time, not being as wise as you young ones are today, found it rewarding enough in their simplicity to listen to an oak or even a stone, so long as it was telling the truth, while it seems to *c* make a difference to you, Phaedrus, who is speaking and where he comes from. Why, though, don't you just consider whether what he says is right or wrong?

PHAEDRUS I deserved that, Socrates. And I agree that the Theban king was correct about writing.

SOCRATES Well, then, those who think they can leave written instructions for an art, as well as those who accept them, thinking that writing can yield results that are clear or certain, must be quite naive and truly ignorant of Ammon's prophetic judgment: otherwise, how could they possibly think that words that have been written down can *d* do more than remind those who already know what the writing is about?

PHAEDRUS Quite right.

SOCRATES You know, Phaedrus, writing shares a strange feature with painting. The offsprings of painting stand there as if they are alive, but if anyone asks them anything, they remain most solemnly silent. The same is true of written words. You'd think they were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever. When it has once been written down, *e* every discourse roams about everywhere, reaching indiscriminately those with understanding no less than those who have no business with it, and it doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not. And when it is faulted and attacked unfairly, it always needs its father's support; alone, it can neither defend itself nor come to its own support.

PHAEDRUS You are absolutely right about that, too.

SOCRATES Now tell me, can we discern another kind of discourse, *276*

a legitimate brother of this one? Can we say how it comes about, and how it is by nature better and more capable?

PHAEDRUS Which one is that? How do you think it comes about?

SOCRATES It is a discourse that is written down, with knowledge, in the soul of the listener; it can defend itself, and it knows for whom it should speak and for whom it should remain silent.

PHAEDRUS You mean the living, breathing discourse of the man who knows, of which the written one can be fairly called an image.

b SOCRATES Absolutely right. And tell me this. Would a sensible farmer, who cared about his seeds and wanted them to yield fruit, plant them in all seriousness in the gardens of Adonis in the middle of the summer and enjoy watching them bear fruit within seven days? Or would he do this as an amusement and in honor of the holiday, if he did it at all?[52] Wouldn't he use his knowledge of farming to plant the seeds he cared for when it was appropriate and be content if they bore fruit seven months later?

c PHAEDRUS That's how he would handle those he was serious about, Socrates, quite differently from the others, as you say.

SOCRATES Now what about the man who knows what is just, noble, and good? Shall we say that he is less sensible with his seeds than the farmer is with his?

PHAEDRUS Certainly not.

SOCRATES Therefore, he won't be serious about writing them in ink, sowing them, through a pen, with words that are as incapable of speaking in their own defense as they are of teaching the truth adequately.

PHAEDRUS That wouldn't be likely.

d SOCRATES Certainly not. When he writes, it's likely he will sow gardens of letters for the sake of amusing himself, storing up reminders for himself "when he reaches forgetful old age" and for everyone who wants to follow in his footsteps, and will enjoy seeing them sweetly

blooming. And when others turn to different amusements, watering themselves with drinking parties and everything else that goes along with them, he will rather spend his time amusing himself with the things I have just described.

PHAEDRUS Socrates, you are contrasting a vulgar amusement with *e*
the very noblest—with the amusement of a man who can while away his time telling stories of justice and the other matters you mentioned.

SOCRATES That's just how it is, Phaedrus. But it is much nobler to be serious about these matters, and use the art of dialectic. The dialectician chooses a proper soul and plants and sows within it discourse accompanied by knowledge—discourse capable of helping itself as well as the man who planted it, which is not barren but produces a seed *277*
from which more discourse grows in the character of others. Such discourse makes the seed forever immortal and renders the man who has it as happy as any human being can be.

PHAEDRUS What you describe is really much nobler still.

SOCRATES And now that we have agreed about this, Phaedrus, we are finally able to decide the issue.

PHAEDRUS What issue is that?

SOCRATES The issue which brought us to this point in the first place: We wanted to examine the attack made on Lysias on account of *b*
his writing speeches, and to ask which speeches are written artfully and which not. Now, I think that we have answered that question clearly enough.

PHAEDRUS So it seemed; but remind me again how we did it.

SOCRATES First, you must know the truth concerning everything you are speaking or writing about; you must learn how to define each thing in itself; and, having defined it, you must know how to divide it into kinds until you reach something indivisible. Second, you must understand the nature of the soul, along the same lines; you must determine which kind of speech is appropriate to each kind of soul, prepare *c*

and arrange your speech accordingly, and offer a complex and elaborate speech to a complex soul and a simple speech to a simple one. Then, and only then, will you be able to use speech artfully, to the extent that its nature allows it to be used that way, either in order to teach or in order to persuade. This is the whole point of the argument we have been making.

PHAEDRUS Absolutely. That is exactly how it seemed to us.

d SOCRATES Now how about whether it's noble or shameful to give or write a speech—when it could be fairly said to be grounds for reproach, and when not? Didn't what we said just a little while ago make it clear—

PHAEDRUS What was that?

SOCRATES That if Lysias or anybody else ever did or ever does write—privately or for the public, in the course of proposing some law—a political document which he believes to embody clear knowledge of lasting importance, then this writer deserves reproach, whether anyone says so or not. For to be unaware of the difference be-
e tween a dream-image and the reality of what is just and unjust, good and bad, must truly be grounds for reproach even if the crowd praises it with one voice.

PHAEDRUS It certainly must be.

SOCRATES On the other hand, take a man who thinks that a written discourse on any subject can only be a great amusement, that no discourse worth serious attention has ever been written in verse or prose, and that those that are recited in public without questioning and ex-
278 planation, in the manner of the rhapsodes, are given only in order to produce conviction. He believes that at their very best these can only serve as reminders to those who already know. And he also thinks that only what is said for the sake of understanding and learning, what is truly written in the soul concerning what is just, noble, and good can be clear, perfect, and worth serious attention: Such discourses should

be called his own legitimate children, first the discourse he may have discovered already within himself and then its sons and brothers who may have grown naturally in other souls insofar as these are worthy; to the rest, he turns his back. Such a man, Phaedrus, would be just what you and I both would pray to become. *b*

PHAEDRUS I wish and pray for things to be just as you say.

SOCRATES Well, then: our playful amusement regarding discourse is complete. Now you go and tell Lysias that we came to the spring which is sacred to the Nymphs and heard words charging us to deliver a message to Lysias and anyone else who composes speeches, as well as to Homer and anyone else who has composed poetry either spoken or sung, and third, to Solon and anyone else who writes political documents that he calls laws: If any one of you has composed these things with a knowledge of the truth, if you can defend your writing when you are challenged, and if you can yourself make the argument that your writing is of little worth, then you must be called by a name derived not from these writings but rather from those things that you are seriously pursuing. *c* *d*

PHAEDRUS What name, then, would you give such a man?

SOCRATES To call him wise, Phaedrus, seems to me too much, and proper only for a god. To call him wisdom's lover—a philosopher—or something similar would fit him better and be more seemly.

PHAEDRUS That would be quite appropriate.

SOCRATES On the other hand, if a man has nothing more valuable than what he has composed or written, spending long hours twisting it around, pasting parts together and taking them apart—wouldn't you be right to call him a poet or a speech writer or an author of laws? *e*

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Tell that, then, to your friend.

PHAEDRUS And what about you? What shall you do? We must surely not forget your own friend.

SOCRATES Whom do you mean?

PHAEDRUS The beautiful Isocrates.[53] What are you going to tell him, Socrates? What shall we say he is?

279 SOCRATES Isocrates is still young, Phaedrus. But I want to tell you what I foresee for him.

PHAEDRUS What is that?

SOCRATES It seems to me that by his nature he can outdo anything that Lysias has accomplished in his speeches; and he also has a nobler character. So I wouldn't be at all surprised if, as he gets older and continues writing speeches of the sort he is composing now, he makes everyone who has ever attempted to compose a speech seem like a child in comparison. Even more so if such work no longer satisfies him and a higher, divine impulse leads him to more important things. For
b nature, my friend, has placed the love of wisdom in his mind.

That is the message I will carry to my beloved, Isocrates, from the gods of this place; and you have your own message for your Lysias.

PHAEDRUS So it shall be. But let's be off, since the heat has died down a bit.

SOCRATES Shouldn't we offer a prayer to the gods here before we leave?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES O dear Pan and all the other gods of this place, grant that
c I may be beautiful inside. Let all my external possessions be in friendly harmony with what is within. May I consider the wise man rich. As for gold, let me have as much as a moderate man could bear and carry with him.

Do we need anything else, Phaedrus? I believe my prayer is enough for me.

PHAEDRUS Make it a prayer for me as well. Friends have everything in common.

SOCRATES Let's be off.

SYMPOSIUM

FOREWORD

This dialogue, Plato's poetic and dramatic masterpiece, relates the events of a 'symposium' or formal drinking party held in honor of the tragedian Agathon's first victorious production. To gratify Phaedrus (the passionate admirer of speeches and rhetoric in the dialogue named after him), who indignantly regrets the neglect by Greek poets and writers of the god of Love, the company agree to give speeches in turn, while they all drink, in praise of Love. 'Love' (Greek *erôs*) covers sexual attraction and gratification between men and women and between men and teenage boys, but the focus here is also and especially on the adult male's role as ethical and intellectual educator of the adolescent that was traditional among the Athenians in the latter sort of relationship, whether accompanied by sex or not. There are six speeches—plus a seventh delivered by an uninvited and very drunk latecomer, the Athenian statesman and general Alcibiades. In his youth Alcibiades had been one of Socrates' admiring followers, and he now reports in gripping detail the fascinating reversal Socrates worked upon him in the erotic roles of the older and the younger man usual among the Greeks in a relationship of 'love': Socrates became the pursued, Alcibiades the pursuer. Appropriately enough, all the speakers, with the interesting exception of the comic poet Aristophanes, are mentioned in *Protagoras* as among those who flocked to Callias' house to attend the sophists gathered there (all experts on speaking): as he enters Callias' house, Socrates spots four of the *Symposium* speakers—Phaedrus and Eryximachus in a crowd round Hippias, and Agathon and Pausanias (his lover) hanging on the words of Prodicus; Alcibiades joins the company shortly afterwards.

Socrates' own speech is given over to reporting a discourse on love

he says he once heard from Diotima, a wise woman from Mantinea. This Diotima seems an invention, contrived by Socrates (and Plato) to distance Socrates in his report of it from what she says. In any event, Diotima herself is made to say that Socrates can probably not follow her in the 'final and highest mystery' of the 'rites of love'—her account of the ascent in love, beginning with love for individual young men, ending with love for the Form of Beauty, which 'always *is* and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes', and is 'not beautiful this way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another' but is 'just what it is to be beautiful'. In this way Plato lets us know that this theory of the Beautiful is his own contrivance, not really an idea of Socrates (whether the historical philosopher or the philosopher of the 'Socratic' dialogues). Readers will want to compare Diotima's speech on Love with those of Socrates in *Phaedrus*, and also with Socrates' discussion on friendship with the boys in the *Lysis*.

The events of this evening at Agathon's house are all reported long afterward by a young friend of Socrates' in his last years, Apollodorus. Apparently they had become famous among Socrates' intimates and others who were interested in hearing about him. That, at any rate, is the impression Apollodorus leaves us with: he has himself taken the trouble to learn about it all from Aristodemus, who was present on the occasion, and he has just reported on it to Glaucon (Socrates' conversation partner in the *Republic*). He now reports again to an unnamed friend who has asked to hear about it all—and to us readers of Plato's dialogue.

—John M. Cooper

SYMPOSIUM

APOLLODOROS In fact, your question does not find me unprepared. *172*
Just the other day, as it happens, I was walking to the city from my home in Phaleron when a man I know, who was making his way behind me, saw me and called from a distance:

"The gentleman from Phaleron!" he yelled, trying to be funny. "Hey, Apollodorus, wait!"

So I stopped and waited.

"Apollodorus, I've been looking for you!" he said. "You know there *b*
once was a gathering at Agathon's when Socrates, Alcibiades, and their friends had dinner together; I wanted to ask you about the speeches they made on Love. What were they? I heard a version from a man who had it from Phoenix, Philip's son, but it was badly garbled, and he said you were the one to ask. So please, will you tell me all about it? After all, Socrates is your friend—who has a better right than you to report his conversation? But before you begin," he added, "tell me this: were you there yourself?"

"Your friend must have really garbled his story," I replied, "if you *c*
think this affair was so recent that I could have been there."

"I did think that," he said.

"Glaucon, how could you? You know very well Agathon hasn't lived in Athens for many years, while it's been less than three that I've been Socrates' companion and made it my job to know exactly what he says and does each day. Before that, I simply drifted aimlessly. Of course, *173*
I used to think that what I was doing was important, but in fact I was the most worthless man on earth—as bad as you are this very moment: I used to think philosophy was the last thing a man should do."

"Stop joking, Apollodorus," he replied. "Just tell me when the party took place."

"When we were still children, when Agathon won the prize with his first tragedy. It was the day after he and his troupe held their victory celebration."

"So it really was a long time ago," he said. "Then who told you about it? Was it Socrates himself?"

b "Oh, for god's sake, of course not!" I replied. "It was the very same man who told Phoenix, a fellow called Aristodemus, from Cydatheneum, a real runt of a man, who always went barefoot. He went to the party because, I think, he was obsessed with Socrates—one of the worst cases at that time. Naturally, I checked part of his story with Socrates, and Socrates agreed with his account."

"Please tell me, then," he said. "You speak and I'll listen, as we walk to the city. This is the perfect opportunity."

c So this is what we talked about on our way; and that's why, as I said before, I'm not unprepared. Well, if I'm to tell *you* about it too—I'll be glad to. After all, my greatest pleasure comes from philosophical conversation, even if I'm only a listener, whether or not I think it will be to my advantage. All other talk, especially the talk of rich businessmen like you, bores me to tears, and I'm sorry for you and your friends be-
d cause you think your affairs are important when really they're totally trivial. Perhaps, in your turn, you think I'm a failure, and, believe me, I think that what you think is true. But as for all of you, I don't just *think* you are failures—I know it for a fact.

FRIEND You'll never change, Apollodorus! Always nagging, even at yourself! I do believe you think everybody—yourself first of all—is totally worthless, except, of course, Socrates. I don't know exactly how you came to be called "the maniac," but you certainly talk like one, always furious with everyone, including yourself—but not with Socrates!

e APOLLODOROS Of course, my dear friend, it's perfectly obvious why I have these views about us all: it's simply because I'm a maniac, and I'm raving!

FRIEND It's not worth arguing about this now, Apollodorus. Please do as I asked: tell me the speeches.

APOLLODOROS All right … Well, the speeches went something like this—but I'd better tell you the whole story from the very beginning, *174* as Aristodemus told it to me.

He said, then, that one day he ran into Socrates, who had just bathed and put on his fancy sandals—both very unusual events. So he asked him where he was going, and why he was looking so good.

Socrates replied, "I'm going to Agathon's for dinner. I managed to avoid yesterday's victory party—I really don't like crowds—but I promised to be there today. So, naturally, I took great pains with my appearance: I'm going to the house of a good-looking man; I had to look my best. But let me ask you this," he added, "I know you haven't been invited to the dinner; how would you like to come anyway?" *b*

And Aristodemus answered, "I'll do whatever you say."

"Come with me, then," Socrates said, "and we shall prove the proverb wrong; the truth is, 'Good men go uninvited to Goodman's feast.'[54] Even Homer himself, when you think about it, did not much like this proverb; he not only disregarded it, he violated it. Agamem- *c* non, of course, is one of his great warriors, while he describes Menelaus as a 'limp spearman.' And yet, when Agamemnon offers a sacrifice and gives a feast, Homer has the weak Menelaus arrive uninvited at his superior's table."[55]

Aristodemus replied to this, "Socrates, I am afraid Homer's description is bound to fit me better than yours. Mine is a case of an obvious inferior arriving uninvited at the table of a man of letters. I think you'd better figure out a good excuse for bringing me along, because, you know, I won't admit I've come without an invitation. I'll say I'm your *d* guest."

"Let's go," he said. "We'll think about what to say 'as we proceed the two of us along the way.' "[56]

With these words, they set out. But as they were walking, Socrates

began to think about something, lost himself in thought, and kept lagging behind. Whenever Aristodemus stopped to wait for him, Socrates
e would urge him to go on ahead. When he arrived at Agathon's he found the gate wide open, and that, Aristodemus said, caused him to find himself in a very embarrassing situation: a household slave saw him the moment he arrived and took him immediately to the dining room, where the guests were already lying down on their couches, and dinner was about to be served.

As soon as Agathon saw him, he called:

"Welcome, Aristodemus! What perfect timing! You're just in time for dinner! I hope you're not here for any other reason—if you are, forget it. I looked all over for you yesterday, so I could invite you, but I couldn't find you anywhere. But where is Socrates? How come you didn't bring him along?"

So I turned around (Aristodemus said), and Socrates was nowhere to be seen. And I said that it was actually Socrates who had brought *me* along as his guest.

175 "I'm delighted he did," Agathon replied. "But where is he?"

"He was directly behind me, but I have no idea where he is now."

"Go look for Socrates," Agathon ordered a slave, "and bring him in. Aristodemus," he added, "you can share Eryximachus' couch."

A slave brought water, and Aristodemus washed himself before he lay down. Then another slave entered and said: "Socrates is here, but he's gone off to the neighbor's porch. He's standing there and won't come in even though I called him several times."

"How strange," Agathon replied. "Go back and bring him in. Don't leave him there."

b But Aristodemus stopped him. "No, no," he said. "Leave him alone. It's one of his habits: every now and then he just goes off like that and stands motionless, wherever he happens to be. I'm sure he'll come in very soon, so don't disturb him; let him be."

"Well, all right, if you really think so," Agathon said, and turned

to the slaves: "Go ahead and serve the rest of us. What you serve is completely up to you; pretend nobody's supervising you—as if I ever did! Imagine that we are all your own guests, myself included. Give us *c* good reason to praise your service."

So they went ahead and started eating, but there was still no sign of Socrates. Agathon wanted to send for him many times, but Aristodemus wouldn't let him. And, in fact, Socrates came in shortly afterward, as he always did—they were hardly halfway through their meal. Agathon, who, as it happened, was all alone on the farthest couch, immediately called: "Socrates, come lie down next to me. Who knows, *d* if I touch you, I may catch a bit of the wisdom that came to you under my neighbor's porch. It's clear *you've* seen the light. If you hadn't, you'd still be standing there."

Socrates sat down next to him and said, "How wonderful it would be, dear Agathon, if the foolish were filled with wisdom simply by touching the wise. If only wisdom were like water, which always flows from a full cup into an empty one when we connect them with a piece *e* of yarn—well, then I would consider it the greatest prize to have the chance to lie down next to you. I would soon be overflowing with your wonderful wisdom. My own wisdom is of no account—a shadow in a dream—while yours is bright and radiant and has a splendid future. Why, young as you are, you're so brilliant I could call more than thirty thousand Greeks as witnesses."

"Now you've gone *too* far, Socrates," Agathon replied. "Well, eat your dinner. Dionysus will soon enough be the judge of our claims to *176* wisdom!"[57]

Socrates took his seat after that and had his meal, according to Aristodemus. When dinner was over, they poured a libation to the god, sang a hymn, and—in short—followed the whole ritual. Then they turned their attention to drinking. At that point Pausanias addressed the group:

"Well, gentlemen, how can we arrange to drink less tonight? To be

honest, I still have a terrible hangover from yesterday, and I could really use a break. I daresay most of you could, too, since you were also part
b of the celebration. So let's try not to overdo it."

Aristophanes replied: "Good idea, Pausanias. We've got to make a plan for going easy on the drink tonight. I was over my head last night myself, like the others."

After that, up spoke Eryximachus, son of Acumenus: "Well said, both of you. But I still have one question: How do *you* feel, Agathon? Are you strong enough for serious drinking?"

"Absolutely not," replied Agathon. "I've no strength left for anything."

c "What a lucky stroke for us," Eryximachus said, "for me, for Aristodemus, for Phaedrus, and the rest—that you large-capacity drinkers are already exhausted. Imagine how weak drinkers like ourselves feel after last night! Of course I don't include Socrates in my claims: he can drink or not, and will be satisfied whatever we do. But since none of us seems particularly eager to overindulge, perhaps it would not be amiss
d for me to provide you with some accurate information as to the nature of intoxication. If I have learned anything from medicine, it is the following point: inebriation is harmful to everyone. Personally, therefore, I always refrain from heavy drinking; and I advise others against it—especially people who are suffering the effects of a previous night's excesses."

"Well," Phaedrus interrupted him, "I always follow your advice, especially when you speak as a doctor. In this case, if the others know what's good for them, they too will do just as you say."

e At that point they all agreed not to get drunk that evening; they decided to drink only as much as pleased them.

"It's settled, then," said Eryximachus. "We are resolved to force no one to drink more than he wants. I would like now to make a further motion: let us dispense with the flute-girl who just made her entrance;

let her play for herself or, if she prefers, for the women in the house. Let us instead spend our evening in conversation. If you are so minded, I would like to propose a subject." 177

They all said they were quite willing, and urged him to make his proposal. So Eryximachus said:

"Let me begin by citing Euripides' *Melanippe:* 'Not mine the tale.' What I am about to tell belongs to Phaedrus here, who is deeply indignant on this issue, and often complains to me about it:

"'Eryximachus,' he says, 'isn't it an awful thing! Our poets have composed hymns in honor of just about any god you can think of; but has a single one of them given one moment's thought to the god of b love, ancient and powerful as he is? As for our fancy intellectuals, they have written volumes praising Heracles and other heroes (as did the distinguished Prodicus). Well, perhaps *that's* not surprising, but I've actually read a book by an accomplished author who saw fit to extol c the usefulness of salt! How *could* people pay attention to such trifles and never, not even once, write a proper hymn to Love? How could anyone ignore so great a god?'

"Now, Phaedrus, in my judgment, is quite right. I would like, therefore, to take up a contribution, as it were, on his behalf, and gratify his wish. Besides, I think this a splendid time for all of us here to honor d the god. If you agree, we can spend the whole evening in discussion, because I propose that each of us give as good a speech in praise of Love as he is capable of giving, in proper order from left to right. And let us begin with Phaedrus, who is at the head of the table and is, in addition, the father of our subject."

"No one will vote against that, Eryximachus," said Socrates. "How could *I* vote 'No,' when the only thing I say I understand is the art of e love? Could Agathon and Pausanias? Could Aristophanes, who thinks of nothing but Dionysus and Aphrodite? No one I can see here now could vote against your proposal.

"And though it's not quite fair to those of us who have to speak last, if the first speeches turn out to be good enough and to exhaust our subject, I promise we won't complain. So let Phaedrus begin, with the blessing of Fortune; let's hear his praise of Love."

178 They all agreed with Socrates, and pressed Phaedrus to start. Of course, Aristodemus couldn't remember exactly what everyone said, and I myself don't remember everything he told me. But I'll tell you what he remembered best, and what I consider the most important points.

As I say, he said Phaedrus spoke first, beginning more or less like this:

Love is a great god, wonderful in many ways to gods and men, and most marvelous of all is the way he came into being. We honor him *b* as one of the most ancient gods, and the proof of his great age is this: the parents of Love have no place in poetry or legend. According to Hesiod, the first to be born was Chaos,

> *…but then came*
> *Earth, broad-chested, a seat for all, forever safe,*
> *And Love.*

And Acusilaus agrees with Hesiod: after Chaos came Earth and Love, these two.[58] And Parmenides tells of this beginning:

> *The very first god [she] designed was Love.*

c All sides agree, then, that Love is one of the most ancient gods. As such, he gives to us the greatest goods. I cannot say what greater good there is for a young boy than a gentle lover, or for a lover than a boy to love. There is a certain guidance each person needs for his whole

life, if he is to live well; and nothing imparts this guidance—not high kinship, not public honor, not wealth—nothing imparts this guidance *d*
as well as Love. What guidance do I mean? I mean a sense of shame at acting shamefully, and a sense of pride in acting well. Without these, nothing fine or great can be accomplished, in public or in private.

What I say is this: if a man in love is found doing something shameful, or accepting shameful treatment because he is a coward and makes no defense, then nothing would give him more pain than being seen by the boy he loves—not even being seen by his father or his comrades. *e*
We see the same thing also in the boy he loves, that he is especially ashamed before his lover when he is caught in something shameful. If only there were a way to start a city or an army made up of lovers and the boys they love! Theirs would be the best possible system of society, for they would hold back from all that is shameful, and seek honor in *179*
each other's eyes. Even a few of them, in battle side by side, would conquer all the world, I'd say. For a man in love would never allow his loved one, of all people, to see him leaving ranks or dropping weapons. He'd rather die a thousand deaths! And as for leaving the boy behind, or not coming to his aid in danger—why, no one is so base that true Love could not inspire him with courage, and make him as brave as if *b*
he'd been born a hero. When Homer says a god 'breathes might' into some of the heroes, this is really Love's gift to every lover.[59]

Besides, no one will die for you but a lover, and a lover will do this even if she's a woman. Alcestis is proof to everyone in Greece that what I say is true.[60] Only she was willing to die in place of her husband, *c*
although his father and mother were still alive. Because of her love, she went so far beyond his parents in family feeling that she made them look like outsiders, as if they belonged to their son in name only. And when she did this her deed struck everyone, even the gods, as nobly done. The gods were so delighted, in fact, that they gave her the prize they reserve for a handful chosen from the throngs of noble heroes— *d*

they sent her soul back from the dead. As you can see, the eager courage of love wins highest honors from the gods.

Orpheus, however, they sent unsatisfied from Hades, after showing him only an image of the woman he came for. They did not give him the woman herself, because they thought he was soft (he was, after all, a cithara-player) and did not dare to die like Alcestis for Love's sake, but contrived to enter living into Hades. So they punished him for
e that, and made him die at the hands of women.[61]

The honor they gave to Achilles is another matter. They sent him to the Isles of the Blest because he dared to stand by his lover Patro-
180 clus and avenge him, even after he had learned from his mother that he would die if he killed Hector, but that if he chose otherwise he'd go home and end his life as an old man. Instead he chose to die for Patroclus, and more than that, he did it for a man whose life was already over. The gods were highly delighted at this, of course, and gave him special honor, because he made so much of his lover. Aeschylus talks nonsense when he claims Achilles was the lover;[62] he was more beautiful than Patroclus, more beautiful than all the heroes, and still beardless. Besides he was much younger, as Homer says.

In truth, the gods honor virtue most highly when it belongs to Love.
b They are more impressed and delighted, however, and are more generous with a loved one who cherishes his lover, than with a lover who cherishes the boy he loves. A lover is more godlike than his boy, you see, since he is inspired by a god. That's why they gave a higher honor to Achilles than to Alcestis, and sent him to the Isles of the Blest.

Therefore I say Love is the most ancient of the gods, the most honored, and the most powerful in helping men gain virtue and blessedness, whether they are alive or have passed away.

That was more or less what Phaedrus said according to Aristodemus.
c There followed several other speeches which he couldn't remember very well. So he skipped them and went directly to the speech of Pausanias.

Phaedrus (Pausanias began), I'm not quite sure our subject has been well defined. Our charge has been simple—to speak in praise of Love. This would have been fine if Love himself were simple, too, but as a matter of fact, there are two kinds of Love. In view of this, it might be better to begin by making clear which kind of Love we are to praise. Let me therefore try to put our discussion back on the right track and *d* explain which kind of Love ought to be praised. Then I shall give him the praise he deserves, as the god he is.

It is a well-known fact that Love and Aphrodite are inseparable. If, therefore, Aphrodite were a single goddess, there could also be a single Love; but, since there are actually two goddesses of that name, there also are two kinds of Love. I don't expect you'll disagree with me about the two goddesses, will you? One is an older deity, the motherless daughter of Uranus, the god of heaven: she is known as Urania, or Heavenly Aphrodite. The other goddess is younger, the daughter of Zeus and Dione: her name is Pandemos, or Common Aphrodite. It follows, therefore, that there is a Common as well as a Heavenly *e* Love, depending on which goddess is Love's partner. And although, of course, all the gods must be praised, we must still make an effort to keep these two gods apart.

The reason for this applies in the same way to every type of action: considered in itself, no action is either good or bad, honorable or shameful. Take, for example, our own case. We had a choice between *181* drinking, singing, or having a conversation. Now, in itself none of these is better than any other: how it comes out depends entirely on how it is performed. If it is done honorably and properly, it turns out to be honorable; if it is done improperly, it is disgraceful. And my point is that exactly this principle applies to being in love: Love is not in himself noble and worthy of praise; that depends on whether the sentiments he produces in us are themselves noble.

Now the Common Aphrodite's Love is himself truly common. As *b* such, he strikes wherever he gets a chance. This, of course, is the love

felt by the vulgar, who are attached to women no less than to boys, to the body more than to the soul, and to the least intelligent partners, since all they care about is completing the sexual act. Whether they do it honorably or not is of no concern. That is why they do whatever comes their way, sometimes good, sometimes bad; and which one it is is incidental to their purpose. For the Love who moves them belongs
c to a much younger goddess, who, through her parentage, partakes of the nature both of the female and the male.

Contrast this with the Love of Heavenly Aphrodite. This goddess, whose descent is purely male (hence this love is for boys), is considerably older and therefore free from the lewdness of youth. That's why those who are inspired by her Love are attracted to the male: they find pleasure in what is by nature stronger and more intelligent. But, even
d within the group that is attracted to handsome boys, some are not moved purely by this Heavenly Love; those who are do not fall in love with little boys; they prefer older ones whose cheeks are showing the first traces of a beard—a sign that they have begun to form minds of their own. I am convinced that a man who falls in love with a young man of this age is generally prepared to share everything with the one he loves—he is eager, in fact, to spend the rest of his own life with him. He certainly does not aim to deceive him—to take advantage of him
e while he is still young and inexperienced and then, after exposing him to ridicule, to move quickly on to someone else.

As a matter of fact, there should be a law forbidding affairs with young boys. If nothing else, all this time and effort would not be wasted on such an uncertain pursuit—and what is more uncertain than whether a particular boy will eventually make something of himself, physically or mentally? Good men, of course, are willing to make a law like this for themselves, but those other lovers, the vulgar ones, need
182 external restraint. For just this reason we have placed every possible legal obstacle to their seducing our own wives and daughters. These

vulgar lovers are the people who have given love such a bad reputation that some have gone so far as to claim that taking *any* man as a lover is in itself disgraceful. Would anyone make this claim if he weren't thinking of how hasty vulgar lovers are, and therefore how unfair to their loved ones? For nothing done properly and in accordance with our customs would ever have provoked such righteous disapproval.

I should point out, however, that, although the customs regarding Love in most cities are simple and easy to understand, here in Athens (and in Sparta as well) they are remarkably complex. In places where *b* the people are inarticulate, like Elis or Boeotia, tradition straightforwardly approves taking a lover in every case. No one there, young or old, would ever consider it shameful. The reason, I suspect, is that, being poor speakers, they want to save themselves the trouble of having to offer reasons and arguments in support of their suits.

By contrast, in places like Ionia and almost every other part of the Persian empire, taking a lover is always considered disgraceful. The Persian empire is absolute; that is why it condemns love as well as philosophy and sport. It is no good for rulers if the people they rule cher- *c* ish ambitions for themselves or form strong bonds of friendship with one another. That these are precisely the effects of philosophy, sport, and especially of Love is a lesson the tyrants of Athens learned directly from their own experience: Didn't their reign come to a dismal end because of the bonds uniting Harmodius and Aristogiton in love and affection?[63] *d*

So you can see that plain condemnation of Love reveals lust for power in the rulers and cowardice in the ruled, while indiscriminate approval testifies to general dullness and stupidity.

Our own customs, which, as I have already said, are much more difficult to understand, are also far superior. Recall, for example, that we consider it more honorable to declare your love rather than to keep it a secret, especially if you are in love with a youth of good family

and accomplishment, even if he isn't all that beautiful. Recall also that a lover is encouraged in every possible way; this means that what he does is not considered shameful. On the contrary, conquest is deemed
e noble, and failure shameful. And as for *attempts* at conquest, our custom is to praise lovers for totally extraordinary acts—so extraordinary,
183 in fact, that if they performed them for any other purpose whatever, they would reap the most profound contempt. Suppose, for example, that in order to secure money, or a public post, or any other practical benefit from another person, a man were willing to do what lovers do for the ones they love. Imagine that in pressing his suit he went to his knees in public view and begged in the most humiliating way, that he swore all sorts of vows, that he spent the night at the other man's doorstep, that he were anxious to provide services even a slave would have refused—well, you can be sure that everyone, his enemies no less
b than his friends, would stand in his way. His enemies would jeer at his fawning servility, while his friends, ashamed on his behalf, would try everything to bring him back to his senses. But let a lover act in any of these ways, and everyone will immediately say what a charming man he is! No blame attaches to his behavior: custom treats it as noble through and through. And what is even more remarkable is that, at least according to popular wisdom, the gods will forgive a lover even for breaking his vows—a lover's vow, our people say, is no vow at all.
c The freedom given to the lover by both gods and men according to our custom is immense.

In view of all this, you might well conclude that in our city we consider the lover's desire and the willingness to satisfy it as the noblest things in the world. When, on the other hand, you recall that fathers hire attendants for their sons as soon as they're old enough to be attractive, and that an attendant's main task is to prevent any contact between his charge and his suitors; when you recall how mercilessly a boy's own friends tease him if they catch him at it, and how strongly

their elders approve and even encourage such mocking—when you take all this into account, you're bound to come to the conclusion that we Athenians consider such behavior the most shameful thing in the world. *d*

In my opinion, however, the fact of the matter is this. As I said earlier, love is, like everything else, complex: considered simply in itself, it is neither honorable nor a disgrace—its character depends entirely on the behavior it gives rise to. To give oneself to a vile man in a vile way is truly disgraceful behavior; by contrast, it is perfectly honorable to give oneself honorably to the right man. Now you may want to know who counts as vile in this context. I'll tell you: it is the common, vulgar lover, who loves the body rather than the soul, the man whose love is bound to be inconstant, since what he loves is itself mutable and unstable. The moment the body is no longer in bloom, "he flies off and away,"[64] his promises and vows in tatters behind him. How different from this is a man who loves the right sort of character, and who remains its lover for life, attached as he is to something that is permanent. *e* *184*

We can now see the point of our customs: they are designed to separate the wheat from the chaff, the proper love from the vile. That's why we do everything we can to make it as easy as possible for lovers to press their suits and as difficult as possible for young men to comply; it is like a competition, a kind of test to determine to which sort each belongs. This explains two further facts: First, why we consider it shameful to yield too quickly: the passage of time in itself provides a good test in these matters. Second, why we also consider it shameful for a man to be seduced by money or political power, either because he cringes at ill-treatment and will not endure it or because, once he has tasted the benefits of wealth and power, he will not rise above them. None of these benefits is stable or permanent, apart from the fact that no genuine affection can possibly be based upon them. *b*

Our customs, then, provide for only one honorable way of taking

c a man as a lover. In addition to recognizing that the lover's total and willing subjugation to his beloved's wishes is neither servile nor reprehensible, we allow that there is one—and only one—further reason for willingly subjecting oneself to another which is equally above reproach: that is subjection for the sake of virtue. If someone decides to put himself at another's disposal because he thinks that this will make him better in wisdom or in any other part of virtue, we approve of his voluntary subjection: we consider it neither shameful nor servile. Both these principles—that is, both the principle governing the proper attitude toward the lover of young men and the principle governing the *d* love of wisdom and of virtue in general—must be combined if a young man is to accept a lover in an honorable way. When an older lover and a young man come together and each obeys the principle appropriate to him—when the lover realizes that he is justified in doing anything for a loved one who grants him favors, and when the young man understands that he is justified in performing any service for a lover who *e* can make him wise and virtuous—and when the lover *is* able to help the young man become wiser and better, and the young man *is* eager to be taught and improved by his lover—then, and only then, when these two principles coincide absolutely, is it ever honorable for a young man to accept a lover.

Only in this case, we should notice, is it never shameful to be deceived; in every other case it is shameful, both for the deceiver and *185* the person he deceives. Suppose, for example, that someone thinks his lover is rich and accepts him for his money; his action won't be any less shameful if it turns out that he was deceived and his lover was a poor man after all. For the young man has already shown himself to be the sort of person who will do anything for money—and that is far from honorable. By the same token, suppose that someone takes a lover in the mistaken belief that this lover is a good man and likely to make him better himself, while in reality the man is horrible, totally lacking *b* in virtue; even so, it is noble for him to have been deceived. For he

too has demonstrated something about himself: that he is the sort of person who will do anything for the sake of virtue—and what could be more honorable than that? It follows, therefore, that giving in to your lover for virtue's sake is honorable, whatever the outcome. And this, of course, is the Heavenly Love of the heavenly goddess. Love's value to the city as a whole and to the citizens is immeasurable, for he compels the lover and his loved one alike to make virtue their central *c*
concern. All other forms of love belong to the vulgar goddess.

Phaedrus, I'm afraid this hasty improvisation will have to do as my contribution on the subject of Love.

When Pausanias finally came to a pause (I've learned this sort of fine figure from our clever rhetoricians), it was Aristophanes' turn, according to Aristodemus. But he had such a bad case of the hiccups—he'd probably stuffed himself again, though, of course, it could have been anything—that making a speech was totally out of the question. So he turned to the doctor, Eryximachus, who was next in line, and said to him: *d*

"Eryximachus, it's up to you—as well it should be. Cure me or take my turn."

"As a matter of fact," Eryximachus replied, "I shall do both. I shall take your turn—you can speak in my place as soon as you feel better—and I shall also cure you. While I am giving my speech, you should hold your breath for as long as you possibly can. This may well eliminate your hiccups. If it fails, the best remedy is a thorough gargle. And if *e*
even this has no effect, then tickle your nose with a feather. A sneeze or two will cure even the most persistent case."

"The sooner you start speaking, the better," Aristophanes said. "I'll follow your instructions to the letter."

This, then, was the speech of Eryximachus:

Pausanias introduced a crucial consideration in his speech, though in my opinion he did not develop it sufficiently. Let me therefore try

186 to carry his argument to its logical conclusion. His distinction between the two species of Love seems to me very useful indeed. But if I have learned a single lesson from my own field, the science of medicine, it is that Love does not occur only in the human soul; it is not simply the attraction we feel toward human beauty: it is a significantly broader
b phenomenon. It certainly occurs within the animal kingdom, and even in the world of plants. In fact, it occurs everywhere in the universe. Love is a deity of the greatest importance: he directs everything that occurs, not only in the human domain, but also in that of the gods.

Let me begin with some remarks concerning medicine—I hope you will forgive my giving pride of place to my own profession. The point is that our very bodies manifest the two species of Love. Consider for a moment the marked difference, the radical dissimilarity, between healthy and diseased constitutions and the fact that dissimilar subjects desire and love objects that are themselves dissimilar. Therefore, the love manifested in health is fundamentally distinct from the love man-
c ifested in disease. And now recall that, as Pausanias claimed, it is as honorable to yield to a good man as it is shameful to consort with the debauched. Well, my point is that the case of the human body is strictly parallel. Everything sound and healthy in the body must be encouraged and gratified; that is precisely the object of medicine. Conversely, whatever is unhealthy and unsound must be frustrated and rebuffed: that's what it is to be an expert in medicine.

d In short, medicine is simply the science of the effects of Love on repletion and depletion of the body, and the hallmark of the accomplished physician is his ability to distinguish the Love that is noble from the Love that is ugly and disgraceful. A good practitioner knows how to affect the body and how to transform its desires; he can implant the proper species of Love when it is absent and eliminate the other sort whenever it occurs. The physician's task is to effect a reconciliation and establish mutual love between the most basic bodily elements.

Which are those elements? They are, of course, those that are most opposed to one another, as hot is to cold, bitter to sweet, wet to dry, cases like those. In fact, our ancestor Asclepius first established medicine as a profession when he learned how to produce concord and love between such opposites—that is what those poet fellows say, and—this time—I concur with them. *e*

Medicine, therefore, is guided everywhere by the god of Love, and so are physical education and farming as well. Further, a moment's reflection suffices to show that the case of poetry and music, too, is precisely the same. Indeed, this may have been just what Heraclitus had in mind, though his mode of expression certainly leaves much to be desired. The one, he says, "being at variance with itself is in agreement with itself" "like the attunement of a bow or a lyre."[65] Naturally, it is patently absurd to claim that an attunement or a harmony is in itself discordant or that its elements are still in discord with one another. Heraclitus probably meant that an expert musician creates a harmony by resolving the prior discord between high and low notes. For surely there can be no harmony so long as high and low are still discordant; harmony, after all, is consonance, and consonance is a species of agreement. Discordant elements, as long as they are still in discord, cannot come to an agreement, and they therefore cannot produce a harmony. Rhythm, for example, is produced only when fast and slow, though earlier discordant, are brought into agreement with each other. Music, like medicine, creates agreement by producing concord and love between these various opposites. Music is therefore simply the science of the effects of Love on rhythm and harmony. *187* *b* *c*

These effects are easily discernible if you consider the constitution of rhythm and harmony in themselves; Love does not occur in both his forms in this domain. But the moment you consider, in their turn, the effects of rhythm and harmony on their audience—either through composition, which creates new verses and melodies, or through mu- *d*

sical education, which teaches the correct performance of existing compositions—complications arise directly, and they require the treatment of a good practitioner. Ultimately, the identical argument applies once again: the love felt by good people or by those whom such love might improve in this regard must be encouraged and protected. This is the honorable, heavenly species of Love, produced by the melodies
e of Urania, the Heavenly Muse. The other, produced by Polyhymnia, the muse of many songs, is common and vulgar. Extreme caution is indicated here: we must be careful to enjoy his pleasures without slipping into debauchery—this case, I might add, is strictly parallel to a serious issue in my own field, namely, the problem of regulating the appetite so as to be able to enjoy a fine meal without unhealthy aftereffects.

In music, therefore, as well as in medicine and in all the other domains, in matters divine as well as in human affairs, we must attend with the greatest possible care to these two species of Love, which are,
188 indeed, to be found everywhere. Even the seasons of the year exhibit their influence. When the elements to which I have already referred—hot and cold, wet and dry—are animated by the proper species of Love, they are in harmony with one another: their mixture is temperate, and so is the climate. Harvests are plentiful; men and all other living things are in good health; no harm can come to them. But when the sort of Love that is crude and impulsive controls the seasons, he brings death
b and destruction. He spreads the plague and many other diseases among plants and animals; he causes frost and hail and blights. All these are the effects of the immodest and disordered species of Love on the movements of the stars and the seasons of the year, that is, on the objects studied by the science called astronomy.

c Consider further the rites of sacrifice and the whole area with which the art of divination is concerned, that is, the interaction between men and gods. Here, too, Love is the central concern: our object is to try to maintain the proper kind of Love and to attempt to cure the kind

that is diseased. For what is the origin of all impiety? Our refusal to gratify the orderly kind of Love, and our deference to the other sort, when we should have been guided by the former sort of Love in every action in connection with our parents, living or dead, and with the gods. The task of divination is to keep watch over these two species of Love and to doctor them as necessary. Divination, therefore, is the *d* practice that produces loving affection between gods and men; it is simply the science of the effects of Love on justice and piety.

Such is the power of Love—so varied and great that in all cases it might be called absolute. Yet even so it is far greater when Love is directed, in temperance and justice, toward the good, whether in heaven or on earth: happiness and good fortune, the bonds of human society, concord with the gods above—all these are among his gifts.

Perhaps I, too, have omitted a great deal in this discourse on Love. *e* If so, I assure you, it was quite inadvertent. And if in fact I have overlooked certain points, it is now your task, Aristophanes, to complete the argument—unless, of course, you are planning on a different approach. In any case, proceed; your hiccups seem cured. *189*

Then Aristophanes took over (so Aristodemus said): "The hiccups have stopped all right—but not before I applied the Sneeze Treatment to them. Makes me wonder whether the 'orderly sort of Love' in the body calls for the sounds and itchings that constitute a sneeze, because the hiccups stopped immediately when I applied the Sneeze Treatment."

"You're good, Aristophanes," Eryximachus answered. "But watch what you're doing. You are making jokes before your speech, and you're forcing me to prepare for you to say something funny, and to put up my guard against you, when otherwise you might speak at peace." *b*

Then Aristophanes laughed. "Good point, Eryximachus. So let me 'unsay what I have said.' But don't put up your guard. I'm not worried

about saying something funny in my coming oration. That would be pure profit, and it comes with the territory of my Muse. What I'm worried about is that I might say something ridiculous."

"Aristophanes, do you really think you can take a shot at me, and then escape? Use your head! Remember, as you speak, that you will be
c called upon to give an account. Though perhaps, if I decide to, I'll let you off."

"Eryximachus," Aristophanes said, "indeed I do have in mind a different approach to speaking than the one the two of you used, you and Pausanias. You see, I think people have entirely missed the power of Love, because, if they had grasped it, they'd have built the greatest temples and altars to him and made the greatest sacrifices. But as it is, none of this is done for him, though it should be, more than anything
d else! For he loves the human race more than any other god, he stands by us in our troubles, and he cures those ills we humans are most happy to have mended. I shall, therefore, try to explain his power to you; and you, please pass my teaching on to everyone else."

First you must learn what Human Nature was in the beginning and what has happened to it since, because long ago our nature was not what it is now, but very different. There were three kinds of human beings, that's my first point—not two as there are now, male and fe-
e male. In addition to these, there was a third, a combination of those two; its name survives, though the kind itself has vanished. At that time, you see, the word "androgynous" really meant something: a form made up of male and female elements, though now there's nothing but the word, and that's used as an insult. My second point is that the shape of each human being was completely round, with back and sides in a circle; they had four hands each, as many legs as hands, and two faces,
190 exactly alike, on a rounded neck. Between the two faces, which were on opposite sides, was one head with four ears. There were two sets of

sexual organs, and everything else was the way you'd imagine it from what I've told you. They walked upright, as we do now, whatever direction they wanted. And whenever they set out to run fast, they thrust out all their eight limbs, the ones they had then, and spun rapidly, the way gymnasts do cartwheels, by bringing their legs around straight.

Now here is why there were three kinds, and why they were as I described them: The male kind was originally an offspring of the sun, the female of the earth, and the one that combined both genders was an offspring of the moon, because the moon shares in both. They were spherical, and so was their motion, because they were like their parents in the sky. *b*

In strength and power, therefore, they were terrible, and they had great ambitions. They made an attempt on the gods, and Homer's story about Ephialtes and Otus was originally about them: how they tried to make an ascent to heaven so as to attack the gods.[66] Then Zeus and the other gods met in council to discuss what to do, and they were sore perplexed. They couldn't wipe out the human race with thunderbolts and kill them all off, as they had the giants, because that would wipe out the worship they receive, along with the sacrifices we humans give them. On the other hand, they couldn't let them run riot. At last, after great effort, Zeus had an idea. *c*

"I think I have a plan," he said, "that would allow human beings to exist and stop their misbehaving: they will give up being wicked when they lose their strength. So I shall now cut each of them in two. At one stroke they will lose their strength and also become more profitable to us, owing to the increase in their number. They shall walk upright on two legs. But if I find they still run riot and do not keep the peace," he said, "I will cut them in two again, and they'll have to make their way on one leg, hopping." *d*

So saying, he cut those human beings in two, the way people cut sorbapples before they dry them or the way they cut eggs with hairs. *e*

As he cut each one, he commanded Apollo to turn its face and half its neck towards the wound, so that each person would see that he'd been cut and keep better order. Then Zeus commanded Apollo to heal the rest of the wound, and Apollo did turn the face around, and he drew skin from all sides over what is now called the stomach, and there he made one mouth, as in a pouch with a drawstring, and fastened it at the
191 center of the stomach. This is now called the navel. Then he smoothed out the other wrinkles, of which there were many, and he shaped the breasts, using some such tool as shoemakers have for smoothing wrinkles out of leather on the form. But he left a few wrinkles around the stomach and the navel, to be a reminder of what happened long ago.

Now, since their natural form had been cut in two, each one longed for its own other half, and so they would throw their arms about each other, weaving themselves together, wanting to grow together. In that
b condition they would die from hunger and general idleness, because they would not do anything apart from each other. Whenever one of the halves died and one was left, the one that was left still sought another and wove itself together with that. Sometimes the half he met came from a woman, as we'd call her now, sometimes it came from a man; either way, they kept on dying.

Then, however, Zeus took pity on them, and came up with another plan: he moved their genitals around to the front! Before then, you
c see, they used to have their genitals outside, like their faces, and they cast seed and made children, not in one another, but in the ground, like cicadas. So Zeus brought about this relocation of genitals, and in doing so he invented interior reproduction, *by* the man *in* the woman. The purpose of this was so that, when a man embraced a woman, he would cast his seed and they would have children; but when male embraced male, they would at least have the satisfaction of intercourse,
d after which they could stop embracing, return to their jobs, and look after their other needs in life. This, then, is the source of our desire to

love each other. Love is born into every human being; it calls back the halves of our original nature together; it tries to make one out of two and heal the wound of human nature.

Each of us, then, is a "matching half" of a human whole, because each was sliced like a flatfish, two out of one, and each of us is always seeking the half that matches him. That's why a man who is split from the double sort (which used to be called "androgynous") runs after women. Many lecherous men have come from this class, and so do *e*
the lecherous women who run after men. Women who are split from a woman, however, pay no attention at all to men; they are oriented more towards women, and lesbians come from this class. People who are split from a male are male-oriented. While they are boys, because they are chips off the male block, they love men and enjoy lying with men and being embraced by men; those are the best of boys and lads, *192*
because they are the most manly in their nature. Of course, some say such boys are shameless, but they're lying. It's not because they have no shame that such boys do this, you see, but because they are bold and brave and masculine, and they tend to cherish what is like themselves. Do you want me to prove it? Look, these are the only kind of boys who grow up to be real men in politics. When they're grown men, *b*
they are lovers of young men, and they naturally pay no attention to marriage or to making babies, except insofar as they are required by local custom. They, however, are quite satisfied to live their lives with one another unmarried. In every way, then, this sort of man grows up as a lover of young men and a lover of Love, always rejoicing in his own kind.

And so, when a person meets the half that is his very own, whatever his orientation, whether it's to young men or not, then something wonderful happens: the two are struck from their senses by love, by a sense of belonging to one another, and by desire, and they don't want *c*
to be separated from one another, not even for a moment.

These are the people who finish out their lives together and still cannot say what it is they want from one another. No one would think it is the intimacy of sex—that mere sex is the reason each lover takes so great and deep a joy in being with the other. It's obvious that the soul
d of every lover longs for something else; his soul cannot say what it is, but like an oracle it has a sense of what it wants, and like an oracle it hides behind a riddle. Suppose two lovers are lying together and Hephaestus[67] stands over them with his mending tools, asking, "What is it you human beings really want from each other?" And suppose they're perplexed, and he asks them again: "Is this your heart's desire, then—for the two of you to become parts of the same whole, as near as can be, and never to separate, day or night? Because if that's your desire, I'd like to weld you together and join you into something that is naturally
e whole, so that the two of you are made into one. Then the two of you would share one life, as long as you lived, because you would be one being, and by the same token, when you died, you would be one and not two in Hades, having died a single death. Look at your love, and see if this is what you desire: wouldn't this be all the good fortune you could want?"

Surely you can see that no one who received such an offer would turn it down; no one would find anything else that he wanted. Instead, everyone would think he'd found out at last what he had always wanted: to come together and melt together with the one he loves, so that one person emerged from two. Why should this be so? It's because, as I said, we used to be complete wholes in our original nature,
193 and now "Love" is the name for our pursuit of wholeness, for our desire to be complete.

Long ago we were united, as I said; but now the god has divided us as punishment for the wrong we did him, just as the Spartans divided the Arcadians.[68] So there's a danger that if we don't keep order before the gods, we'll be split in two again, and then we'll be walking around

in the condition of people carved on gravestones in bas-relief, sawn apart between the nostrils, like half dice. We should encourage all men, therefore, to treat the gods with all due reverence, so that we may *b* escape this fate and find wholeness instead. And we will, if Love is our guide and our commander. Let no one work against him. Whoever opposes Love is hateful to the gods, but if we become friends of the god and cease to quarrel with him, then we shall find the young men that are meant for us and win their love, as very few men do nowadays.

Now don't get ideas, Eryximachus, and turn this speech into a com- *c* edy. Don't think I'm pointing this at Pausanias and Agathon. Probably, they both do belong to the group that are entirely masculine in nature. But I am speaking about everyone, men and women alike, and I say there's just one way for the human race to flourish: we must bring love to its perfect conclusion, and each of us must win the favors of his very own young man, so that he can recover his original nature. If that is the ideal, then, of course, the nearest approach to it is best in present circumstances, and that is to win the favor of young men who are naturally sympathetic to us.

If we are to give due praise to the god who can give us this blessing, *d* then, we must praise Love. Love does the best that can be done for the time being: he draws us towards what belongs to us. But for the future, Love promises the greatest hope of all: if we treat the gods with due reverence, he will restore to us our original nature, and by healing us, he will make us blessed and happy.

"That," he said, "is my speech about Love, Eryximachus. It is rather different from yours. As I begged you earlier, don't make a comedy of it. I'd prefer to hear what all the others will say—or, rather, what each *e* of them will say, since Agathon and Socrates are the only ones left."

"I found your speech delightful," said Eryximachus, "so I'll do as you say. Really, we've had such a rich feast of speeches on Love, that if I couldn't vouch for the fact that Socrates and Agathon are masters

of the art of love, I'd be afraid that they'd have nothing left to say. But as it is, I have no fears on this score."

194 Then Socrates said, "That's because *you* did beautifully in the contest, Eryximachus. But if you ever get in my position, or rather the position I'll be in after Agathon's spoken so well, then you'll really be afraid. You'll be at your wit's end, as I am now."

"You're trying to bewitch me, Socrates," said Agathon, "by making me think the audience expects great things of my speech, so I'll get
b flustered."

"Agathon!" said Socrates, "How forgetful do you think I am? I saw how brave and dignified you were when you walked right up to the theater platform along with the actors and looked straight out at that enormous audience. You were about to put your own writing on display, and you weren't the least bit panicked. After seeing that, how could I expect you to be flustered by us, when we are so few?"

"Why, Socrates," said Agathon. "You must think I have nothing but theater audiences on my mind! So you suppose I don't realize that, if you're intelligent, you find a few sensible men much more frightening than a senseless crowd?"

"No," he said, "It wouldn't be very handsome of me to think you
c crude in any way, Agathon. I'm sure that if you ever run into people you consider wise, you'll pay more attention to them than to ordinary people. But you can't suppose we're in that class; we were at the theater too, you know, part of the ordinary crowd. Still, if you did run into any wise men, other than yourself, you'd certainly be ashamed at the thought of doing anything ugly in front of them. Is that what you mean?"

'That's true," he said.

"On the other hand, you wouldn't be ashamed to do something ugly
d in front of ordinary people. Is that it?"

At that point Phaedrus interrupted: "Agathon, my friend, if you an-

swer Socrates, he'll no longer care whether we get anywhere with what we're doing here, so long as he has a partner for discussion. Especially if he's handsome. Now, like you, I enjoy listening to Socrates in discussion, but it is my duty to see to the praising of Love and to exact a speech from every one of this group. When each of you two has made his offering to the god, then you can have your discussion." *e*

"You're doing a beautiful job, Phaedrus," said Agathon. "There's nothing to keep me from giving my speech. Socrates will have many opportunities for discussion later."

I wish first to speak of how I ought to speak, and only then to speak. In my opinion, you see, all those who have spoken before me did not so much celebrate the god as congratulate human beings on the good things that come to them from the god. But who it is who gave these gifts, what he is like—no one has spoken about that. Now, only one method is correct for every praise, no matter whose: you must explain *195* what qualities in the subject of your speech enable him to give the benefits for which we praise him. So now, in the case of Love, it is right for us to praise him first for what he is and afterwards for his gifts.

I maintain, then, that while all the gods are happy, Love—if I may say so without giving offense—is the happiest of them all, for he is the most beautiful and the best. His great beauty lies in this: First, Phaedrus, he is the youngest of the gods.[69] He proves my point himself by fleeing *b* old age in headlong flight, fast-moving though it is (that's obvious—it comes after us faster than it should). Love was born to hate old age and will come nowhere near it. Love always lives with young people and is one of them: the old story holds good that like is always drawn to like. And though on many other points I agree with Phaedrus, I do not agree with this: that Love is more ancient than Cronus and Iapetus. *c* No, I say that he is the youngest of the gods and stays young forever.

Those old stories Hesiod and Parmenides tell about the gods—those things happened under Necessity, not Love, if what they say is true. For not one of all those violent deeds would have been done—no castrations, no imprisonments—if Love had been present among them. There would have been peace and brotherhood instead, as there has been now as long as Love has been king of the gods.

d So he is young. And besides being young, he is delicate. It takes a poet as good as Homer to show how delicate the god is. For Homer says that Mischief is a god and that she is delicate—well, that her feet are delicate, anyway! He says:

> *… hers are delicate feet: not on the ground*
> *Does she draw nigh; she walks instead upon the heads of men.*[70]

e A lovely proof, I think, to show how delicate she is: she doesn't walk on anything hard; she walks only on what is soft. We shall use the same proof about Love, then, to show that he is delicate. For he walks not on earth, not even on people's skulls, which are not really soft at all, but in the softest of all the things that are, there he walks, there he has his home. For he makes his home in the characters, in the souls, of gods and men—and not even in every soul that comes along: when he encounters a soul with a harsh character, he turns away; but when he finds a soft and gentle character, he settles down in it. Always, then, he
196 is touching with his feet and with the whole of himself what is softest in the softest places. He must therefore be most delicate.

He is youngest, then, and most delicate; in addition he has a fluid, supple shape. For if he were hard, he would not be able to enfold a soul completely or escape notice when he first entered it or withdrew. Besides, his graceful good looks prove that he is balanced and fluid in his nature. Everyone knows that Love has extraordinary good looks, and between ugliness and Love there is unceasing war.

And the exquisite coloring of his skin! The way the god consorts with flowers shows that. For he never settles in anything, be it a body *b*
or a soul, that cannot flower or has lost its bloom. His place is wherever it is flowery and fragrant; there he settles, there he stays.

Enough for now about the beauty of the god, though much remains still to be said. After this, we should speak of Love's moral character.[71] The main point is that Love is neither the cause nor the victim of any injustice; he does no wrong to gods or men, nor they to him. If anything has an effect on him, it is never by violence, for violence never touches Love. And the effects he has on others are not forced, for every service *c*
we give to love we give willingly. And whatever one person agrees on with another, when both are willing, that is right and just; so say "the laws that are kings of society."[72]

And besides justice, he has the biggest share of moderation.[73] For moderation, by common agreement, is power over pleasures and passions, and no pleasure is more powerful than Love! But if they are weaker, they are under the power of Love, and *he* has the power; and because he has power over pleasures and passions, Love is exceptionally moderate.

And as for manly bravery, "Not even Ares can stand up to" Love![74] For Ares has no hold on Love, but Love does on Ares—love of *d*
Aphrodite, so runs the tale.[75] But he who has hold is more powerful than he who is held; and so, because Love has power over the bravest of the others, he is bravest of them all.

Now I have spoken about the god's justice, moderation, and bravery; his wisdom remains.[76] I must try not to leave out anything that can be said on this. In the first place—to honor *our* profession as Eryximachus did his[77]—the god is so skilled a poet that he can make others into *e*
poets: once Love touches him, *anyone* becomes a poet,

> *. . . howe'er uncultured he had been before.*[78]

This, we may fittingly observe, testifies that Love is a good poet, good, in sum, at every kind of artistic production. For you can't give
197 to another what you don't have yourself, and you can't teach what you don't know.

And as to the production of animals—who will deny that they are all born and begotten through Love's skill?

And as for artisans and professionals—don't we know that whoever has this god for a teacher ends up in the light of fame, while a man untouched by Love ends in obscurity? Apollo, for one, invented archery,
b medicine, and prophecy when desire and love showed the way. Even he, therefore, would be a pupil of Love, and so would the Muses in music, Hephaestus in bronze work, Athena in weaving, and Zeus in "the governance of gods and men."

That too is how the gods' quarrels were settled, once Love came to be among them—love of beauty, obviously, because love is not drawn to ugliness. Before that, as I said in the beginning, and as the poets say, many dreadful things happened among the gods, because Necessity
c was king. But once this god was born, all goods came to gods and men alike through love of beauty.

This is how I think of Love, Phaedrus: first, he is himself the most beautiful and the best; after that, if anyone else is at all like that, Love is responsible. I am suddenly struck by a need to say something in poetic meter,[79] that it is he who—

Gives peace to men and stillness to the sea,
d *Lays winds to rest, and careworn men to sleep.*

Love fills us with togetherness and drains all of our divisiveness away. Love calls gatherings like these together. In feasts, in dances, and in ceremonies, he gives the lead. Love moves us to mildness, removes from us wildness. He is giver of kindness, never of meanness. Gra-

cious, kindly[80]—let wise men see and gods admire! Treasure to lovers, envy to others, father of elegance, luxury, delicacy, grace, yearning, desire. Love cares well for good men, cares not for bad ones. In pain, *e* in fear, in desire, or speech, Love is our best guide and guard; he is our comrade and our savior. Ornament of all gods and men, most beautiful leader and the best! Every man should follow Love, sing beautifully his hymns, and join with him in the song he sings that charms the mind of god or man.

This, Phaedrus, is the speech I have to offer. Let it be dedicated to the god, part of it in fun, part of it moderately serious, as best I could *198* manage.

When Agathon finished, Aristodemus said, everyone there burst into applause, so becoming to himself and to the god did they think the young man's speech.

Then Socrates glanced at Eryximachus and said, "Now do you think I was foolish to feel the fear I felt before? Didn't I speak like a prophet a while ago when I said that Agathon would give an amazing speech and I would be tongue-tied?"

"You were prophetic about one thing, I think," said Eryximachus, "that Agathon would speak well. But you, tongue-tied? No, I don't believe that." *b*

"Bless you," said Socrates. "How am I not going to be tongue-tied, I or anyone else, after a speech delivered with such beauty and variety? The other parts may not have been so wonderful, but that at the end! Who would not be struck dumb on hearing the beauty of the words and phrases? Anyway, I was worried that I'd not be able to say anything that came close to them in beauty, and so I would almost have run away and escaped, if there had been a place to go. And, you see, the speech *c* reminded me of Gorgias, so that I actually experienced what Homer describes: I was afraid that Agathon would end by sending the Gorgian head,[81] awesome at speaking in a speech, against my speech, and this

would turn me to stone by striking me dumb. Then I realized how
d ridiculous I'd been to agree to join with you in praising Love and to say that I was a master of the art of love, when I knew nothing whatever of this business, of how anything whatever ought to be praised. In my foolishness, I thought you should tell the truth about whatever you praise, that this should be your basis, and that from this a speaker should select the most beautiful truths and arrange them most suitably. I was quite vain, thinking that I would talk well and that I knew the truth about praising anything whatever. But now it appears that this is
e not what it is to praise anything whatever; rather, it is to apply to the object the grandest and the most beautiful qualities, whether he actually has them or not. And if they are false, that is no objection; for the proposal, apparently, was that everyone here make the rest of us think he is praising Love—and not that he actually praise him. I think that is why you stir up every word and apply it to Love; your description of
199 him and his gifts is designed to make him look better and more beautiful than anything else—to ignorant listeners, plainly, for of course he wouldn't look that way to those who knew. And your praise did seem beautiful and respectful. But I didn't even know the method for giving praise; and it was in ignorance that I agreed to take part in this. So "the tongue" promised, and "the mind" did not.[82] Goodbye to that! I'm not giving another eulogy using that method, not at all—I wouldn't be able
b to do it!—but, if you wish, I'd like to tell the truth my way. I want to avoid any comparison with your speeches, so as not to give you a reason to laugh at me. So look, Phaedrus, would a speech like this satisfy your requirement? You will hear the truth about Love, and the words and phrasing will take care of themselves."

Then Aristodemus said that Phaedrus and the others urged him to speak in the way he thought was required, whatever it was.

"Well then, Phaedrus," said Socrates, "allow me to ask Agathon a
c few little questions, so that, once I have his agreement, I may speak on that basis."

"You have my permission," said Phaedrus. "Ask away."

After that, said Aristodemus, Socrates began: "Indeed, Agathon, my friend, I thought you led the way beautifully into your speech when you said that one should first show the qualities of Love himself, and only then those of his deeds. I must admire that beginning. Come, then, since you have beautifully and magnificently expounded his qualities *d* in other ways, tell me this, too, about Love. Is Love such as to be a love of something or of nothing? I'm not asking if he is born *of* some mother or father, (for the question whether Love is love of mother or of father would really be ridiculous), but it's as if I'm asking this about a father—whether a father is the father *of* something or not. You'd tell me, of course, if you wanted to give me a good answer, that it's *of* a son or a daughter that a father is the father. Wouldn't you?"

"Certainly," said Agathon.

"Then does the same go for the mother?"

He agreed to that also. *e*

"Well, then," said Socrates, "answer a little more fully, and you will understand better what I want. If I should ask, 'What about this: a brother, just insofar as he *is* a brother, is he the brother of something or not?' "

He said that he was.

"And he's of a brother or a sister, isn't he?"

He agreed.

"Now try to tell me about love," he said. "Is Love the love of nothing or of something?"

"Of something, surely!" *200*

"Then keep this object of love in mind, and remember what it is.[83] But tell me this much: does Love desire that of which it is the love, or not?"

"Certainly," he said.

"At the time he desires and loves something, does he actually have what he desires and loves at that time, or doesn't he?"

"He doesn't. At least, that wouldn't be likely," he said.

"Instead of what's *likely*," said Socrates, "ask yourself whether it's
b *necessary* that this be so: a thing that desires desires something of which it is in need; otherwise, if it were not in need, it would not desire it. I can't tell you, Agathon, how strongly it strikes me that this is necessary. But how about you?"

"I think so too."

"Good. Now then, would someone who is tall, want to be tall? Or someone who is strong want to be strong?"

"Impossible, on the basis of what we've agreed."

"Presumably because no one is in need of those things he already has."

"True."

"But maybe a strong man could want to be strong," said Socrates, "or a fast one fast, or a healthy one healthy: in cases like these, you
c might think people really do want to be things they already are and do want to have qualities they already have—I bring them up so they won't deceive us. But in these cases, Agathon, if you stop to think about them, you will see that these people are what they are at the present time, whether they want to be or not, by a logical necessity. And who, may I ask, would ever bother to desire what's necessary in any event? But when someone says 'I am healthy, but that's just what I want to be,' or 'I am rich, but that's just what I want to be,' or 'I desire the
d very things that I have,' let us say to him: 'You already have riches and health and strength in your possession, my man, what you want is to possess these things in time to come, since in the present, whether you want to or not, you have them. Whenever you say, *I desire what I already have*, ask yourself whether you don't mean this: *I want the things I have now to be mine in the future as well.*' Wouldn't he agree?"

According to Aristodemus, Agathon said that he would.

So Socrates said, "Then this is what it is to love something which is

not at hand, which the lover does not have: it is to desire the preservation of what he now has in time to come, so that he will have it then."

e

"Quite so," he said.

"So such a man or anyone else who has a desire desires what is not at hand and not present, what he does not have, and what he is not, and that of which he is in need; for such are the objects of desire and love."

"Certainly," he said.

"Come, then," said Socrates. "Let us review the points on which we've agreed. Aren't they, first, that Love is the love of something, and, second, that he loves things of which he has a present need?" *201*

"Yes," he said.

"Now, remember, in addition to these points, what you said in your speech about what it is that Love loves. If you like, I'll remind you. I think you said something like this: that the gods' quarrels were settled by love of beautiful things, for there is no love of ugly ones.[84] Didn't you say something like that?"

"I did," said Agathon.

"And that's a suitable thing to say, my friend," said Socrates. "But if this is so, wouldn't Love have to be a desire for beauty, and never for ugliness?"

He agreed. *b*

"And we also agreed that he loves just what he needs and does not have."

"Yes," he said.

"So Love needs beauty, then, and does not have it."

"Necessarily," he said.

"So! If something needs beauty and has got no beauty at all, would you still say that it is beautiful?"

"Certainly not."

"Then do you still agree that Love is beautiful, if those things are so?"

c Then Agathon said, "It turns out, Socrates, I didn't know what I was talking about in that speech."

"It was a beautiful speech, anyway, Agathon," said Socrates. "Now take it a little further. Don't you think that good things are always beautiful as well?"

"I do."

"Then if Love needs beautiful things, and if all good things are beautiful, he will need good things too."

"As for me, Socrates," he said, "I am unable to contradict you. Let it be as you say."

"Then it's the truth, my beloved Agathon, that you are unable to contradict," he said. "It is not hard at all to contradict Socrates."

d Now I'll let you go. I shall try to go through for you the speech about Love I once heard from a woman of Mantinea, Diotima—a woman who was wise about many things besides this: once she even put off the plague for ten years by telling the Athenians what sacrifices to make. She is the one who taught me the art of love, and I shall go through her speech as best I can on my own, using what Agathon and I have agreed to as a basis.

Following your lead, Agathon, one should first describe who Love is
e and what he is like, and afterwards describe his works—I think it will be easiest for me to proceed the way Diotima did and tell you how she questioned me.

You see, I had told her almost the same things Agathon told me just now: that Love is a great god and that he belongs to beautiful things.[85] And she used the very same arguments against me that I used against Agathon; she showed how, according to my very own speech, Love is neither beautiful nor good.

So I said, "What do you mean, Diotima? Is Love ugly, then, and bad?"

But she said, "Watch your tongue! Do you really think that, if a thing *202*
is not beautiful, it has to be ugly?"

"I certainly do."

"And if a thing's not wise, it's ignorant? Or haven't you found out yet that there's something in between wisdom and ignorance?"

"What's that?"

"It's judging things correctly without being able to give a reason. Surely you see that this is not the same as knowing—for how could knowledge be unreasoning? And it's not ignorance either—for how could what hits the truth be ignorance? Correct judgment, of course, has this character: it is *in between* understanding and ignorance."

"True," said I, "as you say." *b*

"Then don't force whatever is not beautiful to be ugly, or whatever is not good to be bad. It's the same with Love: when you agree he is neither good nor beautiful, you need not think he is ugly and bad; he could be something in between," she said.

"Yet everyone agrees he's a great god," I said.

"Only those who don't know?" she said. "Is that how you mean 'everyone'? Or do you include those who do know?"

"Oh, everyone together."

And she laughed. "Socrates, how could those who say that he's not a god at all agree that he's a great god?" *c*

"Who says that?" I asked.

"You, for one," she said, "and I for another."

"How can you say this!" I exclaimed.

"That's easy," said she. "Tell me, wouldn't you say that all gods are beautiful and happy? Surely you'd never say a god is not beautiful or happy?"

"Zeus! Not I," I said.

"Well, by calling anyone 'happy,' don't you mean they possess good and beautiful things?"

d "Certainly."

"What about Love? You agreed he needs good and beautiful things, and that's why he desires them—because he needs them."

"I certainly did."

"Then how could he be a god if he has no share in good and beautiful things?"

"There's no way he could, apparently."

"Now do you see? You don't believe Love is a god either!"

"Then, what could Love be?" I asked. "A mortal?"

"Certainly not."

"Then, what is he?"

"He's like what we mentioned before," she said. "He is in between mortal and immortal."

"What do you mean, Diotima?"

"He's a great spirit, Socrates. Everything spiritual, you see, is in be-

e tween god and mortal."

"What is their function?" I asked.

"They are messengers who shuttle back and forth between the two, conveying prayer and sacrifice from men to gods, while to men they bring commands from the gods and gifts in return for sacrifices. Being in the middle of the two, they round out the whole and bind fast the

203 all to all. Through them all divination passes, through them the art of priests in sacrifice and ritual, in enchantment, prophecy, and sorcery. Gods do not mix with men; they mingle and converse with us through spirits instead, whether we are awake or asleep. He who is wise in any of these ways is a man of the spirit, but he who is wise in any other way, in a profession or any manual work, is merely a mechanic. These spirits are many and various, then, and one of them is Love."

b "Who are his father and mother?" I asked.

"That's rather a long story," she said. "I'll tell it to you, all the same."

"When Aphrodite was born, the gods held a celebration. Poros, the son of Metis, was there among them.[86] When they had feasted, Penia came begging, as poverty does when there's a party, and stayed by the gates. Now Poros got drunk on nectar (there was no wine yet, you see) and, feeling drowsy, went into the garden of Zeus, where he fell asleep. Then Penia schemed up a plan to relieve her lack of resources: *c*
she would get a child from Poros. So she lay beside him and got pregnant with Love. That is why Love was born to follow Aphrodite and serve her: because he was conceived on the day of her birth. And that's why he is also by nature a lover of beauty, because Aphrodite herself is especially beautiful.

"As the son of Poros and Penia, his lot in life is set to be like theirs. In the first place, he is always poor, and he's far from being delicate and beautiful (as ordinary people think he is); instead, he is tough and *d*
shriveled and shoeless and homeless, always lying on the dirt without a bed, sleeping at people's doorsteps and in roadsides under the sky, having his mother's nature, always living with Need. But on his father's side he is a schemer after the beautiful and the good; he is brave, impetuous, and intense, an awesome hunter, always weaving snares, resourceful in his pursuit of intelligence, a lover of wisdom[87] through all his life, a genius with enchantments, potions, and clever pleadings.

"He is by nature neither immortal nor mortal. But now he springs *e*
to life when he gets his way; now he dies—all in the very same day. Because he is his father's son, however, he keeps coming back to life, but then anything he finds his way to always slips away, and for this reason Love is never completely without resources, nor is he ever rich.

"He is in between wisdom and ignorance as well. In fact, you see, *204*
none of the gods loves wisdom or wants to become wise—for they are wise—and no one else who is wise already loves wisdom; on the other hand, no one who is ignorant will love wisdom either or want

to become wise. For what's especially difficult about being ignorant is that you are content with yourself, even though you're neither beautiful and good nor intelligent. If you don't think you need anything, of course you won't want what you don't think you need."

"In that case, Diotima, who *are* the people who love wisdom, if they
b are neither wise nor ignorant?"

"That's obvious," she said. "A child could tell you. Those who love wisdom fall in between those two extremes. And Love is one of them, because he is in love with what is beautiful, and wisdom is extremely beautiful. It follows that Love *must* be a lover of wisdom and, as such, is in between being wise and being ignorant. This, too, comes to him from his parentage, from a father who is wise and resourceful and a mother who is not wise and lacks resource.

"My dear Socrates, that, then, is the nature of the Spirit called Love.
c Considering what you thought about Love, it's no surprise that you were led into thinking of Love as you did. On the basis of what you say, I conclude that you thought Love was *being loved*, rather than *being a lover*. I think that's why Love struck you as beautiful in every way: because it is what is really beautiful and graceful that deserves to be loved, and this is perfect and highly blessed; but being a lover takes a different form, which I have just described."

So I said, "All right then, my friend. What you say about Love is
d beautiful, but if you're right, what use is Love to human beings?"

"I'll try to teach you that, Socrates, after I finish this. So far I've been explaining the character and the parentage of Love. Now, according to you, he is love for beautiful things. But suppose someone asks us, 'Socrates and Diotima, what is the point of loving beautiful things?'

"It's clearer this way: 'The lover of beautiful things has a desire; what does he desire?' "

"That they become his own," I said.

"But that answer calls for still another question, that is, 'What will

this man have, when the beautiful things he wants have become his own?' "

I said there was no way I could give a ready answer to that question. *e*

Then she said, "Suppose someone changes the question, putting 'good' in place of 'beautiful,' and asks you this: 'Tell me, Socrates, a lover of good things has a desire; what does he desire?' "

"That they become his own," I said.

"And what will he have, when the good things he wants have become his own?"

"This time it's easier to come up with the answer," I said. "He'll have happiness. "[88] *205*

"That's what makes happy people happy, isn't it—possessing good things. There's no need to ask further, 'What's the point of wanting happiness?' The answer you gave seems to be final."

"True," I said.

"Now this desire for happiness, this kind of love—do you think it is common to all human beings and that everyone wants to have good things forever and ever? What would you say?"

"Just that," I said. "It is common to all."

"Then, Socrates, why don't we say that everyone is in love," she *b* asked, "since everyone always loves the same things? Instead, we say some people are in love and others not; why is that?"

"I wonder about that myself," I said.

"It's nothing to wonder about," she said. "It's because we divide out a special kind of love, and we refer to it by the word that means the whole—'love'; and for the other kinds of love we use other words."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, you know, for example, that 'poetry' has a very wide range.[89] After all, everything that is responsible for creating something out of *c* nothing is a kind of poetry; and so all the creations of every craft and

profession are themselves a kind of poetry, and everyone who practices a craft is a poet."

"True."

"Nevertheless," she said, "as you also know, these craftsmen are not called poets. We have other words for them, and out of the whole of poetry we have marked off one part, the part the Muses give us with melody and rhythm, and we refer to this by the word that means the whole. For this alone is called 'poetry,' and those who practice this part of poetry are called poets."

d "True."

"That's also how it is with love. The main point is this: every desire for good things or for happiness is 'the supreme and treacherous love' in everyone. But those who pursue this along any of its many other ways—through making money, or through the love of sports, or through philosophy—we don't say that *these* people are in love, and we don't call them lovers. It's only when people are devoted exclusively to one special kind of love that we use these words that really belong to the whole of it: 'love' and 'in love' and 'lovers.' "

"I am beginning to see your point," I said.

e "Now there is a certain story," she said, "according to which lovers are those people who seek their other halves. But according to my story, a lover does not seek the half or the whole, unless, my friend, it turns out to be good as well. I say this because people are even willing to cut off their own arms and legs if they think they are diseased. I don't think an individual takes joy in what belongs to him personally unless by 'belonging to me' he means 'good' and by 'belonging to another' he means 'bad.' That's because what everyone loves is really nothing
206 other than the good. Do you disagree?"

"Zeus! Not I," I said.

"Now, then," she said. "Can we simply say that people love the good?"

"Yes," I said.

"But shouldn't we add that, in loving it, they want the good to be theirs?"

"We should."

"And not only that," she said. "They want the good to be theirs forever, don't they?"

"We should add that too."

"In a word, then, love is wanting to possess the good forever."

"That's very true," I said. *b*

"This, then, is the object of love,"[90] she said. "Now, how do lovers pursue it? We'd rightly say that when they are in love they do something with eagerness and zeal. But what is it precisely that they do? Can you say?"

"If I could," I said, "I wouldn't be your student, filled with admiration for your wisdom, and trying to learn these very things."

"Well, I'll tell you," she said. "It is giving birth in beauty,[91] whether in body or in soul."

"It would take divination to figure out what you mean. I can't." *c*

"Well, I'll tell you more clearly," she said. "All of us are pregnant, Socrates, both in body and in soul, and, as soon as we come to a certain age, we naturally desire to give birth. Now no one can possibly give birth in anything ugly; only in something beautiful. That's because when a man and a woman come together in order to give birth, this is a godly affair. Pregnancy, reproduction—this is an immortal thing for a mortal animal to do, and it cannot occur in anything that is out of harmony, but ugliness is out of harmony with all that is godly. *d* Beauty, however, is in harmony with the divine. Therefore the goddess who presides at childbirth—she's called Moira or Eilithuia—is really Beauty.[92] That's why, whenever pregnant animals or persons draw near to beauty, they become gentle and joyfully disposed and give birth and reproduce; but near ugliness they are foulfaced and draw back in

pain; they turn away and shrink back and do not reproduce, and because they hold on to what they carry inside them, the labor is painful.
e This is the source of the great excitement about beauty that comes to anyone who is pregnant and already teeming with life: beauty releases them from their great pain. You see, Socrates," she said, "what Love wants is not beauty, as you think it is."

"Well, what is it, then?"

"Reproduction and birth in beauty."

"Maybe," I said.

"Certainly," she said. "Now, why reproduction? It's because repro-
207 duction goes on forever; it is what mortals have in place of immortality. A lover must desire immortality along with the good, if what we agreed earlier was right, that Love wants to possess the good forever. It follows from our argument that Love must desire immortality."

All this she taught me, on those occasions when she spoke on the art of love. And once she asked, "What do you think causes love and desire, Socrates? Don't you see what an awful state a wild animal is in
b when it wants to reproduce? Footed and winged animals alike, all are plagued by the disease of Love. First they are sick for intercourse with each other, then for nurturing their young—for their sake the weakest animals stand ready to do battle against the strongest and even to die for them, and they may be racked with famine in order to feed their young. They would do anything for their sake. Human beings, you'd
c think, would do this because they understand the reason for it; but what causes wild animals to be in such a state of love? Can you say?"

And I said again that I didn't know.

So she said, "How do you think you'll ever master the art of love, if you don't know that?"

"But that's why I came to you, Diotima, as I just said. I knew I needed a teacher. So tell me what causes this, and everything else that belongs to the art of love."

"If you really believe that Love by its nature aims at what we have often agreed it does, then don't be surprised at the answer," she said. *d*
"For among animals the principle is the same as with us, and mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and be immortal. And this is possible in one way only: by reproduction, because it always leaves behind a new young one in place of the old. Even while each living thing is said to be alive and to be the same—as a person is said to be the same from childhood till he turns into an old man—even then he never consists of the same things, though he is called the same, but he is always being renewed and in other respects passing away, in his hair and *e*
flesh and bones and blood and his entire body. And it's not just in his body, but in his soul, too, for none of his manners, customs, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, or fears ever remains the same, but some are coming to be in him while others are passing away. And what is still far stranger than that is that not only does one branch of knowledge *208*
come to be in us while another passes away and that we are never the same even in respect of our knowledge, but that each single piece of knowledge has the same fate. For what we call *studying* exists because knowledge is leaving us, because forgetting is the departure of knowledge, while studying puts back a fresh memory in place of what went away, thereby preserving a piece of knowledge, so that it seems to be the same. And in that way everything mortal is preserved, not, like the divine, by always being the same in every way, but because what is *b*
departing and aging leaves behind something new, something such as it had been. By this device, Socrates," she said, "what is mortal shares in immortality, whether it is a body or anything else, while the immortal has another way. So don't be surprised if everything naturally values its own offspring, because it is for the sake of immortality that everything shows this zeal, which is Love."

Yet when I heard her speech I was amazed, and spoke: "Well," said I, "Most wise Diotima, is this really the way it is?" *c*

And in the manner of a perfect sophist she said, "Be sure of it, Socrates. Look, if you will, at how human beings seek honor. You'd be amazed at their irrationality, if you didn't have in mind what I spoke about and if you hadn't pondered the awful state of love they're in, wanting to become famous and 'to lay up glory immortal forever,' and how they're ready to brave any danger for the sake of this, much more than they are for their children; and they are prepared to spend money, suffer through all sorts of ordeals, and even die for the sake of glory.
d Do you really think that Alcestis would have died for Admetus," she asked, "or that Achilles would have died after Patroclus, or that your Codrus would have died so as to preserve the throne for his sons,[93] if they hadn't expected the memory of their virtue—which we still hold in honor—to be immortal? Far from it," she said. "I believe that anyone will do anything for the sake of immortal virtue and the glorious
e fame that follows; and the better the people, the more they will do, for they are all in love with immortality.

"Now, some people are pregnant in body, and for this reason turn more to women and pursue love in that way, providing themselves through childbirth with immortality and remembrance and happiness, as they think, for all time to come; while others are pregnant in soul—
209 because there surely *are* those who are even more pregnant in their souls than in their bodies, and these are pregnant with what is fitting for a soul to bear and bring to birth. And what is fitting? Wisdom and the rest of virtue, which all poets beget, as well as all the craftsmen who are said to be creative. But by far the greatest and most beautiful part of wisdom deals with the proper ordering of cities and households, and that is called moderation and justice. When someone has been preg-
b nant with these in his soul from early youth, while he is still a virgin, and, having arrived at the proper age, desires to beget and give birth, he too will certainly go about seeking the beauty in which he would beget; for he will never beget in anything ugly. Since he is pregnant,

then, he is much more drawn to bodies that are beautiful than to those that are ugly; and if he also has the luck to find a soul that is beautiful and noble and well-formed, he is even more drawn to this combination; such a man makes him instantly teem with ideas and arguments about virtue—the qualities a virtuous man should have and the customary activities in which he should engage; and so he tries to educate him. In my view, you see, when he makes contact with someone beautiful and keeps company with him, he conceives and gives birth to what he has been carrying inside him for ages. And whether they are together or apart, he remembers that beauty. And in common with him he nurtures the newborn; such people, therefore, have much more to share than do the parents of human children, and have a firmer bond of friendship, because the children in whom they have a share are more beautiful and more immortal. Everyone would rather have such children than human ones, and would look up to Homer, Hesiod, and the other good poets with envy and admiration for the offspring they have left behind—offspring, which, because they are immortal themselves, provide their parents with immortal glory and remembrance. For example," she said, "those are the sort of children Lycurgus[94] left behind in Sparta as the saviors of Sparta and virtually all of Greece. Among you the honor goes to Solon for his creation of your laws. Other men in other places everywhere, Greek or barbarian, have brought a host of beautiful deeds into the light and begotten every kind of virtue. Already many shrines have sprung up to honor them for their immortal children, which hasn't happened yet to anyone for human offspring.

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"Even you, Socrates, could probably come to be initiated into these rites of love. But as for the purpose of these rites when they are done correctly—that is the final and highest mystery, and I don't know if you are capable of it. I myself will tell you," she said, "and I won't stint any effort. And you must try to follow if you can.

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"A lover who goes about this matter correctly must begin in his

youth to devote himself to beautiful bodies. First, if the leader[95] leads aright, he should love one body and beget beautiful ideas there; then
b he should realize that the beauty of any one body is brother to the beauty of any other and that if he is to pursue beauty of form he'd be very foolish not to think that the beauty of all bodies is one and the same. When he grasps this, he must become a lover of all beautiful bodies, and he must think that this wild gaping after just one body is a small thing and despise it.

"After this he must think that the beauty of people's souls is more valuable than the beauty of their bodies, so that if someone is decent
c in his soul, even though he is scarcely blooming in his body, our lover must be content to love and care for him and to seek to give birth to such ideas as will make young men better. The result is that our lover will be forced to gaze at the beauty of activities and laws and to see that all this is akin to itself, with the result that he will think that the beauty of bodies is a thing of no importance. After customs he must move on to various kinds of knowledge. The result is that he will see
d the beauty of knowledge and be looking mainly not at beauty in a single example—as a servant would who favored the beauty of a little boy or a man or a single custom (being a slave, of course, he's low and small-minded)—but the lover is turned to the great sea of beauty, and, gazing upon this, he gives birth to many gloriously beautiful ideas and theories, in unstinting love of wisdom,[96] until, having grown and been
e strengthened there, he catches sight of such knowledge, and it is the knowledge of such beauty …

"Try to pay attention to me," she said, "as best you can. You see, the man who has been thus far guided in matters of Love, who has beheld beautiful things in the right order and correctly, is coming now to the goal of Loving: all of a sudden he will catch sight of something wonderfully beautiful in its nature; that, Socrates, is the reason for all
211 his earlier labors:

"First, it always *is* and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes. Second, it is not beautiful this way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another; nor is it beautiful here but ugly there, as it would be if it were beautiful for some people and ugly for others. Nor will the beautiful appear to him in the guise of a face or hands or anything else that belongs to the body. It will not appear to him as one idea or one kind of knowledge. It is not anywhere in another thing, as in an animal, or in earth, or in heaven, or in anything else, *b* but itself by itself with itself, it is always one in form; and all the other beautiful things share in that, in such a way that when those others come to be or pass away, this does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change. So when someone rises by these stages, through loving boys correctly, and begins to see this beauty, he has almost grasped his goal. This is what it is to go aright, or be led by *c* another, into the mystery of Love: one goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives[97] in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful. *d*

"And there in life, Socrates, my friend," said the woman from Mantinea, "there if anywhere should a person live his life, beholding that Beauty. If you once see that, it won't occur to you to measure beauty by gold or clothing or beautiful boys and youths—who, if you see them now, strike you out of your senses, and make you, you and many others, eager to be with the boys you love and look at them forever, if there were any way to do that, forgetting food and drink, everything but looking at them and being with them. But how would it be, in our *e* view," she said, "if someone got to see the Beautiful itself, absolute,

pure, unmixed, not polluted by human flesh or colors or any other
212 great nonsense of mortality, but if he could see the divine Beauty itself in its one form? Do you think it would be a poor life for a human being to look there and to behold it by that which he ought, and to be with it? Or haven't you remembered," she said, "that in that life alone, when he looks at Beauty in the only way that Beauty can be seen—only then will it become possible for him to give birth not to images of virtue (because he's in touch with no images), but to true virtue (because he is in touch with the true Beauty). The love of the gods belongs to anyone who has given birth to true virtue and nour-
b ished it, and if any human being could become immortal, it would be he."

This, Phaedrus and the rest of you, was what Diotima told me. I was persuaded. And once persuaded, I try to persuade others too that human nature can find no better workmate for acquiring this than Love. That's why I say that every man must honor Love, why I honor the rites of Love myself and practice them with special diligence, and why I commend them to others. Now and always I praise the power and
c courage of Love so far as I am able. Consider this speech, then, Phaedrus, if you wish, a speech in praise of Love. Or if not, call it whatever and however you please to call it.

Socrates' speech finished to loud applause. Meanwhile, Aristophanes was trying to make himself heard over their cheers in order to make a response to something Socrates had said about his own speech.[98] Then, all of a sudden, there was even more noise. A large drunken party had arrived at the courtyard door and they were rattling it loudly, accompanied by the shrieks of some flute-girl they had brought along. Agathon at that point called to his slaves:

d "Go see who it is. If it's people we know, invite them in. If not, tell them the party's over, and we're about to turn in."

A moment later they heard Alcibiades shouting in the courtyard, very drunk and very loud. He wanted to know where Agathon was, he demanded to see Agathon at once. Actually, he was half-carried into the house by the flute-girl and by some other companions of his, but, *e* at the door, he managed to stand by himself, crowned with a beautiful wreath of violets and ivy and ribbons in his hair.

"Good evening, gentlemen. I'm plastered," he announced. "May I join your party? Or should I crown Agathon with this wreath—which is all I came to do, anyway—and make myself scarce? I really couldn't make it yesterday," he continued, "but nothing could stop me tonight! See, I'm wearing the garland myself. I want this crown to come directly from my head to the head that belongs, I don't mind saying, to the cleverest and best looking man in town. Ah, you laugh; you think I'm drunk! Fine, go ahead—I know I'm right anyway. Well, what do you *213* say? May I join you on these terms? Will you have a drink with me or not?"

Naturally they all made a big fuss. They implored him to join them, they begged him to take a seat, and Agathon called him to his side. So Alcibiades, again with the help of his friends, approached Agathon. At the same time, he kept trying to take his ribbons off so that he could crown Agathon with them, but all he succeeded in doing was to push them further down his head until they finally slipped over his eyes. What with the ivy and all, he didn't see Socrates, who had made room for him on the couch as soon as he saw him. So Alcibiades sat down between Socrates and Agathon and, as soon as he did so, he put his *b* arms around Agathon, kissed him, and placed the ribbons on his head.

Agathon asked his slaves to take Alcibiades' sandals off. "We can all three fit on my couch," he said.

"What a good idea!" Alcibiades replied. "But wait a moment! Who's the third?"

As he said this, he turned around, and it was only then that he saw

Socrates. No sooner had he seen him than he leaped up and cried:

"Good lord, what's going on here? It's Socrates! You've trapped me
c again! You always do this to me—all of a sudden you'll turn up out of nowhere where I least expect you! Well, what do you want now? Why did you choose this particular couch? Why aren't you with Aristophanes or anyone else we could tease you about? But no, you figured out a way to find a place next to the most handsome man in the room!"

"I beg you, Agathon," Socrates said, "protect me from this man! You
d can't imagine what it's like to be in love with him: from the very first moment he realized how I felt about him, he hasn't allowed me to say two words to anybody else—what am I saying, I can't so much as look at an attractive man but he flies into a fit of jealous rage. He yells; he threatens; he can hardly keep from slapping me around! Please, try to keep him under control. Could you perhaps make him forgive me? And if you can't, if he gets violent, will you defend me? The fierceness of his passion terrifies me!"

"I shall never forgive you!" Alcibiades cried. "I promise you, you'll
e pay for this! But for the moment," he said, turning to Agathon, "give me some of these ribbons. I'd better make a wreath for him as well—look at that magnificent head! Otherwise, I know, he'll make a scene. He'll be grumbling that, though I crowned you for your first victory, I didn't honor him even though he has never lost an argument in his life."

So Alcibiades took the ribbons, arranged them on Socrates' head, and lay back on the couch. Immediately, however, he started up again:

"Friends, you look sober to me; we can't have that! Let's have a drink! Remember our agreement? We need a master of ceremonies; who should it be? … Well, at least till you are all too drunk to care, I elect … myself! Who else? Agathon, I want the largest cup around …
214 No! Wait! You! Bring me that cooling jar over there!"

He'd seen the cooling jar, and he realized it could hold more than two quarts of wine. He had the slaves fill it to the brim, drained it, and ordered them to fill it up again for Socrates.

"Not that the trick will have any effect on *him*," he told the group. "Socrates will drink whatever you put in front of him, but no one yet has seen him drunk."

The slave filled the jar and, while Socrates was drinking, Eryximachus said to Alcibiades:

"This is certainly most improper. We cannot simply pour the wine *b* down our throats in silence: we must have some conversation, or at least a song. What we are doing now is hardly civilized."

What Alcibiades said to him was this:

"O Eryximachus, best possible son to the best possible, the most temperate father: Hi!"

"Greetings to you, too," Eryximachus replied. "Now what do you suggest we do?"

"Whatever you say. Ours to obey you, 'For a medical mind is worth a million others'.[99] Please prescribe what you think fit."

"Listen to me," Eryximachus said. "Earlier this evening we decided *c* to use this occasion to offer a series of encomia of Love. We all took our turn—in good order, from left to right—and gave our speeches, each according to his ability. You are the only one not to have spoken yet, though, if I may say so, you have certainly drunk your share. It's only proper, therefore, that you take your turn now. After you have spoken, you can decide on a topic for Socrates on your right; he can then do the same for the man to his right, and we can go around the table once again."

"Well said, O Eryximachus," Alcibiades replied. "But do you really think it's fair to put my drunken ramblings next to your sober orations? And anyway, my dear fellow, I hope you didn't believe a single word *d*

Socrates said: the truth is just the opposite! He's the one who will most surely beat me up if I dare praise anyone else in his presence—even a god!"

"Hold your tongue!" Socrates said.

"By god, don't you dare deny it!" Alcibiades shouted. "I would never—*never*—praise anyone else with you around."

e "Well, why not just do that, if you want?" Eryximachus suggested. "Why don't you offer an encomium to Socrates?"

"What do you mean?" asked Alcibiades. "Do you really think so, Eryximachus? Should I unleash myself upon him? Should I give him his punishment in front of all of you?"

"Now, wait a minute," Socrates said. "What do you have in mind? Are you going to praise me only in order to mock me? Is that it?"

"I'll only tell the truth—please, let me!"

"I would certainly like to hear the truth from you. By all means, go ahead," Socrates replied.

"Nothing can stop me now," said Alcibiades. "But here's what you can do: if I say anything that's not true, you can just interrupt, if you want, and correct me; at worst, there'll be mistakes in my speech, not
215 lies. But you can't hold it against me if I don't get everything in the right order—I'll say things as they come to mind. It is no easy task for one in my condition to give a smooth and orderly account of your bizarreness!"

I'll try to praise Socrates, my friends, but I'll have to use an image. And though he may think I'm trying to make fun of him, I assure you my image is no joke: it aims at the truth. Look at him! Isn't he just like
b a statue of Silenus? You know the kind of statue I mean; you'll find them in any shop in town. It's a Silenus sitting, his flute[100] or his pipes in his hands, and it's hollow. It's split right down the middle, and inside it's full of tiny statues of the gods. Now look at him again! Isn't he also just like the satyr Marsyas?[101]

Nobody, not even you, Socrates, can deny that you *look* like them. But the resemblance goes beyond appearance, as you're about to hear.

You are impudent, contemptuous, and vile! No? If you won't admit it, I'll bring witnesses. And you're quite a fluteplayer, aren't you? In fact, you're much more marvelous than Marsyas, who needed instruments to cast his spells on people. And so does anyone who plays *c*
his tunes today—for even the tunes Olympus[102] played are Marsyas' work, since Olympus learned everything from him. Whether they are played by the greatest flautist or the meanest flute-girl, his melodies have in themselves the power to possess and so reveal those people who are ready for the god and his mysteries. That's because his melodies are themselves divine. The only difference between you and Marsyas is that you need no instruments; you do exactly what he does, but with words alone. You know, people hardly ever take a speaker se- *d*
riously, even if he's the greatest orator; but let anyone—man, woman, or child—listen to you or even to a poor account of what you say—and we are all transported, completely possessed.

If I were to describe for you what an extraordinary effect his words have always had on me (I can feel it this moment even as I'm speaking), you might actually suspect that I'm drunk! Still, I swear to you, the *e*
moment he starts to speak, I am beside myself: my heart starts leaping in my chest, the tears come streaming down my face, even the frenzied Corybantes[103] seem sane compared to me—and, let me tell you, I am not alone. I have heard Pericles and many other great orators, and I have admired their speeches. But nothing like this ever happened to me: they never upset me so deeply that my very own soul started protesting that my life—*my* life!—was no better than the most miserable slave's. And yet that is exactly how this Marsyas here at my side makes me feel *216*
all the time: he makes it seem that my life isn't worth living! You can't say that isn't true, Socrates. I know very well that you could make me feel that way this very moment if I gave you half a chance. He always traps me, you see, and he makes me admit that my political career is

a waste of time, while all that matters is just what I most neglect: my personal shortcomings, which cry out for the closest attention. So I
b refuse to listen to him; I stop my ears and tear myself away from him, for, like the Sirens, he could make me stay by his side till I die.

Socrates is the only man in the world who has made me feel shame—ah, you didn't think I had it in me, did you? Yes, he makes me feel ashamed: I know perfectly well that I can't prove he's wrong when he tells me what I should do; yet, the moment I leave his side, I go back to my old ways: I cave in to my desire to please the crowd. My whole life has become one constant effort to escape from him and keep away,
c but when I see him, I feel deeply ashamed, because I'm doing nothing about my way of life, though I have already agreed with him that I should. Sometimes, believe me, I think I would be happier if he were dead. And yet I know that if he dies I'll be even more miserable. I can't live with him, and I can't live without him! What *can* I do about him?

That's the effect of this satyr's music—on me and many others. But that's the least of it. He's like these creatures in all sorts of other ways; his powers are really extraordinary. Let me tell you about them, be-
d cause, you can be sure of it, none of you really understands him. But, now I've started, I'm going to show you what he really is.

To begin with, he's crazy about beautiful boys; he constantly follows them around in a perpetual daze. Also, he likes to say he's ignorant and knows nothing. Isn't this just like Silenus? Of course it is! And all this is just on the surface, like the outsides of those statues of Silenus. I wonder, my fellow drinkers, if you have any idea what a sober and temperate man he proves to be once you have looked inside. Believe me, it couldn't matter less to him whether a boy is beautiful. You can't
e imagine how little he cares whether a person is beautiful, or rich, or famous in any other way that most people admire. He considers all these possessions beneath contempt, and that's exactly how he considers all of us as well. In public, I tell you, his whole life is one big game—a

game of irony. I don't know if any of you have seen him when he's really serious. But I once caught him when he was open like Silenus' statues, and I had a glimpse of the figures he keeps hidden within: they were so godlike—so bright and beautiful, so utterly amazing—that I 217
no longer had a choice—I just had to do whatever he told me.

What I thought at the time was that what he really wanted was *me*, and that seemed to me the luckiest coincidence: all I had to do was to let him have his way with me, and he would teach me everything he knew—believe me, I had a lot of confidence in my looks. Naturally, up to that time we'd never been alone together; one of my attendants had always been present. But with this in mind, I sent the attendant away, and met Socrates alone. (You see, in this company I must tell the whole b
truth: so pay attention. And, Socrates, if I say anything untrue, I want you to correct me.)

So there I was, my friends, alone with him at last. My idea, naturally, was that he'd take advantage of the opportunity to tell me whatever it is that lovers say when they find themselves alone; I relished the moment. But no such luck! Nothing of the sort occurred. Socrates had his usual sort of conversation with me, and at the end of the day he went off. c

My next idea was to invite him to the gymnasium with me. We took exercise together, and I was sure that this would lead to something. He took exercise and wrestled with me many times when no one else was present. What can I tell you? I got nowhere. When I realized that my ploy had failed, I decided on a frontal attack. I refused to retreat from a battle I myself had begun, and I needed to know just where matters stood. So what I did was to invite him to dinner, as if *I* were his lover and he my young prey! To tell the truth, it took him quite a while to accept my invitation, but one day he finally arrived. That first time d
he left right after dinner: I was too shy to try to stop him. But on my next attempt, I started some discussion just as we were finishing our

meal and kept him talking late into the night. When he said he should be going, I used the lateness of the hour as an excuse and managed to persuade him to spend the night at my house. He had had his meal on the couch next to mine, so he just made himself comfortable and lay
e down on it. No one else was there.

Now you must admit that my story so far has been perfectly decent; I could have told it in any company. But you'd never have heard me tell the rest of it, as you're about to do, if it weren't that, as the saying goes, 'there's truth in wine when the slaves have left'—and when they're present, too. Also, would it be fair to Socrates for me to praise him and yet to fail to reveal one of his proudest accomplishments? And, furthermore, you know what people say about snakebite—that you'll only talk about it with your fellow victims: only they will understand
218 the pain and forgive you for all the things it made you do. Well, something much more painful than a snake has bitten me in my most sensitive part—I mean my heart, or my soul, or whatever you want to call it, which has been struck and bitten by philosophy, whose grip on young and eager souls is much more vicious than a viper's and makes
b them do the most amazing things. Now, all you people here, Phaedrus, Agathon, Eryximachus, Pausanias, Aristodemus, Aristophanes—I need not mention Socrates himself—and all the rest, have all shared in the madness, the Bacchic frenzy of philosophy. And that's why you will hear the rest of my story; you will understand and forgive both what I did then and what I say now. As for the house slaves and for anyone else who is not an initiate, my story's not for you: block your ears!

c To get back to the story. The lights were out; the slaves had left; the time was right, I thought, to come to the point and tell him freely what I had in mind. So I shook him and whispered:

"Socrates, are you asleep?"

"No, no, not at all," he replied.

"You know what I've been thinking?"

"Well, no, not really."

"I think," I said, "you're the only worthy lover I have ever had—and yet, look how shy you are with me! Well, here's how I look at it. It would be really stupid not to give you anything you want: you can *d* have me, my belongings, anything my friends might have. Nothing is more important to me than becoming the best man I can be, and no one can help me more than you to reach that aim. With a man like you, in fact, I'd be much more ashamed of what wise people would say if I did *not* take you as my lover, than I would of what all the others, in their foolishness, would say if I did."

He heard me out, and then he said in that absolutely inimitable ironic manner of his:

"Dear Alcibiades, if you are right in what you say about me, you are *e* already more accomplished than you think. If I really have in me the power to make you a better man, then you can see in me a beauty that is really beyond description and makes your own remarkable good looks pale in comparison. But, then, is this a fair exchange that you propose? You seem to me to want more than your proper share: you offer me the merest appearance of beauty, and in return you want the thing itself, 'gold in exchange for bronze.'[104] *219*

"Still, my dear boy, you should think twice, because you could be wrong, and I may be of no use to you. The mind's sight becomes sharp only when the body's eyes go past their prime—and you are still a good long time away from that."

When I heard this I replied:

"I really have nothing more to say. I've told you exactly what I think. Now it's your turn to consider what you think best for you and me."

"You're right about that," he answered. "In the future, let's consider *b* things together. We'll always do what seems the best to the two of us."

His words made me think that my own had finally hit their mark, that he was smitten by my arrows. I didn't give him a chance to say

another word. I stood up immediately and placed my mantle over the light cloak which, though it was the middle of winter, was his only clothing. I slipped underneath the cloak and put my arms around this
c man—this utterly unnatural, this truly extraordinary man—and spent the whole night next to him. Socrates, you can't deny a word of it. But in spite of all my efforts, this hopelessly arrogant, this unbelievably insolent man—he turned me down! He spurned my beauty, of which I was so proud, members of the jury—for this is really what you are: you're here to sit in judgment of Socrates' amazing arrogance and pride. Be sure of it, I swear to you by all the gods and goddesses to-
d gether, my night with Socrates went no further than if I had spent it with my own father or older brother!

How do you think I felt after that? Of course, I was deeply humiliated, but also I couldn't help admiring his natural character, his moderation, his fortitude—here was a man whose strength and wisdom went beyond my wildest dreams! How could I bring myself to hate him? I couldn't bear to lose his friendship. But how could I pos-
e sibly win him over? I knew very well that money meant much less to him than enemy weapons ever meant to Ajax,[105] and the only trap by means of which I had thought I might capture him had already proved a dismal failure. I had no idea what to do, no purpose in life; ah, no one else has ever known the real meaning of slavery!

All this had already occurred when Athens invaded Potidaea,[106] where we served together and shared the same mess. Now, first, he took the hardships of the campaign much better than I ever did—much better, in fact, than anyone in the whole army. When we were cut off from our supplies, as often happens in the field, no one else stood up
220 to hunger as well as he did. And yet he was the one man who could really enjoy a feast; and though he didn't much want to drink, when he had to, he could drink the best of us under the table. Still, and most amazingly, no one ever saw him drunk (as we'll straightaway put to the test).

Add to this his amazing resistance to the cold—and, let me tell you, the winter there is something awful. Once, I remember, it was frightfully cold; no one so much as stuck his nose outside. If we absolutely had to leave our tent, we wrapped ourselves in anything we could lay our hands on and tied extra pieces of felt or sheepskin over our boots. Well, Socrates went out in that weather wearing nothing but this same old light cloak, and even in bare feet he made better progress on the ice than the other soldiers did in their boots. You should have seen the looks they gave him; they thought he was only doing it to spite them! *b* *c*

So much for that! But you should hear what else he did during that same campaign,

The exploit our strong-hearted hero dared to do.[107]

One day, at dawn, he started thinking about some problem or other; he just stood outside, trying to figure it out. He couldn't resolve it, but he wouldn't give up. He simply stood there, glued to the same spot. By midday, many soldiers had seen him, and, quite mystified, they told everyone that Socrates had been standing there all day, thinking about something. He was still there when evening came, and after dinner some Ionians moved their bedding outside, where it was cooler and more comfortable (all this took place in the summer), but mainly in order to watch if Socrates was going to stay out there all night. And so he did; he stood on the very same spot until dawn! He only left next morning, when the sun came out, and he made his prayers to the new day. *d*

And if you would like to know what he was like in battle—this is a tribute he really deserves. You know that I was decorated for bravery during that campaign: well, during that very battle, Socrates single-handedly saved my life! He absolutely did! He just refused to leave me behind when I was wounded, and he rescued not only me but my armor as well. For my part, Socrates, I told them right then that the *e*

decoration really belonged to you, and you can blame me neither for doing so then nor for saying so now. But the generals, who seemed much more concerned with my social position, insisted on giving the decoration to me, and, I must say, you were more eager than the generals themselves for me to have it.

221 You should also have seen him at our horrible retreat from Delium.[108] I was there with the cavalry, while Socrates was a foot soldier. The army had already dispersed in all directions, and Socrates was retreating together with Laches. I happened to see them just by chance, and the moment I did I started shouting encouragements to them, telling them I was never going to leave their side, and so on. *b* That day I had a better opportunity to watch Socrates than I ever had at Potidaea, for, being on horseback, I wasn't in very great danger. Well, it was easy to see that he was remarkably more collected than Laches. But when I looked again I couldn't get your words, Aristophanes, out of my mind: in the midst of battle he was making his way exactly as he does around town,

> … *with swagg'ring gait and roving eye.*[109]

He was observing everything quite calmly, looking out for friendly troops and keeping an eye on the enemy. Even from a great distance it was obvious that this was a very brave man, who would put up a terrific fight if anyone approached him. This is what saved both of them. For, as a rule, you try to put as much distance as you can between yourself and such men in battle; you go after the others, those who run away *c* helter-skelter.

You could say many other marvelous things in praise of Socrates. Perhaps he shares some of his specific accomplishments with others. But, as a whole, he is unique; he is like no one else in the past and no one in the present—this is by far the most amazing thing about him.

For we might be able to form an idea of what Achilles was like by comparing him to Brasidas or some other great warrior, or we might compare Pericles with Nestor or Antenor or one of the other great orators.[110] There is a parallel for everyone—everyone else, that is. But *d*
this man here is so bizarre, his ways and his ideas are so unusual, that, search as you might, you'll never find anyone else, alive or dead, who's even remotely like him. The best you can do is not to compare him to anything human, but to liken him, as I do, to Silenus and the satyrs, and the same goes for his ideas and arguments.

Come to think of it, I should have mentioned this much earlier: even his ideas and arguments are just like those hollow statues of Silenus. If you were to listen to his arguments, at first they'd strike you as totally *e*
ridiculous; they're clothed in words as coarse as the hides worn by the most vulgar satyrs. He's always going on about pack asses, or blacksmiths, or cobblers, or tanners; he's always making the same tired old points in the same tired old words. If you are foolish, or simply unfamiliar with him, you'd find it impossible not to laugh at his arguments. But if you see them when they open up like the statues, if you go *222*
behind their surface, you'll realize that no other arguments make any sense. They're truly worthy of a god, bursting with figures of virtue inside. They're of great—no, of the greatest—importance for anyone who wants to become a truly good man.

Well, this is my praise of Socrates, though I haven't spared him my *b*
reproach, either; I told you how horribly he treated me—and not only me but also Charmides, Euthydemus, and many others. He has deceived us all: he presents himself as your lover, and, before you know it, you're in love with him yourself! I warn you, Agathon, don't let him fool you! Remember our torments; be on your guard: don't wait, like the fool in the proverb, to learn your lesson from your own misfor- *c*
tune.[111]

Alcibiades' frankness provoked a lot of laughter, especially since it was obvious that he was still in love with Socrates, who immediately said to him:

"You're perfectly sober after all, Alcibiades. Otherwise you could never have concealed your motive so gracefully: how casually you let it drop, almost like an afterthought, at the very end of your speech! As
d if the real point of all this has not been simply to make trouble between Agathon and me! You think that I should be in love with you and no one else, while you, and no one else, should be in love with Agathon—well, we were *not* deceived; we've seen through your little satyr play. Agathon, my friend, don't let him get away with it: let no one come between us!"

Agathon said to Socrates:

e "I'm beginning to think you're right; isn't it proof of that that he literally came between us here on the couch? Why would he do this if he weren't set on separating us? But he won't get away with it; I'm coming right over to lie down next to you."

"Wonderful," Socrates said. "Come here, on my other side."

"My god!" cried Alcibiades. "How I suffer in his hands! He kicks me when I'm down; he never lets me go. Come, don't be selfish, Socrates; at least, let's compromise: let Agathon lie down between us."

"Why, that's impossible," Socrates said. "You have already delivered your praise of me, and now it's my turn to praise whoever's on my right. But if Agathon were next to you, he'd have to praise me all
223 over again instead of having me speak in his honor, as I very much want to do in any case. Don't be jealous; let me praise the boy."

"Oh, marvelous," Agathon cried. "Alcibiades, nothing can make me stay next to you now. I'm moving no matter what. I simply *must* hear what Socrates has to say about me."

"There we go again," said Alcibiades. "It's the same old story: when Socrates is around, nobody else can get close to a good-looking man.

Look how smoothly and plausibly he found a reason for Agathon to lie down next to him!" *b*

And then, all of a sudden, while Agathon was changing places, a large drunken group, finding the gates open because someone was just leaving, walked into the room and joined the party. There was noise everywhere, and everyone was made to start drinking again in no particular order.

At that point, Aristodemus said, Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and some *c* others among the original guests made their excuses and left. He himself fell asleep and slept for a long time (it was winter, and the nights were quite long). He woke up just as dawn was about to break; the roosters were crowing already. He saw that the others had either left or were asleep on their couches and that only Agathon, Aristophanes, and Socrates were still awake, drinking out of a large cup which they were passing around from left to right. Socrates was talking to them. *d* Aristodemus couldn't remember exactly what they were saying—he'd missed the first part of their discussion, and he was half-asleep anyway—but the main point was that Socrates was trying to prove to them that authors should be able to write both comedy and tragedy: the skillful tragic dramatist should also be a comic poet. He was about to clinch his argument, though, to tell the truth, sleepy as they were, they were hardly able to follow his reasoning. In fact, Aristophanes fell asleep in the middle of the discussion, and very soon thereafter, as day was breaking, Agathon also drifted off.

But after getting them off to sleep, Socrates got up and left, and Aristodemus followed him, as always. He said that Socrates went directly to the Lyceum, washed up, spent the rest of the day just as he always did, and only then, as evening was falling, went home to rest.

ENDNOTES

[1] Cephalus is prominent in the opening section of Plato's *Republic*, which is set in his home in Piraeus, the port of Athens. His sons Lysias, Polemarchus, and Euthydemus were known for their democratic sympathies.

[2] Acumenus was a doctor and a relative of the doctor Eryximachus who speaks in the *Symposium*.

[3] Morychus is mentioned for his luxurious ways in a number of Aristophanes' plays.

[4] Pindar, *Isthmian* I.2, adapted by Plato.

[5] Herodicus was a medical expert whose regimen Socrates criticizes in *Republic*.

[6] According to legend, Orithuia, daughter of the Athenian king Erechtheus, was abducted by Boreas while she was playing with Nymphs along the banks of the Ilisus River. Boreas personifies the north wind.

[7] Typhon is a fabulous multiform beast with a hundred heads resembling many different animal species.

[8] Achelous is a river god. The Nymphs are benevolent female deities associated with natural phenomena such as streams, woods, and mountains.

[9] This is classic behavior in ancient Greek literature of a lovesick man pursuing his prey.

[10] The archons were magistrates chosen by lot in classical Athens. On taking office they swore an oath to set up a golden statue if they violated the laws.

[11] The Cypselids were rulers of Corinth in the seventh century B.C.; an ornate chest in which Cypselus was said to have been hidden as an infant was on display at Olympia, perhaps along with other offerings of theirs.

[12] A line of Pindar's.

[13] Socrates here suggests a farfetched etymology for a common epithet of the Muses, as the "clear-voiced" ones, on the basis of its resemblance to the Greek name for the Ligurians, who lived in what is now known as the French Riviera.

[14] I.e., *hubris*, which ranges from arrogance to the sort of crimes to which arrogance gives rise, sexual assault in particular.

[15] Reading *polumeles kai polueides*, lit. "multilimbed and multiformed".

[16] A dithyramb was a choral poem originally connected with the worship of Dionysus. In classical times it became associated with an artificial style dominated by music.

[17] The overheated choral poems known as dithyrambs were written in lyric meters. The meter of the last line of Socrates' speech, however, was epic, and it is the tradition in epic poetry to glorify a hero, not to attack him.

[18] Simmias, a companion of Socrates, was evidently a lover of discussion (cf. *Phaedo*).

[19] Ibycus was a sixth-century poet, most famous for his passionate love poetry.

[20] Etymologically: "Stesichorus son of Good Speaker, from the Land of Desire." Myrrhinus was one of the demes of ancient Athens.

[21] Alternatively, "All soul."

[22] I.e., a philosopher.

[23] I.e., we philosophers.

[24] "Desire" is *himeros*: the derivation is from *merē* ("particles"), *ienai* ("go") and *rhein* ("flow").

[25] The lines are probably Plato's invention, as the language is not consistently Homeric. The pun in the original is on *erōs* and *pterōs* ("the winged one").

[26] Bacchants were worshippers of Dionysus who gained miraculous abilities when possessed by the madness of their god.

[27] Apparently this was a familiar example of something named by language that means the opposite—though called "pleasant" it was really a long, nasty bend.

[28] This is the standard form for decisions, including legislation, made by the assembly of Athens, though it is not the standard beginning for even the most political of speeches.

[29] Lycurgus was the legendary lawgiver of Sparta. Solon reformed the constitution of Athens in the early sixth century B.C. and was revered by both democrats and their opponents. Darius was king of Persia (521–486 B.C.). None of these was famous as a speech writer.

[30] *Iliad* ii.361

[31] For a criticism of rhetoric as not an art, see *Gorgias* 462b–c.

[32] Cf. 242a–b; *Symposium* 209b–e.

[33] Nestor and Odysseus are Homeric heroes known for their speaking ability. Palamedes, who does not figure in Homer, was proverbial for his cunning.

[34] Gorgias of Leontini was the most famous teacher of rhetoric to visit Athens. About Thrasymachus of Chalcedon (cf. 267c) we know little beyond what we can infer from his appearance in Book 1 of the *Republic*. On Theodorus of Byzantium (not to be confused with the geometer who appears in the *Theaetetus*) see 266e and Aristotle *Rhetoric* 3.13.5.

[35] The Eleatic Palamedes is presumably Zeno of Elea, the author of the famous paradoxes about motion.

[36] *Odyssey* ii.406.

[37] Evenus of Paros was active as a sophist toward the end of the fifth century B.C. Only a few tiny fragments of his work survive.

[38] Tisias of Syracuse, with Corax, is credited with the founding of the Sicilian school of rhetoric, represented by Gorgias and Polus.

[39] Prodicus of Ceos, who lived from about 470 till after 400 B.C., is frequently mentioned by Plato in connection with his ability to make fine verbal distinctions.

40 Hippias of Elis was born in the mid-fifth century and traveled widely teaching a variety of subjects, including mathematics, astronomy, harmony, mnemonics, ethics, and history as well as public speaking.

41 Polus was a pupil of Gorgias; Plato represents him in the *Gorgias*, esp. at 448c and 471a–c. He was said to have composed an *Art of Rhetoric* (*Gorgias*, 462b).

42 Licymnius of Chios was a dithyrambic poet and teacher of rhetoric.

43 Protagoras of Abdera, whose life spanned most of the fifth century B.C., was the most famous of the early sophists. We have a vivid portrayal of him in Plato's *Protagoras* and an intriguing reconstruction of his epistemology in the *Theaetetus*.

44 Literally, "the might of the Chalcedonian": a Homeric figure referring to Thrasymachus, who came from Chalcedon. Cf. 261c.

45 Pericles, who dominated Athens from the 450s until his death in 429 B.C., was famous as the most successful orator-politician of his time. The quotation is from the early Spartan poet Tyrtaeus, fragment 12.8 (Edmonds). Adrastus is a legendary warrior hero of Argos, one of the main characters in Euripides' *Suppliants*.

46 Hippocrates, a contemporary of Socrates, is the famous doctor whose name is given to the Hippocratic Oath. None of the written works that have come down to us under his name express the view attributed to him in what follows. All doctors were said to be descendants of Asclepius, hero and god of healing.

47 Socrates may be referring to Corax, whose name is also the Greek word for "crow."

48 Naucratis was a Greek trading colony in Egypt. The story that follows is probably an invention of Plato's (see 275b3) in which he reworks elements from Egyptian and Greek mythology.

49 Theuth (or Thoth) is the Egyptian god of writing, measuring, and calculation. The Greeks identified Thoth with Hermes, perhaps because of his role in weighing the soul. Thoth figures in a related story about the alphabet at *Philebus* 18b.

[50] As king of the Egyptian gods, Ammon (Thamus) was identified by Egyptians with the sun god Ra and by the Greeks with Zeus.

[51] Accepting the emendation of *Thamoun* at d4.

[52] Gardens of Adonis were pots or window boxes used for forcing plants during the festival of Adonis.

[53] Isocrates (436–338 B.C.) was an Athenian teacher and orator whose school was more famous in its day than Plato's Academy.

[54] Agathon's name could be translated "Goodman." The proverb is, "Good men go uninvited to an inferior man's feast" (Eupolis fr. 289 Kock).

[55] Menelaus calls on Agamemnon at *Iliad* ii.408. Menelaus is called a limp spearman at xvii.587–88

[56] An allusion to *Iliad* x.224, "When two go together, one has an idea before the other."

[57] Dionysus was the god of wine and drunkenness.

[58] Acusilaus was an early-fifth-century writer of genealogies

[59] Cf. *Iliad* x.482, xv.262; *Odyssey* ix.381.

[60] Alcestis was the self-sacrificing wife of Admetus, whom Apollo gave a chance to live if anyone would go to Hades in his place.

[61] Orpheus was a musician of legendary powers, who charmed his way into the underworld in search of his dead wife, Eurydice.

[62] In his play, *The Myrmidons*. In Homer there is no hint of sexual attachment between Achilles and Patroclus.

[63] Harmodius and Aristogiton attempted to overthrow the tyrant Hippias in 514 B.C. Although their attempt failed, the tyranny fell three years later, and the lovers were celebrated as tyrannicides.

[64] *Iliad* ii.71.

[65] Heraclitus of Ephesus, a philosopher of the early fifth century, was known for his enigmatic sayings. This one is quoted elsewhere in a slightly different form, frg. B 51 Diels-Kranz.

[66] *Iliad* v.385, *Odyssey* xi.305 ff.

[67] Cf. *Odyssey* viii.266 ff.

[68] Arcadia included the city of Mantinea, which opposed Sparta, and was rewarded by having its population divided and dispersed in 385 B.C. Aristophanes seems to be referring anachronistically to those events; such anachronisms are not uncommon in Plato.

[69] Contrast 178b.

[70] *Iliad* xix.92–93. "Mischief" translates *Atē*.

[71] "Moral character": *aretē*, i.e., virtue.

[72] A proverbial expression attributed by Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1406a17–23) to the fourth-century liberal thinker and rhetorician Alcidamas.

[73] *Sōphrosunē*. The word can be translated also as "temperance" and, most literally, "sound-mindedness." (Plato and Aristotle generally contrast *sōphrosunē* as a virtue with self-control: the person with *sōphrosunē* is naturally well-tempered in every way and so does not need to control himself, or hold himself back.)

[74] From Sophocles, fragment 234b Dindorf: "Even Ares cannot withstand Necessity." Ares is the god of war.

[75] See *Odyssey* viii.266–366. Aphrodite's husband Hephaestus made a snare that caught Ares in bed with Aphrodite.

[76] "Wisdom" translates *sophia*, which Agathon treats as roughly equivalent to *technē* (professional skill); he refers mainly to the ability to produce things. Accordingly "wisdom" translates *sophia* in the first instance; afterwards in this passage it is "skill" or "art."

[77] At 186b.

[78] Euripides, *Stheneboea* (frg. 666 Nauck).

[79] After these two lines of poetry, Agathon continues with an extremely poetical prose peroration.

[80] Accepting the emendation *aganos* at d5.

[81] "Gorgian head" is a pun on "Gorgon's head." In his peroration Agathon had spoken in the style of Gorgias, and this style was considered to be irresistibly powerful. The sight of a Gorgon's head would turn a man to stone.

[82] The allusion is to Euripides, *Hippolytus* 612.

[83] Cf. 197b.

[84] 197b3–5.

[85] The Greek is ambiguous between "Love loves beautiful things" and "Love is one of the beautiful things." Agathon had asserted the former (197b5, 201a5), and this will be a premise in Diotima's argument, but he asserted the latter as well (195a7), and this is what Diotima proceeds to refute.

[86] *Poros* means "way," "resource." His mother's name, *Mētis*, means "cunning." *Penia* means "poverty."

[87] I.e., a philosopher.

[88] *Eudaimonia*: no English word catches the full range of this term, which is used for the whole of well-being and the good, flourishing life.

[89] "Poetry" translates *poiēsis*, lit. 'making', which can be used for any kind of production or creation. However, the word *poiētēs*, lit. 'maker', was used mainly for poets—writers of metrical verses that were actually set to music.

[90] Accepting the emendation *toutou* in b1.

[91] The preposition is ambiguous between "within" and "in the presence of." Diotima may mean that the lover causes the newborn (which may be an idea) to come to be within a beautiful person; or she may mean that he is stimulated to give birth to it in the presence of a beautiful person.

[92] Moira is known mainly as a Fate, but she was also a birth goddess (*Iliad* xxiv.209), and was identified with the birth-goddess Eilithuia (Pindar, *Olympian Odes* vi.42, *Nemean Odes* vii.1).

[93] Codrus was the legendary last king of Athens. He gave his life to satisfy a prophecy that promised victory to Athens and salvation from the invading Dorians if their king was killed by the enemy.

[94] Lycurgus was supposed to have been the founder of the oligarchic laws and stern customs of Sparta.

95 The leader: Love.

96 I.e., philosophy.

97 Reading *teleutēsēi* at c7.

98 Cf. 205d–e.

99 *Iliad* xi.514.

100 This is the conventional translation of the word, but the *aulos* was in fact a reed instrument and not a flute. It was held by the ancients to be the instrument that most strongly arouses the emotions.

101 Satyrs had the sexual appetites and manners of wild beasts and were usually portrayed with large erections. Sometimes they had horses' tails or ears, sometimes the traits of goats. Marsyas, in myth, dared to compete in music with Apollo and was skinned alive for his impudence.

102 Olympus was a legendary musician who was said to be loved by Marsyas (*Minos* 318b5) and to have made music that moved its listeners out of their senses.

103 Legendary worshippers of Cybele, who brought about their own derangement through music and dance.

104 *Iliad* vi.232–36 tells the famous story of the exchange by Glaucus of golden armor for bronze.

105 Ajax, a hero of the Greek army at Troy, carried an enormous shield and so was virtually invulnerable to enemy weapons.

106 Potidaea, a city in Thrace allied to Athens, was induced by Corinth to revolt in 432 B.C. The city was besieged by the Athenians and eventually defeated in a bloody local war, 432–430 B.C.

107 *Odyssey* iv.242, 271.

108 At Delium, a town on the Boeotian coastline just north of Attica, a major Athenian expeditionary force was routed by a Boeotian army in 424 B.C. For another description of Socrates' action during the retreat, see *Laches* 181b.

109 Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 362.

[110] Brasidas, among the most effective Spartan generals during the Peloponnesian War, was mortally wounded while defeating the Athenians at Amphipolis in 422 B.C. Antenor (for the Trojans) and Nestor (for the Greeks) were legendary wise counsellors during the Trojan War.

[111] Cf. *Iliad* xvii.32.