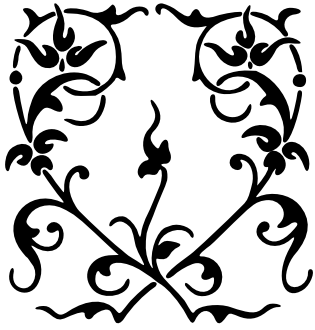
PLATO

PHAEDRUS
&
SYMPOSIUM



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Socrates meets Phaedrus; preliminary conversation.

SOCRATES My dear Phaedrus, where is it you're going, and where have you come from?

PHAEDRUS From Lysias, son of Cephalus, Socrates; and I'm going for a walk outside the wall, because I spent a long time sitting there – since sun-up. I'm doing what your friend and mine, Acumenus, advises, and taking my walks along the country roads; he says that walking here is more refreshing than in the colonnades.

SOCRATES He's right to say so, my friend. So it seems Lysias was in the city.

PHAEDRUS Yes, at Epicrates' house, the one Morychus used to live in, near the temple of Olympian Zeus.

SOCRATES So then how did you spend your time? Obviously Lysias was feasting you all with his speeches?

PHAEDRUS You'll find out about that if you have the leisure to walk and listen.

SOCRATES What? Don't you think I shall be likely to regard it – to quote Pindar – as 'a thing above even want of leisure', to hear how you and Lysias spent your time?

PHAEDRUS Well then – lead on.

SOCRATES Please tell me.

PHAEDRUS Certainly, Socrates, and it will be pretty appropriate for you to hear, because the speech on which we were spending our time was, I tell you, in a certain sort of way about *love*. Lysias has represented someone beautiful being propositioned but not by a lover – indeed, that's just the subtlety of his invention: he says that favours should be granted to a man who is not in love rather than to one who is.

SOCRATES How admirable of Lysias! I only wish he would write that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one,

and an older rather than a younger man, and all the other things which belong to me and to most of us; *then* his speeches would be urbane, and for the general good. I for one am so eager to hear it, in any case, that if your walk takes you to Megara, and you touch the wall with your foot and come back again, as Herodicus recommends, I certainly won't be left behind.

PHAEDRUS Socrates, my good fellow, what do you mean? Do you think that I, an amateur, will be able to repeat from memory in a way worthy of Lysias what he, the cleverest of present writers, has put together at leisure over a long period of time? Far from it; though I'd like to be able to, more than I'd want to come into a stack of money.

SOCRATES Phaedrus – if I don't know Phaedrus, I've forgotten even who I am. But I do, and I haven't; I know perfectly well that when he heard Lysias' speech he did not hear it just once, but repeatedly asked him to go through it for him, and Lysias responded readily. But for Phaedrus not even that was enough, and in the end he borrowed the book and examined the things in it which he was most eager to look at, and doing this he sat from sun-up until he was tired and went for a walk, as *I* think – I'll swear by the Dog it's true – knowing the speech quite off by heart, unless it was a rather long one. He was going outside the wall to practise it, when he met the very person who is sick with passion for hearing people speak – and 'seeing, seeing him', he was glad, because he would have a companion in his manic frenzy, and he told him to lead on. Then when the one in love with speeches asked him to speak, he put on a pose, as if not eager to speak; but in the end, even if no one wanted to listen, he meant to use force, and *would* speak. So you, Phaedrus, you just ask him to do here and now what he will soon do anyway.

PHAEDRUS For me, really much the best thing is to speak as I can, since it seems to me you won't let me go until I speak, somehow or other.

SOCRATES You have just the right idea about me.

PHAEDRUS So that's what I'll do. Nothing could be truer, Socrates – I didn't learn it word for word; but I shall run through the purport of just about everything in which he said the situation of the lover was different from that of the non-lover, giving a summary of each point in turn, beginning with the first.

SOCRATES Yes, my dear fellow, after you've first shown me just what it is you have in your left hand under your cloak; for I suspect you have the speech itself. If you have, you must know this about me, that fond as I am of you, if Lysias is here as well, I am not really inclined to offer myself to you to practise on. Come on, show me!

PHAEDRUS Stop! I'd hoped to flex my muscles on you, and now you've foiled me! Well, where would you like us to sit down and read?

SOCRATES Let's turn off here and go along the Ilissus; then we'll sit down quietly wherever we think best.

PHAEDRUS It seems it's just as well I happen to be barefoot; you always are. So we can very easily go along the stream with our feet in the water; and it won't be unpleasant, particularly at this time of year and of the day.

SOCRATES Lead on, then, and keep a lookout for a place for us to sit down.

PHAEDRUS Well, you see that very tall plane-tree?

SOCRATES Of course.

PHAEDRUS There's shade and a moderate breeze there, and grass to sit on, or lie on, if we like.

SOCRATES Please lead on.

PHAEDRUS Tell me, Socrates, wasn't it from somewhere here that Boreas is said to have seized Oreithuia from the Ilissus?

SOCRATES Yes so it's said.

PHAEDRUS Well, was it from here? The rivulets look attractively pure and clear – just right for young girls to play beside.

SOCRATES No, it was from a place two or three stades lower down, where one crosses over to the district of Agra; and there, somewhere, there's an altar of Boreas.

PHAEDRUS I've not really noticed it. But do tell me, Socrates, for goodness' sake, do you believe this fairy-tale to be true?

SOCRATES If I disbelieved it, as wise people do, I'd not be extraordinary; then I'd use their wisdom and say that a blast of Boreas pushed her down from the nearby rocks while she was playing with Pharmaceia, and when she met her death in this way she was said to have been snatched up by Boreas – or else it was from the Areopagus; for this too is something people say, that it was from there and not from here that she was seized. But, Phaedrus, while I think such explanations attractive in other respects, they belong in my view to an over-clever and laborious person who is not altogether fortunate; just because after that he must set the shape of the Centaurs to rights, and again that of the Chimaera, and a mob of such things – Gorgons and Pegasuses – and strange hordes of other intractable and portentous kinds of creatures flock in on him; if someone is sceptical about these, and tries with his boorish kind of wisdom to reduce each to what is likely, he'll need a good deal of leisure. As for me, there's no way I have leisure for it all, and the reason for it, my friend, is this. I am not yet capable of 'knowing myself', in accordance with the Delphic inscription; so it seems absurd to me that while I am

still ignorant of this subject I should inquire into things which do not belong to me. So then saying goodbye to these things, and believing what is commonly thought about them, as I was saying just now, I inquire not into these but into myself, to see whether I am actually a beast more complex and more typhonic than Typhon, or both a tamer and a simpler creature, sharing by nature some divine and un-typhonic portion. But, my friend, to interrupt our conversation, wasn't this the tree you were taking us to?

PHAEDRUS It's the very one.

SOCRATES By Hera, a beautiful stopping-place! The plane-tree here is altogether spreading and tall, and the tallness and shadiness of the *agnus castus* are quite lovely; it's at the peak of its flowering and gives the place the sweetest perfume it could. The stream, too, flows very attractively under the plane, with the coolest water, to judge by my foot. To judge by the figurines and statuettes, the spot seems to be sacred to some nymphs and to Achelous. Then again, if you like, how welcome it is, the freshness of the place, and very pleasant; it echoes with a summery shrillness to the cicadas' song. Most charming of all is the matter of the grass, growing on a gentle slope and thick enough to be just right to rest one's head upon. So you've been the best of guides for a stranger, my dear Phaedrus.

PHAEDRUS You, my friend, really appear the most extraordinary sort of person. You behave like someone being led around a strange place, as you say, and not like a local. It comes of your not leaving the city to cross the border or even, it seems to me, to go outside the wall at all.

SOCRATES Forgive me, my good man. You see, I'm a lover of learning, and country places and trees won't teach me any-

thing, which the people of the city will. But you seem to have found the prescription to get me to go out. Just like people who lead hungry animals on by waving a branch or some kind of vegetable in front of them, so you seem to me to be going to lead me round all of Attica and wherever else you please by doing as you are now and proffering me speeches in books. In any case, now that I've got here, I think I'm going to lie down for the present, and you choose whatever pose you think easiest for reading, and read.

Phaedrus reads Lysias' speech.

PHAEDRUS Listen, then.

'How it is with me, you know, and how I think it is to our advantage that these things should happen, you have heard me say; and I claim that I should not fail to achieve the things I ask for because I happen not to be in love with you. Those in love repent of whatever services they do at the point they cease from their desire; for the others, there is no time appropriate for repentance. For it is not under compulsion but at their own choosing, and in accordance with the way they would best look after their own affairs, that they render *their* services, in proportion to their own capacity. Again, those who are in love consider the damage they did to their own interests because of their love and the services they have performed and, adding in the labour they have put in, they think they have long since given return enough to the objects of their love; whereas those not in love cannot allege neglect of their own interests because of it, nor reckon up their past labours, nor put the blame on quarrels with their relatives. So with all these bad things removed, there is nothing left but to perform readily whatever actions they think will please the other party. Again, if it is worth putting a high value on those in

love because they say they show the greatest degree of affection to those they are in love with, and are ready to incur the enmity of everyone else for their words and actions if it only pleases their beloved, it is easy to see, if they are telling the truth, that they'll put a higher value on those they fall in love with later than they put on *them*, and clear too that they will maltreat them at the bidding of their new loves. Yet how is it reasonable to give away such a thing to someone in so unfortunate a condition – one that no person with experience of it would even try to prevent? For the ones who suffer it agree themselves that they are sick rather than in their right mind, and that they *know* they are out of their mind but cannot control themselves; so how, when they come to their senses, could they approve of the decisions they make when in this condition? Moreover, if you were to choose the best one out of those in love with you, your choice would be only from a few, while if you chose the most suitable to yourself out of everybody else, you would be choosing from many; so that you would have a much greater expectation of chancing on the man worthy of your affection among the many.

'Now if you are afraid of established convention, that if people find out you will be subject to censure, the likelihood is that those in love, thinking they would be envied by everyone else, too, just as they envy themselves, will be on tiptoe with talking about it and boastfully display to all and sundry that they have not laboured in vain; whereas those not in love, because they are in control of themselves, will choose what is best rather than to have people think highly of them. And again, many are bound to find out about those in love because they see them following their loved ones around and making a practice of it, so that when they are seen in conversation with each other, people think that

they are together in the context of passion spent or soon to be spent; whereas no one even tries to blame those not in love for their being together, because they know people have to talk if they are friends or to get any other sort of pleasure. Moreover, if you are frightened by the thought that it is difficult for affection to last, and that while under other circumstances the occurrence of a quarrel is a misfortune shared by both parties, if you have given away what you value most it is on *you* that great injury would be inflicted, in that case you will have reason to fear those in love more, for there are many things that cause them pain, and everything, they think, is done in order to inflict injury on them. It is for this very reason that they divert their loved ones from associating with others, fearing that those who possess wealth will outdo them with their money, and that the educated will come off better in terms of intellect; and they are on their guard against the power of anyone who possesses any other sort of advantage. So by having persuaded you to become an object of hatred to these people, they isolate you from any friends and, if you consider your own interest and show more sense than they do, you will come into conflict with them; whereas those who happened not to be in love, but achieved what they asked through merit, would not begrudge those who associate with the objects of their attentions but would hate those who did not wish to do so, thinking that they were being looked down on by the latter but benefited by the presence of the former, so that there is much greater expectation that the other party will gain friends than enemies from the affair.

'Moreover, many of those in love desire a person's body before they know his ways and before they have experience of the other aspects belonging to him, so that it is unclear to them if

they will still want to be friends with him when they cease to desire him; whereas for those not in love, since they were friends with each other even before they did what they did, whatever benefits they receive are not likely to make their friendship less but rather to be left as reminders of what is still to come. Moreover, you should expect to become a better person if you listen to my arguments than if you listen to a lover's. For lovers praise words and actions even if it means disregarding what is best, in part because they are afraid of being hated, in part because their own judgement is weakened as a result of their desire. For such are the ways that love displays itself: if lovers are unsuccessful, it makes them regard as distressing the sorts of things that cause pain to no one else; if they are successful, love compels them to praise even things which ought not to cause pleasure at all; so that it is much more fitting for their loved ones to pity them than to want to emulate them. But if you listen to me, in the first place shall give you my company with an eye not to present pleasure but also to the benefit that is to come, not being overcome by love but mastering myself, and not starting violent hostility because of small things but feeling slight anger slowly because of big ones, forgiving the unintentional and trying to prevent the intentional; for these are signs of a friendship that will last for a long time. But if, after all, you have the thought that strong friendship cannot occur unless a man is actually in love, you should bear in mind that in that case we would neither value our sons nor our fathers and mothers, nor would we have trustworthy friends, who are the product not of desire of this sort but of practices of a different kind.

'And again, if it were the rule that one should grant favours most to those who are most in need of them, then the rest of

mankind too ought to benefit not the best people but the most helpless; for since they will have been released from the greatest sufferings, they will be the most grateful to their benefactors. Moreover, when it comes to private expenditure too, it will be right to invite, not one's friends, but those who beg for their share and those who need filling up; for they will treat their benefactors fondly, attend on them, call at their doors, feel the e5 most delight and not the least gratitude, and pray for many good things for them. Yet perhaps the fitting thing is rather to grant favours not to those who stand in great need of them but to those who are most able to pay a favour back; not to those who are merely in love with you but to those who deserve the thing you have to give; not to the sort who will take advantage of your youthful beauty but to the ones who will share their own advantages with you when you become older; not to those who after they have achieved their aim will boast of it to everyone else but to the ones who will say nothing to anyone, out of a sense of shame; not to those who are devoted to you for a short time but to those whose friendship for you will remain unaltered throughout their whole life; not to the ones who will look for an excuse for hostilities with you when they cease to desire you but those who will display their own excellence at that very moment when you cease to be in the prime of youth. So I say to you: Remember what has been said, and bear this in mind: that those in love are admonished by their friends on the basis that what they do is bad, whereas those not in love have never been blamed by anyone close to them for making bad decisions because of that about their own interests.

'You will perhaps ask me, then, whether I advise you to grant favours to all those who are not in love with you. I for my part

think that not even the man who was in love with you would tell you to take this attitude to all those who were. For neither would it merit equal gratitude from the receiver nor would it be possible for you to keep things secret from everyone else in the same way, if you wished to do so; but from the thing no harm should come, only benefit to both parties.

'So I think what I have said is sufficient; but if there is something you miss in my arguments and think I have left out, ask me about it.'

Transition to Socrates' first speech.

How does the speech seem to you, Socrates? Doesn't it seem to you to be extraordinarily well done, especially in its language?

SOCRATES Superhumanly, in fact, my friend; enough to make me beside myself. And it was because of you, Phaedrus, that I felt as I did, as I looked at you, because you seemed to me to be positively beaming with delight at the speech as you read it; for I followed your lead, thinking that you are more of an expert about such things than me, and I joined in the ecstasy with your inspired self.

PHAEDRUS Just stop. Do you mean to joke about it like this?

SOCRATES Do I really seem to you to be joking and not serious?

PHAEDRUS Don't do that, Socrates. Tell me really – in the name of Zeus, the god of friendship – do you think any other Greek who gave his own speech on the same subject would have weightier and more numerous things to say?

SOCRATES What? Should you and I also praise the speech on the grounds that its creator has said what he should, and not just because he has said things clearly and in a well-rounded fashion, and each and every word of his is precisely turned? If we should, then I must go along with your judgement, for your sake, though

in fact I missed it through my feebleness; for I was only paying attention to the rhetorical aspect of the speech.

In this other respect I didn't think even Lysias himself thought the speech adequate; and in fact he seemed to me, Phaedrus, unless you say otherwise, to have said the same things two or three times over, as if he wasn't altogether well off when it came to saying many things about the same subject, or else perhaps because he didn't care at all about this sort of thing; indeed he seemed to me to be behaving with a youthful swagger, showing off his ability to say the same things now in this way and now in that, and to say them excellently either way.

PHAEDRUS You're talking nonsense, Socrates; the very thing you mention is in fact the main feature of the speech. It has left out nothing that was waiting in the subject to be expressed in a way worthy of it; so that no one could ever say other things which were more numerous and of greater worth than what *he* said.

SOCRATES That's where I shall no longer be able to go along with you; men and women of old, wise people who have spoken and written about the subject, will refute me if I agree as a favour to you.

PHAEDRUS Who are these people? And where have you heard better things than there are in Lysias' speech?

SOCRATES At the moment I can't say, just like that, but clearly I *have* heard something, either – maybe – from the beautiful Sappho, or from Anacreon the wise, or indeed from some prose-writers. On what evidence do I say this? My breast is full, if I may say so, my fine fellow, and I see that I would have other things to say beyond what Lysias says, and no worse either. I am well aware that I have thought up none of them from within *my*

resources, because I am conscious of my own ignorance; the only alternative, then, I think, is that I have been filled up through my ears, like a vessel, from someone else's streams. But dullness again has made me forget this very thing, how I heard it and from whom.

PHAEDRUS Absolutely excellent! I love what I hear. Don't you tell me from whom and how you heard it, not even if I tell you to, but do exactly as you say: you've promised to say better things and no fewer than those in the book – different things, and keeping away from what Lysias says; and I in my turn promise you that like the nine archons I'll dedicate a golden statue of equal weight at Delphi, not just of me but of you as well.

SOCRATES You are a very dear man, and truly made of gold, Phaedrus, if you think I mean that Lysias has completely missed the mark, and that I'm actually able to say different things, beyond everything he says; that couldn't, I think, happen even to the worst writer. To begin with, on the topic of the speech, who do you think – if he is saying that one should grant favours to the one who is not in love rather than to the one who is – would be able not to laud the good sense of the one and censure the lack of sense of the other, these being indispensable points, and then have something further to say? In my view such points must be allowed, and one should be forgiven for making them; with such things, what should be praised is not so much the invention as the arrangement, whereas with things that are not indispensable, and are difficult to invent, we should praise the invention as well as the arrangement.

PHAEDRUS I agree with what you say; it seems a reasonable statement. So for my part, I'll behave like this: I'll allow you to

make it an assumption that the man in love is more sick than the man not in love; but when you've made a speech different from Lysias' in all other respects, and one that contains more points and of greater worth, then you'll stand in hammered metal beside the dedication of the Cypselids at Olympia.

SOCRATES Have you been taking me seriously, Phaedrus, because I made my teasing attack on your darling? Do you think I would really try to say something different, of greater variety, to set beside his wisdom?

PHAEDRUS Now here, my friend, you've really let me catch you. You'll have to say your piece, however you can, to avoid our being forced to behave in the vulgar way we see on the comic stage, exchanging jibes; watch out, and don't deliberately make me give you a 'Socrates, if I don't know Socrates, I've even forgotten who *I* am,' or a 'he was desperate to speak, but put on a pose.' Just make up your mind that we won't leave this spot until you say what you were claiming you had 'in your breast'. We're alone in a deserted place, and I'm stronger and younger than you; from all of which 'grasp the meaning of my words', and make sure you're not forced to speak when you can do it voluntarily.

SOCRATES But, Phaedrus, my fine friend – I shall be a laughing-stock if I improvise as a layman in competition with an expert craftsman on the same subjects.

PHAEDRUS I warn you, stop being coy with me. I've got something to say which will pretty well force you to speak.

SOCRATES Then don't say it.

PHAEDRUS No, I shall say it, and what I say will be an oath. I swear to you – but by whom, by which god? What about this plane-tree here? I swear that if you don't make your speech *in*

the presence of this tree, I shall neither display nor report to you any speech of anyone's ever again.

SOCRATES You wretch, you! How well you've found the way to force a lover of speeches to do whatever you tell him to do.

PHAEDRUS So why go on twisting and turning?

SOCRATES Not any longer, now you've sworn what you've sworn. How would I be able to keep myself away from feasts of that sort?

PHAEDRUS Speak then.

SOCRATES Do you know what I shall do, then?

PHAEDRUS About what?

SOCRATES I shall speak with my head covered, so that I can rush through my speech as quickly as I can and not lose my way through shame, from looking at you.

PHAEDRUS Just speak; for the rest, do as you like.

SOCRATES Come then, you Muses, whether you are 'clear-voiced' because of the beauty of your song, or whether you acquired this epithet through the musical race of the Ligurians, 'take part with me' in the story this excellent fellow here forces me to tell, so that his friend, who seemed to him to be wise even before, may seem even more so now.

Socrates' first speech on erôs

'Once upon a time, then, there was a boy, or rather a young lad, and very beautiful he was; and he had a very large number of lovers. And one of them was cunning, because although he was as much in love as any of them, he had convinced the boy that he was not in love with him. And once in pressing his claims he tried to convince him of just this, that one ought to grant favours to one not in love rather than to the one in love; and he spoke like this:

' "In everything, my boy, there is one starting-point for those

who are going to deliberate successfully: they must know what they are deliberating about, or they will inevitably miss their target altogether. Most people are unaware that they do not know what each thing really is. So then, assuming that they know what it is, they fail to reach agreement about it at the beginning of their enquiry, and, having gone forward on this basis, they pay the penalty one would expect: they agree neither with themselves nor with each other. So let us, you and I, avoid having happen to us what we find fault with in others: since the discussion before you and me is whether one should rather enter into friendship with lover or with non-lover, let us establish an agreed definition of love, about what sort of thing it is and what power it possesses, and look to this as our point of reference while we make our enquiry as to whether it brings help or harm.

' "Well then, that love is some sort of desire is clear to everyone; and again we know that men desire the beautiful even if they are not in love. By what then shall we distinguish the man in love and the man who is not? Our next step is to observe that in each of us there are two kinds of thing which rule and lead us, which we follow wherever they may lead, the one an inborn desire for pleasures, the other an acquired judgement that aims at the best. These two things in us are sometimes in accord, but there are times when they are at variance; and sometimes the one, at other times the second, has control. Now when judgement leads us by reason towards the best and is in control, its control over us has the name of restraint; when desire drags us irrationally towards pleasures and has established rule within us, its rule is called by the name of excess. Excess is something which has many names, for it has many limbs and many forms;

and whichever of these forms happens to stand out in any case, it gives its possessor its own name, which is neither an admirable one nor one worth the acquisition. When it is in connection with food that a desire has achieved control over both reasoning for the best and the other desires, it is called gluttony, and will give its possessor this same name; again, when it has become a tyrant in connection with drinking, leading the man who has acquired it in this direction, it is plain what appellation he will receive; and as for the other related names of related desires, we can see already that a person will be called by the appropriate one, that of whichever desire happens at any time to be in power. As for the desire for the sake of which all the foregoing has been said, it is already pretty evident what one should say; but everything is in a way clearer when said than when unsaid: the irrational desire that has gained control over any judgement urging a man towards what is correct, and that is carried towards pleasure in beauty – in turn being forcefully reinforced by the desires related to it in its pursuit of the beauty of bodies – and that wins victory by its drive, taking its name from its very force: this is called love."

Well then, my dear Phaedrus, do you think, as I do myself, that something more than human has happened to me?

PHAEDRUS I certainly agree, Socrates, that you've been seized by a fluency greater than normal.

SOCRATES Then listen to me in silence. For the spot seems really to be a divine one, so if by any chance I become possessed by Nymphs as my speech proceeds, don't be surprised; as it is, I'm already close to uttering in dithyrambs.

PHAEDRUS Very true.

SOCRATES For that you're to blame. But listen to what re-

mains; perhaps the threat might be averted. That, though, will be a matter for god; we must return to the boy with our speech.

" 'Well, my brave friend: we have stated, then, and defined what it really is that is to be deliberated about; so, looking towards that, let us say, for the rest, what help or harm will be likely to accrue to the person granting favours, from lover and non-lover. Now it is necessarily the case, I suppose, that the man who is ruled by desire and enslaved to pleasure will make the one he loves as pleasing to himself as possible; and to a sick man anything which does not resist him is pleasant, while anything which is stronger than he is or equal to him is hateful.

So a lover will not willingly put up with his beloved's being stronger than him or matching him but always tries to make him weaker and less self-sufficient; and an ignorant man is weaker than a wise one, a coward than a brave man, a poor speaker than an expert in rhetoric, a slow-witted man than a quick one. When all these faults and more besides make their appearance or are present by nature in the mind of a loved one, a lover will necessarily delight in these and procure others, or else he will be deprived of what is immediately pleasant.

Necessarily, then, he will be jealous, and by keeping him from many other forms of association, of a beneficial kind, which would most make a man of him, he will be a cause of great harm to him; and he will be the cause of the greatest harm by keeping him from that association from which he would become *wisest*. This is what that divine thing, philosophy, is, from which the lover must necessarily keep his beloved far away, out of a dread of being despised; and he must contrive in everything else that the boy should be in complete ignorance and looking for everything to his lover, which is the condition in which he will offer

most pleasure to the other but most harm to himself. So, in respect of the mind, there is no profit at all in a man as guardian and partner if he is in love.

‘ “What we must look at after this is the condition of the body and its treatment: what sort of physical condition will the man who is under compulsion to pursue pleasure in preference to good aim to produce in anyone under his charge, and what treatment will he apply? And he will be observed pursuing someone soft and not tough, brought up not in the full light of the sun but in a dappled shade, unversed in manly exertions and harsh, sweated labour but fully versed in a soft and effeminate way of life, decking himself out in borrowed colours and d1 ornaments for lack of his own, and resorting to all the other practices that go along with these, which are obvious and are not worth listing further but will allow us to go on to another matter after we have laid down one summary point: a body in such condition is one that in war and in other times of great crisis gives heart to the enemy, and creates alarm in one's friends, and in one's lovers themselves.

‘ “This, then, we should dismiss as obvious, and pass on to the point that comes next: what help or what harm to us in respect of our possessions the society and guardianship of the man in love will bring. This at least is clear enough to everyone, and especially to the lover: that he would pray above all for the one he loves to be bereft of his dearest and best-intentioned and most divine possessions; for he would be happy for him to be deprived of father and mother, relations and friends, thinking them likely to prevent and censure the most pleasant kind of intercourse he has with him. Further, if his loved one possesses property, in the form of gold or any other possession, he will think him neither

as easy to catch nor as manageable once caught; as a result, there is every necessity that the lover should begrudge his beloved the possession of his property, and delight in his loss of it. So too the lover would pray that his beloved should be without wife, without children, without home for the longest possible time, because he desires to reap the sweetness of his own enjoyment for as long as possible.

‘ “There are indeed other bad things in life, but with most of them some divine agency mixes a pleasure of the moment: so with the flatterer, a formidable beast and a source of great harm, nature has nevertheless mixed in a certain pleasure that is not entirely gross; and one might object to a courtesan as something harmful, and many other similarly endowed creatures and their practices, which have the feature of being very pleasant, at least to meet the needs of the day. But for the beloved, the lover, over and above his harmfulness, is the least pleasant of all things to spend the day with. As the proverb has it too, ‘young delights young' – for I suppose matching years draw people to matching pleasures and so makes them friends on the grounds of likeness; yet all the same, even these are bound to have enough of being together. What is more, in every sphere what is *compulsory* is said to be oppressive to everyone; and this element is especially present in the relation of lover to beloved, in addition to their dissimilarity. The older man does not willingly let the younger one leave his company, whether by day or by night, but is driven by a frenzied compulsion that draws him on, by giving *him* pleasures all the time, as he sees, hears, touches, experiences his loved one through all the senses, so that pleasure makes him press his services on him; but as for the one who is loved, what kind of solace or what pleasures will the lover give *him*, to pre-

vent *him*, when he is with him over that same period of time, from experiencing extreme disgust – when he sees a face that is old and past its prime, along with everything else which follows on that, which it is no pleasure even to hear talked about, let alone be continually compelled actually to deal with; when he is guarded suspiciously all the time and in all his relationships; and when he hears himself praised at the wrong times, and too much, and reproached in just the same way, which is intolerable when his lover is sober but shaming as well as intolerable when he is drunk and speaking with an unrestrained and barefaced licence?

‘ “And while he is in love, the lover is harmful and unpleasant, but when he ceases to be in love there is no trusting him in relation to the future, for which he promised many things with many oaths and entreaties, so barely prevailing on the other one in that previous time to put up with his company, painful as it was, through hope of goods to come. Then, at the point when he should be paying back what he owes, he substitutes a different ruler and champion in himself, sense and sanity in place of love and madness, and has become a different person without his beloved's realizing it. And the beloved asks for something in return for what happened before, giving reminders of what was done and said then, thinking that he is talking to the same man; while the other through shame cannot either bring himself to say that he has become a different person or see his way to making good the oaths and promises of his previous mindless regime, having now come to his senses and sobered up – for fear that if he did the same things as his previous self, he would become like that self again, the same person. A fugitive, then, is what he becomes from all of this, and, compelled to default, the

former lover changes direction and launches himself into flight as the sherd flips on to its other side; and the other one is compelled to run after him, angrily invoking the gods, ignorant of everything from the beginning: that in fact he ought never to have granted favours to one in love and necessarily mindless but much rather to one who was not in love and who was in possession of his senses; and that otherwise he was necessarily surrendering himself to someone untrustworthy, peevish, jealous, disagreeable, harmful to property, harmful to his physical condition, but by far most harmful to the education of his soul, than which in truth there neither is nor ever will be anything more valuable in the eyes either of men or of gods. So these, my boy, are the things you must bear in mind, and you must understand that the friendship of a lover does not come with goodwill; it's like an appetite for food, for the purpose of filling up – as wolves love lambs, so is lovers' affection for a boy." '

There, Phaedrus, it's as I said it would be. You'll hear nothing further than that from me; please let my speech end here.

Transition to Socrates' second speech.

PHAEDRUS But I thought it was just in the middle, and would go on to say an equal amount about the non-lover, to the effect that one should rather grant him favours, saying all the good things he has on *his* side; why are you stopping now?

SOCRATES Haven't you noticed, my fine fellow, that I'm already uttering epic verses, no longer dithyrambs now, even though I'm playing the critic? What do you think I'll produce if I begin praising the other man? Don't you know I'll patently be possessed by the Nymphs, to whom *you* deliberately exposed me? So, in a word, I say that the other man has the good points that are opposed to all the things for which we've abused the first. And why indeed make a long speech of it? Enough has

been said about both. So whatever fate should befall my story will befall it without me; I'm off across the river here before I'm forced by you into something bigger.

PHAEDRUS Don't go yet, Socrates, not until the heat of the day has passed. Don't you see that it's just about midday, the time when we say everything stands still? Let's wait and discuss what's been said, and then we'll go, when it's cooler.

SOCRATES You've a superhuman capacity when it comes to speeches, Phaedrus; you're simply amazing. Of the speeches there have been during your lifetime, I think no one has brought more into existence than you, either by making them yourself or by forcing others to make them, in one way or another. Simmias the Theban is the one exception; the rest you beat by a long way. Just so, now, I think you've again become the cause of my making a speech.

PHAEDRUS No bad thing! But how do you mean? What speech is this?

SOCRATES When I was about to cross the river, my good man, I had that supernatural experience, the sign that I am accustomed to having – on each occasion, you understand, it holds me back from whatever I am about to do – and I seemed to hear a kind of voice from the very spot, forbidding me to leave until I make expiation, because I have committed an offence against what belongs to the gods. Well, I am a seer; not a very good one, but like people who are poor at reading and writing, just good enough for my own purposes; so I already clearly understand what my offence is. For the fact is, my friend, that the soul too is something which has divinatory powers; for something certainly troubled me some while ago as I was making the speech, and I had a certain feeling of unease, as Ibycus says (if I remem-

ber rightly), 'that for offences against the gods, I win renown from all my fellow men'. But now I realize my offence.

PHAEDRUS Just what do you mean?

SOCRATES A dreadful speech it was, Phaedrus, dreadful, both the one you brought with you and the one you compelled me to make.

PHAEDRUS How so?

SOCRATES It was foolish and somewhat impious; what speech could be more dreadful than that?

PHAEDRUS None – if you're right in what you say.

SOCRATES What? Don't you think Love to be the son of Aphrodite, and a god?

PHAEDRUS So it is said.

SOCRATES Not, I think, by Lysias, at any rate, nor by your speech, which came from my mouth, bewitched as it was by your potion. But if Love is, as indeed he is, a god, or something divine, he would not be anything bad; whereas the two speeches we had just now spoke of him as if he were like that. So this was their offence in relation to Love; and besides, their foolishness was really quite refined – parading themselves as if they were worth something while actually saying nothing healthy or true, in case they might deceive some poor specimens of humanity and win praise from them. So I, my friend, must purify myself, and for those who offend in the telling of stories there is an ancient method of purification, which Homer was not aware of, but Stesichorus was. For when he was deprived of his sight because of his libel against Helen, he did not fail to recognize the cause, like Homer; because he was a true follower of the Muses, he knew it, and immediately composed the verses

This tale I told is false. There is no doubt:

You made no journey in the well-decked ships
Nor voyaged to the citadel of Troy.

And after composing the whole of the so-called *Palinode*, he at once regained his sight. So I shall follow a wiser course than Stesichorus and Homer in just this respect: I shall try to render my palinode to Love before anything happens to me because of my libel against him, with my head bare, and not covered as it was before, for shame.

PHAEDRUS There's nothing, Socrates, you could have said that would have given me more pleasure.

SOCRATES Yes, my good Phaedrus, for you see how shamelessly said the speeches were, this second one and the one from the book. If we were being listened to by someone of a noble and gentle character who was in love with someone else of the same sort, or else had ever been in love with someone like that before, and he heard us saying that lovers start large-scale hostilities because of small things, and adopt a jealous and harmful attitude towards their beloved, surely you think he would suppose himself to be listening to people who had perhaps been brought up among sailors, and who had never seen a love of the sort that belongs to free men, and would be far from agreeing with the things we find to blame in Love?

PHAEDRUS Zeus! Socrates, perhaps he would.

SOCRATES Then out of shame for what this man would think, and out of fear of Love himself, I for my part am anxious to wash away the bitter taste, as it were, of the things we have heard said, with a wholesome speech; and I advise Lysias too to put it in writing as quickly as possible that one should grant favours to a lover rather than to one not in love, in return for favours received.

PHAEDRUS You can be sure that's how it will be: once you have spoken your praise of the lover, there'll be nothing for it but for me to compel Lysias to write a speech in his turn on the same subject

SOCRATES I believe you'll do it; that's the sort of person you are.

PHAEDRUS Then you can give your speech with full confidence.

SOCRATES Where, then, is that boy I was talking to? I want him to hear this speech too; if he doesn't, he may go ahead and grant favours to the non-lover before we can stop him.

PHAEDRUS Here he is right next to you, whenever you wish.

Socrates' second speech begins.

SOCRATES Well then, my beautiful boy, you should take note of this – that the previous speech belonged to Phaedrus son of Pythocles, of the deme Myrrhinous; while the one I am going to make belongs to Stesichorus son of Euphemus, of Himera. It must go like this: "The story is not true" if it says that when a lover is there for the having, one should rather grant favours to the one not in love, on the grounds that the first is mad, while the second is sane. That would be rightly said if it were a simple truth that madness is a bad thing; but as it is, the greatest of goods come to us through madness, provided that it is bestowed by divine gift. The prophetess at Delphi, no less, and the priestesses at Dodona do many fine things for Greece when mad, both on a private and on a public level, whereas when sane they achieve little or nothing; and if we speak of the Sibyl and of others who by means of inspired prophecy foretell many things to many people and set them on the right track with respect to the future, we would spin the story out by saying things that are obvious to everyone. But it is worthwhile adducing this point:

that among the ancients, too, those who gave things their names did not regard madness as shameful or a matter for reproach; for otherwise they would not have connected this very word with the finest of the sciences, that by which the future is judged, and named it the "manic" art. No, they gave it this name thinking madness a fine thing when it comes by divine dispensation; whereas people now crudely throw in the extra "t" and call it "mantic". So too when the ancients gave a name to the investigation sane men make into the future by means of birds and the other signs they use, they called it "oionoistic", because its proponents in a rational way provide insight (*nous*) and information (*historia*) for human thinking (*oiêsis*); while moderns now call it "oiônistic", making it more high-sounding with the long "o". So the ancients testify to the fact that god-sent madness is a finer thing than man-made sanity, by the very degree that mantic is a more perfect and more valuable thing than oionistic, both when name is measured against name and when effect is measured against effect. But again, in the case of the greatest maladies and sufferings that occur in certain families from some ancient causes of divine anger, madness comes about in them and acts as interpreter, finding the necessary means of relief by recourse to prayers and forms of service to the gods; as a result of which it hits upon secret rites of purification and puts the man who is touched by it out of danger for both the present and the future, so finding a release from his present evils for the one who is rightly maddened and possessed. A third kind of possession and madness comes from the Muses: taking a soft, virgin soul and arousing it to a Bacchic frenzy of expression in lyric and the other forms of poetry, it educates succeeding generations by glorifying myriad deeds of those of the past; while the man who

arrives at the doors of poetry without madness from the Muses, convinced that after all expertise will make him a good poet, both he and his poetry – the poetry of the sane – are eclipsed by that of the mad, remaining imperfect and unfulfilled.

'All these and still more are the fine achievements I can relate to you of madness that comes from the gods. So let us have no fears about *that*, and let us not be alarmed by any argument that tries to frighten us into supposing that we should prefer the sane man as friend to the one who is disturbed; let it carry off the prize of victory only if it has shown this too – that love is not sent from the gods to help lover and beloved. We in our turn must prove the reverse, that such madness is given by the gods to allow us to achieve the greatest good fortune; and the proof will be disbelieved by the clever, believed by the wise.

'Experiences and actions' of divine and human souls.

'Well then: first, we must comprehend the truth about the nature of soul, both divine and human, by observing experiences and actions belonging to it; and the beginning of our proof is this:

'All soul is immortal. For that which is always in movement is immortal; that which moves something else, and is moved by something else, in ceasing from movement ceases from living. So only that which moves itself, because it does not abandon itself, never stops moving. But it is also source and first principle of movement for the other things which move. Now a first principle is something which does not come into being. For all that comes into being must come into being from a first principle, but a first principle itself cannot come into being from anything at all; for if a first principle came into being from anything, it would not do so from a first principle. Since it is something that does not come into being, it must also be something which does not perish. For if a first principle is destroyed, neither will it ever come

into being from anything itself nor will anything else come into being from it, given that all things must come into being from a first principle. It is in this way, then, that that which moves itself is a first principle of movement. It is not possible for this either to be destroyed or to come into being, or else the whole universe and the whole of that which comes to be might collapse together and come to a halt, and never again have a source from which things will be moved and come to be. And since that which is moved by itself has been shown to be immortal, it will incur no shame to say that this is the essence and the definition of soul. For all body which has its source of motion outside itself is soulless, whereas that which has it within itself, from itself, is ensouled, this being the nature of soul; and if this is the way it is that that which moves itself is nothing other than soul – then soul will necessarily be something that neither comes into being nor dies.

'About its immortality, then, enough has been said. About its form we must say the following: *that what kind of thing it is* belongs to a completely and utterly superhuman exposition, and a long one; to say *what it resembles* requires a lesser one, one within human capacities. So let us speak in the latter way. Let it then resemble the combined power of a winged team of horses and their charioteer. Now in the case of gods, horses and charioteers are all both good themselves and of good stock; whereas in the case of the rest, there is a mixture. In the first place, our driver has charge of a pair; secondly, one of them he finds noble and good, and of similar stock, while the other is of the opposite stock, and opposite in its nature; so that the driving in our case is necessarily difficult and troublesome. How it is, then, that some living creatures are called mortal and some immortal, we

must now try to say. All soul has the care of all that is soulless, and ranges about the whole universe, coming to be now in one form, now in another. Now when it is perfectly winged, it travels above the earth and governs the whole cosmos; but the soul that has lost its wings is swept along until it lays hold of something solid, where it settles down, taking on an earthly body that seems to move itself because of the power of soul, and the whole is called a living creature, soul and body fixed together, and acquires the name "mortal"; immortal it is not, on the basis of any argument which has been reasoned through, but because we have neither seen nor adequately conceived of a god, we imagine a kind of immortal living creature which has a soul and has a body, and we imagine these combined for all time. But let this, and our account of it, be as is pleasing to god; let us grasp the cause of the loss of wings – why they fall from a soul. It is something like this.

'The natural property of a wing is to carry what is heavy upwards, lifting it aloft to the region where the race of the gods resides, and in a way, of all the things belonging to the sphere of the body, it has the greatest share in the divine, the divine being beautiful, wise, good and everything which is of that kind; so it is by these things that the plumage of the soul is nourished and increased most of all, while the shameful, the bad and in general the opposites of the other things make it waste away and perish. First in the heavens travels Zeus, the great leader, driving a winged chariot, putting all things in order and caring for all; after him there follows an army of gods and divinities, ordered in eleven companies. For Hestia alone remains in the house of the gods; of the rest, all those who have their place among the number of the twelve take the lead as commanders in the station

given to each. Many, then, and blessed are the paths to be seen along which the happy race of gods turns within the heavens, each of them performing what belongs to him; and after them follows anyone who wishes and is able to do so, for jealousy is excluded from the divine chorus. But when they go to their feasting and to banquet, then they travel to the summit of the arch of heaven, and the climb is steep: the chariots of the gods travel easily, being well balanced and easily controlled, while the rest do so with difficulty; for the horse that is partly bad weighs them down, inclining them towards the earth through its weight, if any of the charioteers has not trained him well. Here it is that the final labour, the final contest, awaits a soul. Those souls that are called immortal, when they are at the top, travel outside and take their stand upon the outer part of the heavens, and positioned like this they are carried round by its revolution, and gaze on the things outside the heavens.

'Now the region above the heavens has never yet been celebrated as it deserves to be by any earthly poet, nor will it ever be. But it is like this – for one must be bold enough to say what is true, especially when speaking about truth. This region is occupied by being which really is, which is without colour or shape, intangible, observable by the steersman of the soul alone, by intellect, and to which the class of true knowledge relates. Thus because the mind of a god is nourished by intellect and knowledge unmixed, and so too that of every soul which is concerned to receive what is appropriate to it, it is glad at last to see what is and is nourished and made happy by gazing on what is true, until the revolution of the whole brings it around in a circle to the same point. In its circuit it sees justice itself, sees self-control, sees knowledge – not that knowledge to which coming into be-

ing attaches, nor the knowledge that strangely differs in different items among the things that we now say are, but that which is in what really is and which is really knowledge; and having feasted its gaze in the same way on the other things that really are, it descends back into the region within the heavens and goes home. When it arrives there, the charioteer stations his horses at their manger, throwing them ambrosia and giving them nectar to drink down with the ambrosia.

'This is the life of gods; of the other souls, the one that follows god best and has come to resemble him most raises the head of its charioteer into the region outside and is carried round with the revolution, meanwhile being disturbed by its horses and scarcely seeing the things that are; while another now rises, now sinks, and because of the force exerted by its horses sees some things but not others. The remaining souls follow after them, all straining to reach the place above but unable to do so, and are carried round together under the surface, trampling and jostling one another, each trying to get ahead of the next. So there ensues the greatest confusion among the sweating competitors, and in all of it, through their charioteers' incompetence, many souls are maimed, and many have their wings all broken; all of them with great labour depart without achieving a sight of what is, and afterwards feed on what only appears to nourish them. The cause of their great eagerness to see the plain of truth where it lies is that the pasturage that is fitting for the best part of the soul really comes from the meadow there, and that it is the nature of the wing that lifts up the soul to be nourished by this. And the ordinance of Destiny is this: that whichever soul follows in the train of god and catches some sight of what is true shall remain free from sorrow until the next circuit, and if it is always able

to do this, it shall always remain free from harm; but whenever through inability to follow it fails to see, and through some mischance is weighed down by being filled with forgetfulness and incompetence, and because of the weight loses its wings and falls to the earth, then it is the law that this soul shall not be planted in any wild creature at its first birth; rather, the one that saw most shall be planted in the seed of a man who will become a lover of wisdom, or of beauty, or devoted to the Muses and to love; the second in the seed of a law-abiding king, or someone fit for generalship and ruling; the third in that of a man who devotes himself to the affairs of a city, or some expert in household or business affairs; the fourth in that of an exercise-loving trainer in the gymnasium, or of someone who will be concerned with healing the body; the fifth will have the life of a seer or of some expert in mystic rites; for the sixth, the fitting life will be that of a poet or of some other type concerned with imitation; for the seventh that of a craftsman or farmer; for the eighth that of sophist or demagogue; for the ninth that of a tyrant. Among all these kinds, whoever lives justly receives a better portion, whoever lives unjustly receives a worse. For each soul only returns to the place from which it has come after ten thousand years; it does not become winged before then, except in the case of the soul of the man who has lived the philosophical life without guile or who has united his love of boys with philosophy. These souls, with the third circuit of a thousand years, if they choose this life three times in succession, on that condition become winged and depart, in the three-thousandth year. But the rest, when they finish their first life, undergo judgement, and after judgement some of them go to the places of correction under the earth and pay their penalty, while others are lifted up by

Justice into some region of the heavens and live a life of a kind merited by their life in human form. In the thousandth year, both sorts come to an allotment and choice of their second life, and each chooses whichever it wishes: then a human soul passes even into the life of a wild animal, and what was once a man back into a man from a wild animal. For the soul which has never seen the truth shall not enter this shape of ours. A human being must comprehend what is said universally, arising from many sensations and being collected together into one through reasoning; and this is a recollection of those things which our soul once saw when it travelled in company with god and treated with contempt the things we now say are, and when it poked its head up into what really is. Hence it is with justice that only the thought of the philosopher becomes winged; for so far as it can it is close, through memory, to those things his closeness to which gives a god his divinity. Thus if a man uses such reminders rightly, being continually initiated in perfect rites, he alone achieves real perfection; and standing aside from human concerns, and coming close to the divine, he is admonished by the many for being disturbed, when his real state is one of possession, which goes unrecognized by the many.

The blessings of the madness of erôs

'Well then, this is the outcome of my whole account of the fourth kind of madness – the madness of the man who, on seeing beauty here on earth, and being reminded of true beauty, becomes winged and, fluttering with eagerness to fly upwards but unable to leave the ground, looking upwards like a bird, and taking no heed of the things below, causes him to be regarded as mad: the outcome is that this in fact reveals itself as the best of all the kinds of divine possession and from the best of sources for the man who is subject to it and shares in it, and that it is when

he partakes in this madness that the man who loves the beautiful is called a lover. For as has been said, every soul of a human being has by the law of its nature observed the things that are, or else it would not have entered this creature, man; but it is not easy for every soul to gain from things here a recollection of those other things, either for those which only briefly saw the things there at that earlier time, or for those which fall to earth and have the misfortune to be turned to injustice by keeping certain kinds of company, forgeting the holy things they saw then. Few souls are left who have sufficient memory; and these, when they see some likeness of the things there, are driven out of their wits with amazement and lose control of themselves, though they do not know what has happened to them because they cannot properly see through it. Now in the earthly likenesses of justice and self-control and the other things that are of value to souls, there is no illumination, but through dulled organs just a few individuals approach their images and with difficulty observe the nature of what is imaged in them; but in that earlier time beauty was there to see, blazing out, when with a happy company – ourselves following with Zeus, others with different gods – they *saw* a blessed sight there before them, and were initiated into what it is right to call most blessed of rites, which we celebrated, whole in ourselves, and untouched by the evils that awaited us in a later time, with our gaze turned in our final initiation towards whole, simple, unchanging and blissful revelations, in a pure light, pure ourselves and not entombed in this thing which we now carry round with us and call body, imprisoned like oysters.

'Let this, then, be our concession to memory, which has made me speak now at some length out of longing for what was before; but on the subject of beauty – as we said, it shone out when in

company with those other things, and now that we have come to earth we have found it gleaming most clearly through the clearest of the senses that we have. For of all the sensations coming to us through the body, sight is the keenest: wisdom we do not see with it – the feelings of love it would cause in us would be terrible, if it allowed some such clear image of itself to reach our sight, and so too with the other objects of love; but as it is, beauty alone has acquired this privilege, of being most evident and most loved. Thus the man whose initiation was not recent, or who has been corrupted, does not move keenly from here to there, to beauty itself, when he gazes on its namesake here, so that he does not revere it when he looks at it but, surrendering himself to pleasure, does his best to go on four feet like an animal and father offspring and, keeping close company with excess, has no fear or shame in pursuing pleasure contrary to nature; while the newly initiated, the man who observed much of what was visible to him before, whenever he sees a godlike face or some form of body which imitates beauty well, first shudders, feeling something of the fears he had before, then reveres what he sees like a god as he gazes at it and, if he were not afraid of appearing thoroughly mad, would sacrifice to his beloved as if to a statue of a god. When he has seen him, the expected change comes over him following the shuddering – sweating and a high fever; for he is warmed by receiving the effluence of beauty that is the natural nourishment of his plumage, and with that warming there is a melting of the parts around its base, which have long since become hard and closed up, so preventing it from sprouting, and with the incoming stream of nourishment the quills of the feathers swell and set to growing from their roots under the surface of the whole form of the soul; for formerly the whole

of it was winged. Meanwhile all of it throbs and palpitates, and the experience is like that of cutting teeth, the itching and the aching that occur around the gums when the teeth are just coming through: such is the state of the soul of the man who is beginning to sprout wings – it throbs and aches and tickles as it grows its feathers. So when it gazes at the boy's beauty, and is nourished and warmed by receiving particles (*merê*) which come to it (*epionta*) in a flood (*rheonta*) from there (hence, of course, the name we give them, desire (*himeros*)), it experiences relief from its anguish and is filled with joy; but when it is apart and becomes parched, the openings of the passages through which the feathers push their way out are dried up and closed, so shutting off their shoots, and these, shut in with the desire, throb like pulsing arteries, each of them pricking at the outlet corresponding to it, so that the entire soul, stung all over, goes mad with pain; but then, remembering the boy with his beauty, it rejoices again. The mixture of both these states makes it despair at the strangeness of its condition, raging in its perplexity, and in its madness it can neither sleep at night nor keep still where it is by day, but in its yearning runs to wherever it thinks it will see the possessor of the beauty it longs for; and, when it has seen him and channelled desire in to itself, it releases what was pent up before, and, finding a breathing space, it ceases from its stinging birth-pains, once more enjoying this for the moment as the sweetest pleasure. This it does not willingly give up, nor does it value anyone above the one with beauty, but quite forgets mother, brothers, friends, all together, loses wealth through neglect without caring a jot about it, and, feeling contempt for all the accepted standards of propriety and good taste in which it previously prided itself, it is ready to act the part of a slave and

sleep wherever it is allowed to do so, provided it is as close as possible to the object of its yearning; for in addition to its reverence for the one who possesses the beauty, it has found him to be the sole healer of its greatest labours. This experience, my beautiful boy, the one to whom my speech is addressed, men term love; but when you hear what gods call it I expect you will laugh, because of your youth. I think some Homeric experts cite two verses to Love from the less well-known poems, the second of which is quite outrageous and not very metrical; they celebrate him like this: We mortals call him Mighty Love, a winged power of great renown, Immortals call him Fledgeling Dove – since Eros' wings lack down. You may believe this or you may not; but at any rate the cause of the lover's experience and the experience itself are as I have described.

'If the man who is taken by Love belongs among the followers of Zeus, he is able to bear the burden of the Feathery One with some sedateness; but as for those who were attendants of Ares and made the circuit with him, when they are captured by Love and think that they are being wronged in some way by the one they love, they become murderous and ready to sacrifice both themselves and their beloved. Just so each lives after the pattern of the god in whose chorus he was, honouring him by imitating him in his life so far as he can, provided that he is uncorrupted and living out the life following his first birth here on earth; and he behaves in this way in his associations both with those he loves and with everyone else. So each selects his love from the ranks of the beautiful according to his own disposition and, as if that love were the very god he followed, fashions and adorns him like a statue for himself, in order to honour him and celebrate his mystic rites. Thus those who belong to Zeus seek

that the one loved by themselves should be Zeus-like in respect of his soul; so they look to see whether he is naturally disposed towards philosophy and leadership, and when they have found him and fallen in love, they do everything to make him like this. So if they haven't embarked on this practice before now, now they do undertake it, both learning from wherever they can and finding out for themselves; and as they follow the scent from within themselves to the discovery of the nature of their own god, they find the means to it through the compulsion on them to gaze intensely on the god, and grasping him through memory, and possessed by him, it is from him that they take their habits and ways, to the extent that it is possible for man to share in god; and because they count their beloved responsible for these very things, they love him even more, and if it is from Zeus that they draw, like Bacchants, they pour the draught over the soul of their loved one and make him as like their god as possible. As for those who followed with Hera, they seek someone regal in nature, and when they have found him they do all the same things in respect of him. Those who belong to Apollo and each of the other gods proceed in the same way in accordance with their god and seek that their boy should be of the same nature; and when they acquire him, imitating the god themselves and persuading and disciplining their beloved, they draw him into the way of life and pattern of the god, to the extent that each is able, without showing jealousy or mean ill-will towards their beloved; rather, they act as they do because they are trying as much as they can, in every way, to draw him into complete resemblance to themselves and to whichever god they honour. The eagerness of those who are truly in love, then, and its outcome – if, that is, they manage to achieve what they eagerly

desire in the way I have said – are thus rendered beautiful and bring happiness from the friend who is maddened through love to the object of his affection, if he is caught; and one who is caught is captured in the following way.

'Just as at the beginning of this story we divided each soul into three forms, two like horses and the third with the role of charioteer, let this still stand now. Of the horses, one, we say, is good, the other not; but we did not describe what the excellence of the good horse was, or the badness of the bad horse, and now we must. Well then, the first of the two, which is on the nobler station, is erect in form and clean-limbed, high-necked, nose somewhat hooked, white in colour, with black eyes, a lover of honour when joined with restraint and a sense of shame, and a companion of true glory, needing no whip, responding to spoken orders alone; the other is crooked in shape, gross, a random collection of parts, with a short, powerful neck, flat-nosed, black-skinned, grey-eyed, bloodshot, companion of excess and boastfulness, shaggy around the ears, deaf, hardly yielding to whip and goad together. Now when the charioteer first catches sight of the light of his love, warms the whole soul with the seeing of it, and begins to be filled with tickling and pricks of longing, the horse that is obedient to the charioteer, constrained then as always by shame, holds itself back from leaping on the loved one; while the other no longer takes any heed of goading or the whip from the charioteer but springs powerfully forward and, causing all kinds of trouble to his yoke-mate and the charioteer, forces them to move towards the beloved and mention to him the delights of sex. At the start, the two of them resist, indignant at the idea of being forced to do terrible and improper things; but finally, when there is no limit to the trou-

ble it causes, they follow its lead, giving in and agreeing to do what it tells them to do. And now they are close to the beloved, and they see the beloved's face, flashing like lightning. As the charioteer sees it, his memory is carried back to the nature of beauty and again sees it standing together with self-control on a holy pedestal; at the sight it becomes frightened, and in sudden reverence falls on its back, and is forced at the same time to pull back the reins so violently as to bring both horses down on their haunches, the one willingly, because of its lack of resistance to him, but the horse of excess much against its will. When they have backed off a little way, the first horse drenches the whole soul with sweat from shame and alarm, while the other, when it has recovered from the pain caused to it by the bit and its fall, scarcely gets its breath back before it breaks into angry abuse, repeatedly reviling the charioteer and its yoke-mate for cowardly and unmanly desertion of their agreed position; and again it tries to compel them to approach, unwilling as they are, and barely concedes when they beg him to postpone it until a later time. When the agreed time comes, and they pretend not to remember, it reminds them; struggling, neighing, pulling, it forces them to approach the beloved again to make the same proposition, and as soon as they are close to him, head down and tail outstretched, teeth clamped on its bit, it pulls shamelessly; but the same thing happens to the charioteer as before, only even more violently, as he falls back as if from a starting-barrier; still more violently, he wrenches the bit back and forces it from the teeth of the horse of excess, spattering its evil-speaking tongue and its jaws with blood and, thrusting its legs and haunches to the ground, ‘gives it over to pains'. When the bad horse has had the same thing happen to it repeatedly and it ceases from its excess,

now humbled it allows the charioteer with his foresight to lead, and when it sees the boy in his beauty, it nearly dies of fright; and the result is that then the soul of the lover follows the beloved in reverence and awe. So because he receives every kind of service, as if equal to the gods, from a lover who is not pretending to be in love but genuinely in this state, and because he naturally feels friendship for the man who renders him service, even if perhaps in the past he has been prejudiced against him by hearing his schoolfellows or others say that it is shameful to associate with a lover, and repulses the one in love for that reason, as time goes on he is led both by his age, and by necessity, towards admitting him to his company; for it is surely against fate that bad be friend to bad, or that good not be friend to good. Once he has admitted him, and accepted his conversation and his company, the goodwill that he experiences at close quarters from the one in love astounds the beloved, as he clearly sees that not even all his other friends and his relations together have anything to offer by way of friendship in comparison with the friend who is divinely possessed. And when he continues doing this, and association is combined with physical contact in the gymnasium and on the other occasions when people come together, then it is that the springs of that stream which Zeus when in love with Ganymede named 'desire' flow in abundance upon the lover, some sinking within him and some flowing off outside him as he brims over; and as a breath of wind or some echo rebounds from smooth, hard surfaces and returns to the source from which it issued, so the stream of beauty passes back into its possessor through his eyes, which is its natural route to the soul; arriving there and setting him all aflutter, it waters the passages of the feathers and causes the wings to grow, and fills the soul of the loved one in his

turn with love. So he is in love, but as to what he is in love with, he is at a loss; and he neither knows what has happened to him nor can he even begin to express what it is, but – like a man who has caught eye-disease from someone – he can give no account of it and is unaware that he is seeing himself in the one who loves as if in a mirror. And when his lover is with him, like him he ceases from his anguish; when he is absent, again like him he longs and is longed for, because he is feeling love back, an image of the lover's love, though he calls what he has and thinks of it not as love but as friendship. His desire is similar to his lover's but weaker: to see, touch, kiss and lie down together; and indeed, as one might expect, soon afterwards he does just that. So as they lie together, the lover's licentious horse has something to say to the charioteer and claims the right to a little enjoyment as recompense for many labours endured; while its counterpart in the beloved has nothing to say, but, swelling with confused passion, it embraces the lover and kisses him, welcoming him as someone full of goodwill, and when they lie down together, it is ready not to refuse to do its own part in granting favours to the one in love, should he beg to receive them; but its yoke-fellow, for its part, together with the charioteer, resists this with a reasoned sense of shame. And then, well, if the better elements of their minds get the upper hand by drawing them to a well-ordered life, and to philosophy, they pass their life here in blessedness and harmony, masters of themselves and orderly in their behaviour, having enslaved that part through which badness attempted to enter the soul and having freed that part through which goodness enters; and when they die they become winged and light, and have won one of their three submissions in these, the true Olympic games – and neither human sanity nor divine mad-

ness has any greater good to offer a man than this. But if they live a coarser way of life, devoted not to wisdom but to honour, then perhaps, I suppose, when they are drinking or in some other moment of carelessness, the licentious horses in the two of them catch them off their guard, bring them together and make that choice which is called blessed by the many, and carry it through; and, once having done so, they continue with that choice, but sparingly, because what they are doing has not been approved by their whole mind. So these too spend their lives as mutual friends, though not to the same degree as the other pair, both during the course of their love and when they have passed beyond it, believing that they have given and received the most binding pledges, which it would be against piety to break by ever becoming enemies. On their death they leave the body without wings but with the impulse to gain them, so that they carry off no small reward for their lovers' madness; for it is ordained that those who have already begun on the journey under the heavens shall no longer pass into the darkness of the journey under the earth but shall rather live in the light and be happy as they travel with each other, and acquire matching plumage, when they acquire it, because of their love.

'These are the blessings, my boy, so great as to be counted divine, that will come to you from the friendship of a lover, in the way I have described; whereas the acquaintance of the one not in love, which is diluted with a merely mortal good sense, dispensing miserly benefits of a mortal kind, engenders in the soul that is the object of its attachment a meanness that, though praised by the many as a virtue, will cause it to wallow mindlessly around the earth and under the earth for nine thousand years.'

A prayer to Love.

This, dear god of love, is offered and paid to you as the finest

and best palinode of which I am capable, especially given that it was forced to use somewhat poetical language because of Phaedrus. Forgive what went before and regard this with favour; be kind and gracious – do not in anger take away or maim the expertise in love that you gave me, and grant that I be valued still more than now by the beautiful. If in our earlier speech Phaedrus and I said anything harsh against you, blame Lysias as the instigator of the speech, and make him cease from speeches of that kind, turning him instead, as his brother Polemarchus has been turned, to philosophy, so that his lover here too may no longer waver, as he does now, between the two choices but may single-mindedly direct his life towards love accompanied by talk of a philosophical kind.

Transition to a discussion of speaking and writing.

PHAEDRUS I pray with you, Socrates: if indeed that is better for us, that may we have. But as for your speech, for some time I have been amazed at how much finer you managed to make it than the one before; so that I have a suspicion Lysias will appear wretched to me in comparison, if he really does consent to put up another in competition with it. Indeed, my amazing friend, just recently one of the politicians was using this very reproach to abuse him, and all through the abuse kept calling him a 'speech-writer'; so perhaps we shall find him refraining from writing out of concern for his reputation.

SOCRATES An absurd idea, young man; you much mistake your friend, if you think him so frightened of mere noise. But perhaps you think that the man who was abusing him really meant what he said.

PHAEDRUS He seemed to, Socrates; and I think you know yourself that the men with the most power and dignity in our cities are ashamed to write speeches and leave compositions of

theirs behind them, for fear of what posterity will think of them – they're afraid they'll be called sophists.

SOCRATES Phaedrus, you don't know the expression 'pleasant bend'; and besides the bend you're missing the point that the politicians who have the highest opinion of themselves are most in love with speech-writing and with leaving compositions behind them, to judge at any rate from the fact that whenever they write a speech, they are so pleased with those who commend mend it that they add in at the beginning the names of those who commend them on each occasion.

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

SOCRATES You don't understand that at the beginning of a politician's composition the commender's name is written first?

PHAEDRUS How so?

SOCRATES The writer says, I think, 'It was resolved by the council,' or 'by the people' or both, and 'So-and-so said', referring to his own dear self with great pomposity and self-eulogy; then he proceeds with what he has to say, demonstrating his own wisdom to those commending him, sometimes making a very long composition of it; or does such a thing seem to you to be anything other than a written speech?

PHAEDRUS Not to me.

SOCRATES Then if it stays written down, the author leaves the theatre delighted; but if it is rubbed out and he loses his chance of being a speech-writer and of being recognized as a writer, he and his friends go into mourning.

PHAEDRUS Very much so.

SOCRATES And clearly they behave like this not because they despise the profession, but because they regard it with admiration.

PHAEDRUS Yes indeed.

SOCRATES Well then: when a person becomes a good enough orator or king to acquire the capacity of a Lycurgus, a Solon or a Darius and achieve immortality as a speech-writer in a city, doesn't he think himself equal to the gods even while he is alive, and don't those who come later think the very same of him, when they observe his compositions?

PHAEDRUS Very much so.

SOCRATES So do you think anyone of that kind, whoever he is and however ill disposed towards Lysias, reproaches him on this count – that he is a writer?

PHAEDRUS It's not very likely, from what you say; if he did, it seems he would be reproaching what he himself desires.

SOCRATES This much, then, is clear to everyone, that writing speeches is not *itself* something shameful.

PHAEDRUS How could it be?

SOCRATES But what is shameful, I think, is speaking and writing and doing it not well but shamefully and badly.

PHAEDRUS Clearly.

SOCRATES So what is the way to write well or badly? Do we need, Phaedrus, to examine Lysias, perhaps, on this subject, and anyone else who has so far written anything, or will write anything, thing, whether it's a political composition or a private one, and whether he writes it as a poet, in verse, or in plain man's prose?

PHAEDRUS You really ask if we need to? What would anyone live for, if I may put it as strongly as that, if not for such pleasures as this? Not, I think, for those which have to be preceded by pain if one is to enjoy pleasure at all – a feature possessed by nearly all the pleasures relating to the body; which is why in fact they

are called slavish, and justly so.

SOCRATES We have plenty of time, it seems; and there's something else: I think that as the cicadas sing above our heads in their usual fashion in the heat, and converse with each other, they are also watching us. So if they saw us behaving like most people at midday, and not conversing but nodding off under their spell through lazy-mindedness, they would justly laugh at us, thinking that some slaves had come to their gathering-place and were having their midday sleep around the spring, like sheep; but if they see us conversing and sailing past them unbewitched by their Siren song, perhaps they may respect us and give us that gift which they have from the gods to give to men.

PHAEDRUS What is this gift they have? I don't seem to have heard of it.

SOCRATES A man who loves the Muses really ought to have heard of things like this. The story is that these creatures were once human beings, belonging to a time before the Muses were born, and that with the birth of the Muses and the appearance of song some of the people of the time were so unhinged by pleasure that in their singing they neglected to eat and drink, and failed to notice that they had died. From them the race of cicadas later sprang, with this gift from the Muses, that from their birth they have no need of sustenance but immediately start singing, with no food and no drink, and sing until they die; then they go and report to the Muses which among those here honours which of them. To Terpsichore they report those who have honoured her in the choral dance, and so make them dearer to her; to Erato those who have honoured her in the affairs of love; and to the other Muses similarly, according to the form of honour belonging to each; but to Calliope, the eldest, and to Ourania,

who comes after her, they announce those who spend their time in philosophy and honour the music that belongs to the two of them – who, most of all the Muses, are concerned both with the heavens and with speech, both divine and human, and whose voices carry most beautifully. So there are many reasons why we should say something and not sleep in the midday heat.

PHAEDRUS Yes, we should.

Rhetoric – as it should be, and as it is.

SOCRATES Then we should consider what we proposed just now: speeches – in what way they will be well said and written, and in what way they will not.

PHAEDRUS Clearly.

SOCRATES Well then, for things that are going to be said *well*, and beautifully, mustn't there be knowledge in the mind of the speaker of the truth about whatever he means to speak of?

PHAEDRUS What I have heard about this, my dear Socrates, is that there is no necessity for the man who means to be an orator to understand what is really just but only what would appear so to the majority of those who will give judgement; and not what is really good or beautiful but whatever will appear so; because persuasion comes from that and not from the truth.

SOCRATES Whatever wise people say, Phaedrus, is 'a word not to be cast aside', and we should always look to see whether they may not be right; what you just said, particularly, must not be dismissed.

PHAEDRUS Quite right.

SOCRATES Let us consider it like this.

PHAEDRUS How?

SOCRATES If I were persuading you to defend yourself against the enemy by getting a horse, and neither of us knew what a horse was, but I happened to know just so much about

you, that Phaedrus thinks a horse is that tame animal which has the largest ears –

PHAEDRUS It would be ridiculous, Socrates.

SOCRATES Not so ridiculous yet; but it would be when I tried in earnest to persuade you by putting together a speech in praise of the donkey, labelling it a horse and saying that the beast would be an invaluable acquisition both at home and on active service, useful to fight from and capable too of carrying baggage, and good for many other purposes.

PHAEDRUS Then it would be thoroughly ridiculous.

SOCRATES Well then, isn't it better to be ridiculous and a friend than to be clever and an enemy?

PHAEDRUS It seems so.

SOCRATES So when an expert in rhetoric who is ignorant of good and bad finds a city in the same condition and tries to persuade it, by making his eulogy not about a miserable donkey as if it were a horse but about what is bad as if it were good, and – having applied himself to what the masses think – actually persuades the city to do something bad instead of good, what sort of harvest do you think rhetoric reaps after that from the seed it sowed?

PHAEDRUS Not a very good one.

SOCRATES Well, my good friend, have we abused the science of speaking more coarsely than we should? She might perhaps say 'What nonsense is this you're talking, you fine people? I don't insist that anyone who learns how to speak should be ignorant of the truth; on the contrary, if I advise anything, it is that he should acquire the truth first and then get hold of me. But this at any rate is my boast, that without me the man who knows what is true will be quite unable to persuade scientifically.'

PHAEDRUS So will she be right in saying this?

SOCRATES I say she will; if, that is, the arguments advancing on her testify that she is a science. For it seems to me as if I am hearing certain arguments approaching and solemnly protesting even before the case comes to court that she is lying, and is not a science but an unscientific knack; without a grasp of truth, saith the Laconian, a genuine science of speaking neither exists nor will come into existence in the future.

PHAEDRUS We need these arguments, Socrates; bring them here before us and examine what they say and how they say it.

SOCRATES Come here then, you noble beasts, and persuade Phaedrus of the beautiful offspring that unless he engages in philosophy sufficiently well, neither will he ever be a sufficiently good speaker about anything. Let Phaedrus answer you.

PHAEDRUS (*addressing the Arguments*) Ask your questions.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) Well then, will not the science of rhetoric as a whole be a kind of leading of the soul by means of speech, not only in law-courts and other kinds of public gatherings but in private ones too – the same science, whether it is concerned with small matters or large ones, and something which possesses no more value, if properly understood, when it comes into play in relation to things of importance than when it does with things of no importance? Is this what you've heard about it?

PHAEDRUS Zeus! No, not quite that, I must say. A science of speaking and writing is perhaps especially employed in lawsuits, though scientific speaking is also involved in public addresses; I have not heard of any extension of it beyond that.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) What? Have you only heard of the manuals on rhetoric by Nestor and Odysseus, the ones they

composed at Troy when they had nothing to do? You haven't heard of those of Palamedes?

PHAEDRUS Neither – Zeus! – have I heard of Nestor's, unless you're dressing up Gorgias as a kind of Nestor, or maybe a Thrasymachus or Theodorus as Odysseus.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) Perhaps. But anyway let them pass. Now you tell us this: What do opposing parties in law-courts do? Don't they give opposing speeches? Or what shall we say?

PHAEDRUS Just that.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) About the just and unjust?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES (*Arguments)* So the man who does this scientifically will make the same thing appear to the same people at one time just and, whenever he wishes, unjust?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) And in public addresses he will make the same things seem to the city at one time good, at another the opposite?

PHAEDRUS Just so.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) Well, don't we recognize the Eleatic Palamedes as speaking scientifically so as to make the same things appear to his hearers to be like and unlike, one and many, at rest and in motion?

PHAEDRUS Yes indeed.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) Then the science of giving opposing speeches is not restricted to law-courts and public addresses, but, it seems, there will be this single science – if indeed it *is* a science – in relation to everything that is said: the science that enables one to make everything which is capable of being made to resemble something else resemble everything which it is capable

of being made to resemble, and to bring it to light when someone else makes one thing resemble another and tries to disguise it.

PHAEDRUS What sort of thing do you mean?

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) I think it will become clear if we direct our search this way: Does deception occur more in the case of things that are widely different or in those that differ little?

PHAEDRUS In those that differ little.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) At any rate, when you are passing over from one thing to its opposite you will be more likely to escape detection if you take small steps than if you take large ones.

PHAEDRUS Certainly.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) In that case the person who means to deceive someone else, but be undeceived himself, must have a precise knowledge of the likeness and unlikeness of the things that are.

PHAEDRUS Yes, necessarily.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*)S So will he be able, if he is ignorant of the truth of each thing, to identify the likeness, whether small or great, that the other things have to the thing he does not know?

PHAEDRUS Impossible.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) Then clearly those who hold beliefs contrary to what is the case and are deceived have this kind of thing creeping in on them through certain likenesses.

PHAEDRUS It does happen that way.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) So is there any way in which a man will be a scientific expert at making others cross over little by little from what is the case on each occasion, via the likenesses, leading them off towards the opposite, or at escaping this him-

self, if he has not recognized what each of the things that are actually is?

PHAEDRUS No, never.

SOCRATES (*Arguments*) In that case, my friend, anyone who does not know the truth, but has made it his business to hunt down appearances, will give us a science of speech that will, so it seems, be ridiculously unscientific.

PHAEDRUS You may be right.

SOCRATES (*returning to his own persona*) So do you want to take the speech of Lysias you're carrying, and the ones you and I made, and see in them something of the features we say are scientific and unscientific?

PHAEDRUS Yes, I think so, more than anything; as things are, our discussion is somewhat bare, because we do not have sufficient examples.

SOCRATES What's more, by some chance, it seems, the pair of speeches as they were given do have in them an example of a sort of how someone who knows the truth can mislead his audience by playing with them. I myself, Phaedrus, blame the gods of the place; and perhaps too the spokesmen of the Muses who sing over our heads may have breathed this gift upon us – for I don't think *I* share in any science of speaking.

PHAEDRUS So be it; only make clear what you're saying.

SOCRATES Well, read me the beginning of Lysias' speech.

PHAEDRUS 'How it is with me, you know, and how I think it is to our advantage that these things should happen, you have heard me say; and I claim that I should not fail to achieve the things I ask for because I happen not to be in love with you. Those in love repent of whatever services they do at the point –'

SOCRATES Stop! We need to say, then, where the author goes wrong and what he does unscientifically – am I right?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES Isn't this sort of thing, at least, clear to anyone: that we're of one mind about some things like this, and at odds about others?

PHAEDRUS I think I understand what you mean, but tell me still more clearly.

SOCRATES When someone utters the name of iron, or of silver, don't we all have the same thing in mind?

PHAEDRUS Absolutely.

SOCRATES What about the names of just, or good? Doesn't one of us go off in one direction, another in another, so that we disagree both with each other and with ourselves?

PHAEDRUS We certainly do.

SOCRATES Then we are in accord in some cases, not in others.

PHAEDRUS Just so.

SOCRATES So in which of the two cases are we easier to deceive, and in which does rhetoric have the greater power?

PHAEDRUS Clearly in those cases where we go off in different directions.

SOCRATES So the one who means to pursue a science of rhetoric must first have divided these up methodically and grasped some mark which distinguishes each of the two kinds, those in which most people are bound to tread uncertainly, and those in which they are not.

PHAEDRUS A fine kind of thing he will have identified, Socrates, if he grasps this!

SOCRATES Then, I think, as he comes across each thing, he must not be caught unawares but look sharply to see which of

the two types the thing he is going to speak about belongs to.

PHAEDRUS Right.

SOCRATES Well then, are we to say that love belongs with the disputed cases or the undisputed ones?

PHAEDRUS With the disputed, surely; otherwise, do you think it would have been possible for you to say what you said about it just now, both that it is harmful to beloved and lover, and then on the other hand that it is really the greatest of goods?

SOCRATES Admirably said; but tell me this too – for of course because of my inspired condition then, I don't quite remember – whether I defined love when beginning my speech.

PHAEDRUS Zeus! Yes, indeed you did, most emphatically.

SOCRATES Dear me! How much more scientific you're saying the Nymphs, daughters of Achelous, and Pan, son of Hermes, are than Lysias, son of Cephalus, in the business of speaking! Or am I wrong? Did Lysias too compel us when beginning his speech on love to take love as one definite thing that he himself had in mind, and did he then bring the whole speech that followed to its conclusion by ordering it in relation to that? Shall we read the beginning again?

PHAEDRUS If you think we should; but what you're looking for isn't there.

SOCRATES Quote it, so I can hear it from the man himself.

PHAEDRUS 'How it is with me, you know, and how I think it is to our advantage that these things should happen, you have heard me say; and I claim that I should not fail to achieve the things I ask for because I happen not to be in love with you. Those in love repent of whatever services they do at the point they cease from their desire –'

SOCRATES He does indeed seem to be a long way from doing

what we're looking for, since he doesn't even begin at the beginning but from the end, trying to swim through his speech in reverse, on his back, and begins from the things the lover would say to his beloved when he'd already finished loving. Or am I wrong, Phaedrus, dear thing?

PHAEDRUS What he makes his speech about, Socrates, is certainly an ending.

SOCRATES What about the rest? Don't the elements of the speech seem to have been thrown in a random heap? Or do you think the second thing he said had to be placed second for some essential reason, or any of the others where *they* were? It seemed to me, as one who knows nothing about it, that the writer had said just what happened to occur to him, in a not ignoble way; but do you know of any constraint deriving from the science of speech-writing which made him place these thoughts one beside another in this order?

PHAEDRUS You're kind to think me competent to understand so precisely what he has done.

SOCRATES But this much I think you would say: that every speech should be put together like a living creature, as it were with a body of its own, so as not to lack either a head or feet but to have both middle parts and extremities, so written as to fit both each other and the whole.

PHAEDRUS Yes indeed.

SOCRATES Well then, ask if your friend's speech is like this or if it's some other way, and you'll find it exactly like the epigram that some say is inscribed on the tomb of Midas the Phrygian.

PHAEDRUS What's this epigram, and what feature of it are you talking about?

SOCRATES The poem's this:

A bronze-clad maid I stand on Midas' tomb,
As long as rivers run and trees grow tall,
A guardian of this much-lamented grave,
I'll tell the traveller: Midas rests within.

I think you see that it makes no difference whether any part of it is put first or last.

PHAEDRUS You're making fun of our speech, Socrates.

SOCRATES Well, to avoid your becoming upset, let's leave this speech to one side – though it does seem to me to contain plenty of examples which someone could glance at with profit, if not exactly by trying to imitate them – and pass on to the others. For in my view there was something in them which should be noticed by those who wish to enquire into speeches.

PHAEDRUS What sort of thing do you mean?

SOCRATES They were, I think, opposites: one of them said that favours should be granted to the one in love, the other to the one not.

PHAEDRUS And very manfully too.

SOCRATES I thought you were going to speak the truth, and say 'madly', which in fact was the very thing I was looking for. We said, didn't we, that love was a kind of madness?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES And that there were two kinds of madness, the one caused by sicknesses of a human sort, the other coming about from a divinely caused reversal of our customary ways of behaving?

PHAEDRUS Certainly.

SOCRATES And of the divine kind we distinguished four parts, belonging to four gods, taking the madness of the seer as Apollo's inspiration, that of mystic rites as Dionysus', poetic

madness, for its part, as the Muses', and the fourth as that belonging to Aphrodite and Love. The madness of love we said was best, and – by expressing the experience of love through some kind of simile, which allowed us perhaps to grasp some truth, though maybe also it took us in a wrong direction, and mixing together a not wholly implausible speech – we sang a playful hymn in the form of a story, in a fittingly quiet way, to my master and yours, Phaedrus, Love, watcher over beautiful boys.

PHAEDRUS And it gave me great pleasure to hear it.

SOCRATES Well then, let's take up this point from it: how the speech was able to pass over from censure to praise.

PHAEDRUS Precisely what aspect are you referring to?

SOCRATES To me it seems that the rest really was playfully done, by way of amusement; but by chance two kinds of thing found expression, whose significance it would be gratifying to grasp in a scientific way.

PHAEDRUS What were these?

SOCRATES First, there is perceiving together and bringing into one form items which are scattered in many places, in order that one may define each thing and make clear whatever it is that one wishes to instruct one's audience about on any given occasion. Just so with the things we said just now about what love amounts to when defined: whether what was said was right or wrong, because of it the speech was able to say what was at any rate clear and self-consistent.

PHAEDRUS And what's the second kind of thing you're talking about, Socrates?

SOCRATES Being able to cut up whatever it is again, kind by kind, according to its natural joints, and not to try to break any

part into pieces, like an inexpert butcher; as just now the two speeches took the unreasoning aspect of the mind as one form together, and in the way that a single body naturally has its parts in pairs, with both members of each pair having the same name, and labelled respectively left and right, so too the speeches regarded derangement as naturally a single form in us, and the one cut off the part on the left-hand side, then cutting it again and not giving up until it had found among the parts a love that is, as we say, 'left-handed', and abused it with full justice, while the other speech led us to the parts of madness on the right-hand side, and discovering and setting forth a love that shares the same name as the other but is divine, it praised it as the cause of our greatest goods.

PHAEDRUS Very true.

SOCRATES Now I am myself, Phaedrus, a lover of these divisions and collections, so that I may be able both to speak and to think; and if I find anyone else who I think has the natural capacity to look to one and to many, I pursue him 'in his footsteps, behind him, as if he were a god'. And the name I give those who can do this – whether it's the right one or not, god knows, but at any rate up till now I have called them 'experts in dialectic'. But now tell me what we should have to call them if we learned from you and Lysias; or is this that very thing, the science of speaking, by means of which Thrasymachus and the rest have become clever at speaking themselves, and make others the same, if they are willing to bring them gifts as if they were kings?

PHAEDRUS Royal these people are, but they certainly don't possess knowledge of the things you're asking about. You do seem, though, to be calling this kind of thing by the right name when you call it dialectical; the rhetorical kind seems to me still

to be eluding us.

SOCRATES What do you mean? Could there perhaps be something thing fine that's divorced from the principles in question and is nonetheless grasped in a scientific way? We must certainly not treat it without proper respect, you and I, and we must say just what that part of rhetoric is which is being left out.

PHAEDRUS There are a great many things left, I think, Socrates: the things in the books that have been written on the science of speaking.

SOCRATES A timely reminder. First of all, I think, there's the point that a 'preamble' must be given at the beginning of a speech; these are the things you mean, aren't they – the refinements of the science?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES In second place, there is to be something called an 'exposition', with 'testimonies' hard on its heels; thirdly 'proofs', fourthly 'probabilities'; and I think 'confirmation' and 'further confirmation' are mentioned, at least by that excellent Byzantine artist in speeches.

PHAEDRUS You mean the worthy Theodorus?

SOCRATES Of course; and he tells us we must put in a 'refutation' and 'further refutation' both when prosecuting and when defending. And must we not give public recognition to that most admirable Parian, Evenus, for being the first to discover 'covert allusion' and 'indirect praise'? Some say he also utters 'indirect censures' in verse as an aid to memory; he's a clever one. And shall we leave Tisias and Gorgias to their sleep, when they saw that probabilities were to be given precedence over truths, and when they make small things appear large and large things small by force of speech, and put new things in an old way and things

of the opposite sort in a new way, and discovered conciseness of speech and infinite length on every subject? Though when once Prodicus heard me talking like this, he laughed and said that he alone had discovered what kind of speeches are needed: what are needed, he said, are neither long speeches nor short ones but ones of a fitting length.

PHAEDRUS Masterly, Prodicus!

SOCRATES And must we not mention Hippias? I think our friend from Elis would cast his vote with Prodicus.

PHAEDRUS Certainly.

SOCRATES And how then are we to tell of the terms Polus has enshrined – terms like 'speaking with reduplication' and 'speaking with maxims' and 'speaking with images' – and the names that Licymnius gave him as a present for the production of fine diction?

PHAEDRUS And weren't there some such things that belonged to Protagoras?

SOCRATES Yes, my boy, there was a 'correctness of diction', and many other fine things. Then again, the scientific mastery of wailing speeches dragged out in connection with old age and poverty seems to me to belong to the might of the Chalcedonian, and the man has also become clever at rousing anger in large numbers of people all at once, and again, when once they are angry, at charming them with incantations, as he put it; and at both devising and refuting calumnies, from whatever source, he is unbeatable. As for the ending of speeches, everyone seems to be in complete agreement; some call it 'recapitulation', while others call it by other names.

PHAEDRUS You mean summarizing the points at the end, and so reminding the audience of what has been said?

SOCRATES That's what I mean – and anything else you can add on the subject of speaking scientifically.

PHAEDRUS Only small things, and not worth mentioning.

SOCRATES Then let's leave the small points; let's hold what we have more closely up to the light, and see just what the power of the science is that's contained in them.

PHAEDRUS A very forceful power it is, Socrates, when it's a question of mass gatherings.

SOCRATES You're right. But see, my fine friend, whether after all you don't think, as I do, that their warp has some gaps in it.

PHAEDRUS Do show me.

SOCRATES Tell me then: if someone came up to your friend Eryximachus or his father, Acumenus, and said, 'I know how to apply certain things to people's bodies so as to make them warm, if I want to, and to cool them down and, if I see fit, to make them vomit, or again make their bowels move, and all sorts of things like that; and because I know all that, I claim to be an expert doctor and to be able to make an expert of anyone else to whom I impart knowledge of these things' – when they heard him say that, what do you think *they* would say?

PHAEDRUS What else but to ask him whether he also knew both to whom he ought to do all these things and when, and to what extent?

SOCRATES So if he said 'No, not at all; but I expect someone to be able to do the things you ask about by himself, if he has learned the things I teach'?

PHAEDRUS I think they'd say the man is mad, and thinks he's become a doctor from having heard something somewhere from a book, or from having stumbled across some common-or-gar-

den remedies, when he has no knowledge of the science itself.

SOCRATES And what about if someone came up to Sophocles or Euripides and said that he knew how to compose very long passages about a small subject and very short ones about a large one, and piteous speeches, when he wished, or again frightening and threatening ones, and everything else like that, and that he thought that by teaching these things he was passing on the making of tragedy?

PHAEDRUS They too, I think, Socrates, would laugh if anyone thought that tragedy was anything other than the arrangement of these things – their being put together so as to fit both each other and the whole.

SOCRATES But I don't think they'd abuse him coarsely; just as a musical expert, if he met someone who thought he knew all about harmony just because he happened to know how to produce the highest and the lowest notes with strings, would not say savagely 'You're off your head, you wretch,' but, being a musician, more gently, 'My dear fellow, the person who means to be an expert in harmony must certainly know that too, but there is nothing to prevent someone in your condition from having not the slightest understanding of harmony; for what you know is what has to be learned before harmony itself, not the elements of harmony as such.'

PHAEDRUS Quite right.

SOCRATES So Sophocles too would say that the man displaying himself to him and Euripides knew the preliminaries to tragedy and not its elements, and Acumenus that the individual in his case knew the preliminaries to medicine but not the elements of medicine.

PHAEDRUS Absolutely.

SOCRATES And what do we think, if the 'honey-toned Adrastus', or Pericles, heard of some of those really fine techniques we were going through just now – things like 'speaking with brevity' and 'speaking with images', and all the other things we went through and said we should look at under the light – do we think that they, like you and me, would coarsely utter some uneducated expression at those who have written these things up and teach them as a science of rhetoric, or, because they are wiser than us, do we think they would reproach us and say, 'Phaedrus and Socrates, one should not get angry but be forgiving, if some people who do not know how to converse prove unable to give a definition of what rhetoric is, and as a result of being in this state think that they have discovered rhetoric when they have merely learned the necessary preliminaries to the science, believing that when they teach these things to other people they have given them a complete course in rhetoric; and that the matter of putting all of these things persuasively, and of arranging the whole, as something involving no difficulty, their pupils must supply in their speeches from their own resources'?

PHAEDRUS I rather think, Socrates, that the substance of the science that these men teach and write up as rhetoric is something like that, and to me, at any rate, you seem to be right; but how and from where can one provide for oneself the science belonging to the real expert in rhetoric and the really persuasive speaker?

SOCRATES As for the ability to acquire it, Phaedrus, so as to become a complete performer, probably – perhaps even necessarily – the matter is as it is in all other cases: if it is naturally in you to be a good orator, a notable orator you will be when you have acquired knowledge and practice besides, and whichever

you lack of these, you will be incomplete in this respect. But as for the part of it that is a science, the way of proceeding seems to me not to be the one that Lysias and Thrasymachus choose.

PHAEDRUS Then how should one proceed?

SOCRATES I suppose it's no surprise, my good fellow, that Pericles turned out to be the most complete of all with respect to rhetoric.

PHAEDRUS Why do you say that?

SOCRATES All sciences of importance require the addition of babbling and lofty talk about nature; for the relevant high-mindedness and effectiveness in all directions seem to come from some such source as that. This is something that Pericles acquired in addition to his natural ability; for I think because he fell in with Anaxagoras, who was just such a person, so becoming filled with lofty talk, and arriving at the nature of mind and the absence of mind, which were the very subjects about which Anaxagoras used to talk so much, he was able to draw from there and apply to the science of speaking what was applicable to it.

PHAEDRUS What do you mean by that?

SOCRATES The method of the science of medicine is, I suppose, the same as that of the science of rhetoric.

PHAEDRUS How is that?

SOCRATES In both sciences it is necessary to determine the nature of something, in the one science the nature of body, in the other the nature of soul, if you are to proceed scientifically, and not merely by knack and experience, to produce health and strength in the one by applying medicines and diet to it, and to pass on to the other whatever conviction you wish, along with excellence, by applying words and practices in conformance with law and custom.

PHAEDRUS Probably it is like that, Socrates.

SOCRATES Do you think, then, that it's possible to understand the nature of soul satisfactorily without understanding the nature of the whole?

PHAEDRUS If one is to place any reliance on Hippocrates the Asclepiad, one can't understand about the body either without proceeding in this way.

SOCRATES And he's right, my friend; but besides Hippocrates we should examine the argument to see if it agrees with him.

PHAEDRUS I accept that.

SOCRATES Well then, on the subject of nature, see what Hippocrates and the true argument say about it. Shouldn't one reflect about the nature of anything like this: First, is the thing about which we shall want to be experts ourselves and be capable of making others expert about something that is simple or complex? Next, if it is simple, we should consider, shouldn't we, what natural capacity it has for acting, and on what, or what capacity it has for being acted upon, and by what; and if it has more forms than one, we should count these, and see in the case of each, as in the case where it had only one, with which of them it is its nature to do what, or with which to have what done to it by what?

PHAEDRUS Probably, Socrates.

SOCRATES At any rate, proceeding without doing these things would seem to be just like a blind man's progress. But on no account must we represent the man who pursues anything scientifically as like someone blind, or deaf; it's clear that if anyone teaches anyone speech-making in a scientific way, he will reveal precisely the essential nature of that thing to which his pupil will apply his speeches; and that, I think, will be soul.

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Then all his effort is concentrated on that; for it is in that that he tries to produce conviction. True?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES In that case, it is clear that both Thrasymachus and anyone else who seriously teaches a science of rhetoric will first write with complete accuracy and enable us to see whether soul is something that is one and uniform in nature or complex like the form of the body; for this is what we say is to reveal the nature of something.

PHAEDRUS Yes, absolutely.

SOCRATES And in the second place, he will show with which of its forms it is its nature to do what, or to have what done to it by what.

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES And then, thirdly, having classified the kinds of speeches and of soul, and the ways in which these are affected, he will go through all the causes, fitting each to each and explaining what sort of soul's being subjected to what sorts of speeches necessarily results in one being convinced and another not, giving the cause in each case.

PHAEDRUS It would certainly seem to be best like that.

SOCRATES Indeed, my friend, if a model speech or a real one is ever spoken or written in any way other than this, it will never be given or written scientifically – not on any other subject, and not on this one. But those who now write speech manuals, the people you have listened to, are cunning, and keep the secret to themselves, although they know perfectly well about soul; so until they both speak and write in the following way, let's not believe their claim that they write scientifically.

PHAEDRUS What way is this?

SOCRATES To give the actual words would not be easy; but I'm willing to say how one should write if it's to be as scientific as it is possible to be.

PHAEDRUS Say it then.

SOCRATES 'Since the power of speech is in fact a leading of the soul, the man who means to be an expert in rhetoric must know how many forms soul has. Thus their number is so and so, and they are of such and such kinds, which is why some people are like this, and others like that; and these having been distinguished in this way, then again there are so many forms of speeches, each one of such and such a kind. People of one kind are easily persuaded for one sort of reason by one kind of speech to hold one kind of opinion, while people of another kind are for some other sorts of reasons difficult to persuade.

'Having then grasped these things satisfactorily, after that the student must observe them as they are in real life, and actually being put into practice, and be able to follow them with keen perception, or otherwise be as yet no further on from the things he heard earlier when he was with me. But when he both has sufficient ability to say what sort of man is persuaded by what sorts of things, and is capable of telling himself when he observes him that *this* is the man, *this* the nature of person that was discussed before, now actually present in front of him, to whom he must now apply *these* kinds of speech in *this* way in order to persuade him of *this* kind of thing; when he now has all of this, and has also grasped the occasions for speaking and for holding back, and again for speaking concisely and piteously and in an exaggerated fashion, and for all the forms of speeches he may learn, recognizing the right and the wrong time for these, *then*

his grasp of the science will be well and completely finished, but not before that; but in whichever of these things someone is lacking when he speaks or teaches or writes, and says that he speaks scientifically, the person who disbelieves him is in the stronger position.' 'Well then, Phaedrus and Socrates,' perhaps our writer will say, 'do you agree, or should we accept it if the science of speaking is stated in some other way?'

PHAEDRUS It's impossible, I think, Socrates, to accept any other description; yet it seems no light undertaking.

SOCRATES You're right. It's just for this reason that we must turn all our arguments upside down in order to see whether some easier and shorter route to the science doesn't show up some- where, so that a person doesn't waste his time going off on a long and rough road when he could take a short and smooth one. But if you have any help to give from what you have heard from Lysias or anyone else, try to remember it and tell me.

PHAEDRUS If it depended on trying, I would; but as things are, I'm just not in a position to help.

SOCRATES Then would you like me to mention something I've heard from some of those who make these things their business?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES The saying goes, Phaedrus, that it's right to give the wolf's side of the case as well.

PHAEDRUS Then you do just that.

SOCRATES Well then, they say that there is no need to treat these things so portentously, or carry them back to general principles, going the long way round; for it's just what we said at the very beginning of this discussion – that the person who means to be competent at rhetoric need have nothing to do with the

truth about just or good things, or indeed about people who are such by nature or upbringing. For, they say, in the law-courts no one cares in the slightest for the truth about these things but only for what is convincing; and what is convincing is what is *probable*, which is what the person who means to speak scientifically must pay attention to. They go on to say that in fact sometimes one should not even say what was actually done, if it is improbable, but rather what is probable, both when accusing and when defending; whatever one's purpose when speaking, the *probable* is what must be pursued, and that means frequently saying goodbye to the truth. When this happens throughout one's entire speech, it gives one the entire science.

PHAEDRUS You've stated just what those who profess to be experts in speaking say; for I'm reminded, now you say it, that we did touch briefly on this sort of thing before, and it seems a point of crucial significance to those concerned with these things.

SOCRATES But you've gone over the man Tisias himself carefully; so let Tisias tell us this too: doesn't he say that the probable is just what most people think to be the case?

PHAEDRUS Just that.

SOCRATES I suppose it was on making this clever, and scientific, discovery that he wrote to the effect that if a weak but brave man beats up a strong coward and steals his cloak or something else of his, and is taken to court for it, then neither party should speak the truth; the coward should say that he wasn't beaten up by the brave man single-handed, while the other man should establish that they were on their own together, and should resort to the well-known argument, 'How could a man like me have assaulted a man like him?' The coward will certainly not admit his cowardice but will try to invent some other lie and so per-

haps offer an opening for his opponent to refute him. And in all other cases too the way to speak 'scientifically' will be something like this. True, Phaedrus?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Hey! How cleverly hidden a science Tisias seems to have discovered – or whoever else it really was, and wherever he pleases to borrow his name from. Still, my friend, should we or should we not say to him –

PHAEDRUS What?

SOCRATES This: 'Tisias, we have for some time been saying, before you came along, that this "probability" comes about in the minds of ordinary people because of a likeness to the truth; and we showed only a few moments ago that in every case it is the man who knows the truth who knows best how to discover these likenesses. So if you have anything else to say on the subject of a science of speaking, we'll gladly hear it; if not, we'll believe what we showed just now, that unless someone counts up the various natures of those who are going to listen to him, and is capable both of dividing things up according to their forms and of including each thing, one by one, under one kind, he will never be an expert in the science of speaking to the degree possible for humankind. This ability he will never acquire without a great deal of application – a labour that the sensible person ought to undertake not for the purpose of speaking and acting in relation to human beings but in order to be able both to say what is gratifying to the gods, and to act in everything, so far as he can, in a way that is gratifying to them. For you see, Tisias – so say wiser people than us – no one in his right mind should practise at gratifying his fellow-slaves, except as a secondary consideration, but rather at gratifying good masters, of noble stock. So if

the way round is a long one, don't be surprised; for the journey is to be made for the sake of important things, not for the things you have in mind. Yet those too, as our argument asserts, if that is what one wants, will come about best as an outcome of the others.'

PHAEDRUS I think that what you say is very fine, Socrates, if only one had the capacity for it.

SOCRATES But surely if one merely tries for the beautiful, to put up with what it takes is beautiful too.

PHAEDRUS Indeed.

SOCRATES So let that be enough on the subject of the scientific and unscientific aspects of speaking.

PHAEDRUS By all means.

How useful is the written text (or the set speech) as a medium of communication and teaching?

SOCRATES What we have left is the subject of propriety and impropriety in writing: in what way, when it is done, it will be done well, and in what way improperly. True?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES So do you know how you will most gratify god in relation to speaking, whether actually doing it or talking about it?

PHAEDRUS Not at all; do you?

SOCRATES At least I can tell you something I've heard, from people before me; only they know the truth of it. But if we were to find this out for ourselves, would we care any longer at all about mere human conjectures?

PHAEDRUS What an absurd question! Tell me what you say you have heard.

SOCRATES Well, what I heard was that one of the ancient gods of Egypt was at Naucratis in that country, the god to whom the sacred bird they call the ibis belongs; the divinity's own

name was Theuth. The story was that he was the first to discover number and calculation, and geometry and astronomy, as well as the games of draughts and dice and, to cap it all, letters. King of all Egypt at that time was Thamus – of all of it, that is, that surrounds the great city of the upper region, which the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes; Thamus they call Ammon. Theuth came to him and displayed his technical inventions, saying that they should be passed on to the rest of the Egyptians; and Thamus asked what benefit each brought. As Theuth went through them, Thamus criticized or praised whatever he seemed to be getting right or wrong. It is reported that Thamus expressed many views to Theuth about each science, both for and against; it would take a long time to go through them in detail, but when it came to the subject of letters, Theuth said, 'But *this* study, King Thamus, will make the Egyptians wiser and improve their memory; what I have discovered is an elixi of memory and wisdom.' Thamus replied, 'Most scientific Theuth, one man has the ability to beget the elements of a science, but it belongs to a different person to be able to judge what measure of harm and help it contains for those who are going to make use of it; so now you, as the father of letters, have been led by your affection for them to describe them as having the opposite of their real effect. For your invention will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it, through lack of practice at using their memory, as through reliance on writing they are reminded from outside by alien marks, not from within, themselves by themselves. So you have discovered an elixir not of memory but of reminding. To your students you give an appearance of wisdom, not the reality of it; thanks to you, they will hear many things without being taught them, and will ap-

pear to know much when for the most part they know nothing, and they will be difficult to get along with because they have acquired the appearance of wisdom instead of wisdom itself.'

PHAEDRUS Socrates, how easily you make up stories, from Egypt or from anywhere else you like!

SOCRATES Well, my friend, those in the sanctuary of Zeus of Dodona claimed that words from an oak were the first prophetic utterances. So the men of those days, because they were not wise like you moderns, were content because of their simplicity to listen to oak and rock, provided only that they said what was true; but for you, Phaedrus, perhaps it makes a difference who the speaker is and where he comes from: you don't just consider whether things are as he says or not. PHAEDRUS You're right to rebuke me, and it seems to me to be as your Theban says about letters.

SOCRATES So the man who thinks that he has left behind him a science in writing, and no less the man who receives it from him, in the belief that anything clear or certain will come from what is written down, would be full of simplicity and would be really ignorant of Ammon's prophetic utterance – thinking that written words were anything more than a reminder to the man who knows the subjects to which the things written relate.

PHAEDRUS Quite right.

SOCRATES Yes, Phaedrus, because I think writing has this strange feature, which makes it truly like painting. The offspring spring of painting stand there as if alive, but if you ask them something, they preserve a quite solemn silence. Similarly with written words: you might think that they spoke as if they had some thought in their heads, but if you ever ask them about any of the things they say out of a desire to learn, they point

to just one thing, the same each time. And when once it is written, every composition trundles about everywhere in the same way, in the presence both of those who know about the subject and of those who have nothing at all to do with it, and it does not know how to address those it should address and not those it should not. When it is ill treated and unjustly abused, it always needs its father to help it; for it is incapable of either defending or helping itself.

PHAEDRUS You're quite right about that too.

SOCRATES Now then, do we see another kind of speech, a legitimate brother of this last one? Do we see both how it comes into being and how much better and more capable it is from its birth?

PHAEDRUS What kind are you referring to, and how does it 'come into being'?

SOCRATES The kind of speech that is written together with knowledge in the soul of the learner, capable of defending itself, and knowing how to speak and keep silent in relation to the people it should.

PHAEDRUS You mean the living, animate speech of the man who knows, of which written speech would rightly be called a kind of phantom.

SOCRATES Absolutely. So tell me this: the sensible farmer who had some seeds he cared about and wanted to bear fruit – would he sow them with serious purpose during the summer in some garden of Adonis, and delight in watching the garden become beautiful in eight days, or would he do that for the sake of amusement on a feast-day, if he did it at all; whereas for the purposes about which he was in earnest, would he make use of the science of farming and sow them in appropriate soil, being

content if what he sowed reached maturity in the eighth month?

PHAEDRUS Just so, I think, Socrates: he would do the one sort of thing in earnest, the other in the other way, the way you say.

SOCRATES And are we to say that the man who has pieces of knowledge about what is just, beautiful and good has a less sensible attitude towards his seeds than the farmer?

PHAEDRUS Hardly!

SOCRATES In that case he will not be in earnest about writing them in water – black water, sowing them through a pen with words that are incapable of speaking in their own support, and incapable of adequately teaching what is true.

PHAEDRUS It certainly isn't likely.

SOCRATES No, it isn't; but his gardens of letters, it seems, he will sow and write for amusement, when he does write, laying up a store of reminders both for himself, for when he 'reaches a forgetful old age', and for anyone following the same track, and he will be pleased as he watches their tender growth; and when others resort to other sorts of amusements, watering themselves with drinking-parties and the other things that go along with these, then he, it seems, will spend his time amusing himself with the things I say, instead of those others.

PHAEDRUS It's a quite beautiful form of amusement you're talking of, Socrates, in contrast with a worthless one: if someone is able to amuse himself with words, telling stories about justice and the other subjects you speak of.

SOCRATES Yes, Phaedrus, just so. But I think it is far finer if one is in earnest about those subjects: when one makes use of the science of dialectic and, taking a fitting soul, plants and sows in it words accompanied by knowledge, which are sufficient to help themselves and the one who planted them, and are not without

fruit but contain a seed from which others grow in other soils, capable of rendering that seed for ever immortal, and making the one who has it as happy as it is possible for a man to be.

PHAEDRUS This is indeed much finer still.

Conclusions. SOCRATES So now, Phaedrus, since we've agreed about these issues we can decide those others.

PHAEDRUS Which ones?

SOCRATES The ones we wanted to look into, and so got ourselves to the present point: how we were to weigh up the reproach aimed at Lysias about his writing of speeches, and about speeches themselves, which were written scientifically and which not. Well then, what is scientific and what is unscientific seems to me to have been demonstrated in fair measure.

PHAEDRUS I thought so; but remind me again how.

SOCRATES Until a person knows the truth about each of the things about which he speaks or writes, and becomes capable of defining the whole by itself, and, having defined it, knows how to cut it up again according to its forms until it can no longer be cut; and until he has reached an understanding of the nature of soul along the same lines, discovering the form of speech that fits each nature, and so arranges and orders what he says, offering a complex soul complex speeches containing all the modes, and simple speeches to a simple soul: not until then will he be capable of pursuing the making of speeches as a whole in a scientific way, to the degree that its nature allows, whether for the purposes of teaching or for those of persuading either, as the whole of our previous argument has indicated.

PHAEDRUS Absolutely; that was just about how it appeared to us.

SOCRATES And what about the matter of its being fine or

shameful to give speeches and write them, and the circumstances under which it would rightly be called a disgrace or not? Hasn't what we said a little earlier shown –

PHAEDRUS Shown what?

SOCRATES That whether Lysias or anyone else ever wrote or writes in the future, either for private purposes or publicly, in the course of proposing laws, so writing a political composition, and thinks there is any great certainty or clarity in it, then it is a reproach to its writer, whether anyone says so or not; for to be ignorant, whether awake or asleep, about the nature of just and unjust and bad and good cannot truly escape being a matter of reproach, even if the whole mob applauds it.

PHAEDRUS No indeed.

SOCRATES But the person who thinks that there is necessarily much that is merely for amusement in a written speech on any subject, and that none has ever yet been written, whether in verse or in prose, which is worth much serious attention, or indeed spoken, in the way that rhapsodes speak theirs, to produce conviction without questioning or teaching, but that the best of them have really been a way of reminding people who know; who thinks that clearness and completeness and seriousness exist only in those things that are taught about what is just and beautiful and good, and are said for the purpose of someone's learning from them, and genuinely written in the soul; who thinks that discourses of that kind should be said to be as it were his legitimate sons, first of all the one within him, if it is found there, and in second place any offspring and brothers of this one that have sprung up simultaneously, in the way they should, in other souls, other men; and who says goodbye to the other kind – *this*, surely, Phaedrus, will be the sort of person you and I would pray

that we both might come to be.

PHAEDRUS Yes, absolutely. I wish and pray for what you say.

SOCRATES So now let that count as our due amusement from the subject of speaking. And as for you, Phaedrus, you go and tell Lysias that we two came down to the spring and the sacred place of the Nymphs and heard arguments that instructed us to tell this to Lysias and anyone else who composes speeches, and to Homer and anyone else who has composed verses, whether without music or to be sung, and, thirdly, to Solon and whoever writes compositions in the form of political speeches, which he calls laws: if he has composed these things knowing how the truth is, able to help his composition when he is challenged on its subjects, and with the capacity, speaking in his own person, to show that what he has written is of little worth, then such a man ought not to derive his title from these, and be called after them, but rather from those things in which he is seriously engaged.

PHAEDRUS What are the titles you assign him, then?

SOCRATES To call him wise seems to me to be too much, and to be fitting only in the case of a god; to call him either a philosopher or something like that would both fit him more and be in better taste.

PHAEDRUS And not at all inappropriate.

SOCRATES On the other hand, the man who doesn't possess things of more value than the things he composed or wrote, turning them upside down over a long period of time, sticking them together and taking them apart – him, I think, you'll rightly call a poet or author of speeches or writer of laws?

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Then tell that to your friend.

PHAEDRUS And what of you? What will you do? For we certainly shouldn't pass over your friend, either.

SOCRATES Who do you mean?

PHAEDRUS The beautiful Isocrates. What will you report to *him*, Socrates? What title shall we give him?

SOCRATES Isocrates is still young, Phaedrus; but I'm willing to say what I prophesy for him.

PHAEDRUS What's that?

SOCRATES He seems to me to be on a level superior to Lysias and his speeches in terms of his natural endowment, and to have a greater nobility in the blend of his character; so there would be no surprise, as he grows older, if the very speeches he works at now turned out to make those of any other speech-writer worse than puerile by comparison. Still more so, were he to be dissatisfied with what he does now, and some diviner impulse led him to more important things; for there is a certain innate philosophical instinct in the man's mind. So that is the report I take from the gods here to Isocrates as my beloved, and you take the other to Lysias as yours.

PHAEDRUS I'll do it. But let's go, now that the heat has become milder.

SOCRATES Shouldn't we pray to the gods here before we go?

A final prayer, after which Socrates and Phaedrus leave.

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Dear Pan and all you gods of this place, grant me that I may become beautiful within; and that what is in my possession outside me may be in friendly accord with what is inside. And may I count the wise man as rich; and may my pile of gold be of a size that no one but a man of moderate desires could bear or carry it.

Do we still need anything else, Phaedrus? For me that prayer

is enough.

PHAEDRUS Make it a prayer for me too; for what friends have they share.

SOCRATES Let's go.