

CRATYLUS: True.

SOCRATES: Nor can we reasonably say, Cratylus, that there is knowledge at all, if everything is in a state of transition and there is nothing abiding. For knowledge too cannot continue to be knowledge unless continuing always to abide and exist. But if the very nature of knowledge changes, at the time when the change occurs there will be no knowledge, and if the transition is always going on, there will always be no knowledge, and, according to this view, there will be no one to know and nothing to be known. But if that which knows and that which is known exist ever, and the beautiful and the good and every other thing also exist, then I do not think that they can resemble a process or flux, as we were just now supposing. Whether there is this eternal nature in things, or whether the truth is what Heraclitus and his followers and many others say, is a question hard to determine, and no man of sense will like to put himself or the education of his mind in the power of names. Neither will he so far trust names or the givers of names as to be confident in any knowledge which condemns himself and other existences to an unhealthy state of unreality; he will not believe that all things leak like a pot, or imagine that the world is a man who has a running at the nose. This may be true, Cratylus, but is also very likely to be untrue, and therefore I would not have you be too easily persuaded of it. Reflect well and like a man, and do not easily accept such a doctrine, for you are young and of an age to learn. And when you have found the truth, come and tell me.

CRATYLUS: I will do as you say, though I can assure you, Socrates, that I have been considering the matter already, and the result of a great deal of trouble and consideration is that I incline to Heraclitus.

SOCRATES: Then, another day, my friend, when you come back, you shall give me a lesson, but at present, go into the country, as you are intending, and Hermogenes shall set you on your way.

CRATYLUS: Very good, Socrates. I hope, however, that you will continue to think about these things yourself.

## PHAEDRUS

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*This is one of the greatest of the dialogues. It should be read with the Symposium. The two together give Plato's idea of love. The Phaedrus is a conversation, not a discourse or a succession of questions and answers directed to a single subject. Socrates and Phaedrus take a walk into the country and talk about whatever occurs to them, but they are Athenians and one of them is Socrates and their notion—and Plato's—of how to pass the time pleasantly while walking is something quite different from our own.*

*Love is the first matter they take up. Phaedrus has with him a piece of writing about it which he greatly admires and reads to Socrates who objects to it as making love chiefly a physical desire. To him it is an impulse full of beauty and goodness, a kind of divine madness which lifts the soul up and can enable it to enter the path which leads to the truth. The first movement to philosophy, the impulse to seek what is higher—in Plato's phrase, "the beyond"—comes from falling in love with visible, physical beauty.*

*It is really impossible for us to grasp what beauty meant to the Greeks. It was a mighty power exercising a profound influence upon their daily lives. The greatest leader Thebes produced was said to have told his countrymen that they would never conquer Athens until they had brought the Parthenon to Thebes. Any Greek would understand that. Of course the Thebans would be better men, more courageous, wiser, too, with that beauty always before them. In the Republic, Plato's philosopher-rulers must be graceful as well as wise. Socrates gives Phaedrus a description of what a lover feels which leaves our love poetry far behind. To fall truly in love starts a man on the path upward to where love is satisfied in the perfect beauty of the truth.*

*The stress in the Phaedrus is on visible beauty, but the reader of Plato must always remember that Socrates, the most beloved and the most lovely of all, was completely without it. Again and again his snub nose is mentioned, his protruding eyes, and so on. He had "no form nor comeliness that we should desire him." His wonderful beauty was within.*

*The last part of the dialogue is about the inferiority of books and writing in general to pure thought and to discussion concerned only with seeking for knowledge, not with putting it into a shape accept-*

able to others, the inferiority of reading to reasoning and of rhetoric to dialectic. The best books do no more than remind us of what we know. The only truly valuable way to write is to inscribe justice and beauty and goodness upon a soul.

227 **SOCRATES**: Where do you come from, Phaedrus my friend, and where are you going?

**PHAEDRUS**: I've been with Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus, and I'm off for a walk outside the wall, after a long morning's sitting there. On the instructions of our common friend Acumenus I take my walks on the open roads; he tells me that is more invigorating than walking in the colonnades.

**SOCRATES**: Yes, he's right in saying so. But Lysias, I take it, was in town.

**PHAEDRUS**: Yes, staying with Epicrates, in that house where Morychus used to live, close to the temple of Olympian Zeus.

**SOCRATES**: Well, how were you occupied? No doubt Lysias was giving the company a feast of eloquence.

**PHAEDRUS**: I'll tell you, if you can spare time to come along with me and listen.

**SOCRATES**: What? Don't you realize that I should account it, in Pindar's words, 'above all business'<sup>1</sup> to hear how you and Lysias passed your time?

**PHAEDRUS**: Lead on then.

**SOCRATES**: Please tell me.

**PHAEDRUS**: As a matter of fact the topic is appropriate for your ears, Socrates, for the discussion that engaged us may be said to have concerned love. Lysias, you must know, has described how a handsome boy was tempted, but not by a lover—that's the clever part of it. He maintains that surrender should be to one who is not in love rather than to one who is.

**SOCRATES**: Splendid! I wish he would add that it should be to a poor man rather than a rich one, an elderly man rather than a young one, and, in general, to ordinary folk like myself. What an attractive democratic theory that would be! However, I'm so eager to hear about it that I vow I won't leave you even if you extend your

<sup>1</sup> *Isthmionikai* I.I.

From *Plato's Phaedrus*, translated with introduction and commentary by R. Hackforth (Cambridge and New York, 1952).

walk as far as Megara, up to the walls and back again as recommended by Herodicus.

**PHAEDRUS**: What do you mean, my good man? Do you expect an amateur like me to repeat by heart, without disgracing its author, the work of the ablest writer of our day, which it took him weeks to compose at his leisure? That is far beyond me, though I'd rather have had the ability than come into a fortune.

**SOCRATES**: I know my Phaedrus. Yes indeed, I'm as sure of him as of my own identity. I'm certain that the said Phaedrus didn't listen just once to Lysias' speech; time after time he asked him to repeat it to him, and Lysias was very ready to comply. Even that would not content him. In the end he secured the script and began poring over the parts that specially attracted him, and thus engaged he sat there the whole morning, until he grew weary and went for a walk. Upon my word, I believe he had learned the whole speech by heart, unless it was a very long one, and he was going into the country to practice declaiming it. Then he fell in with one who has a passion for listening to discourses, and when he saw him he was delighted to think he would have someone to share his frenzied enthusiasm; so he asked him to join him on his way. But when the lover of discourses begged him to discourse, he became difficult, pretending he didn't want to, though he meant to do so ultimately, even if he had to force himself on a reluctant listener. So beg him, Phaedrus, to do straightway what he will soon do in any case.

**PHAEDRUS**: Doubtless it will be much my best course to deliver myself to the best of my ability, for I fancy you will never let me go until I have given you some sort of a speech.

**SOCRATES**: You are quite right about my intention.

**PHAEDRUS**: Then here's what I will do. It really is perfectly true, Socrates, that I have not got the words by heart, but I will sketch the general purport of the several points in which the lover and the nonlover were contrasted, taking them in order one by one, and beginning at the beginning.

**SOCRATES**: Very well, my dear fellow, but you must first show me what it is that you have in your left hand under your cloak, for I surmise that it is the actual discourse. If that is so, let me assure you of this, that much as I love you I am not altogether inclined to let you practice your oratory on me when Lysias himself is here present. Come now, show it me.

**PHAEDRUS**: Say no more, Socrates; you have dashed my hope of trying out my powers on you. Well, where would you like us to sit for our reading?

**SOCRATES**: Let us turn off here and walk along the Ilissus; then we can sit down in any quiet spot you choose.

**PHAEDRUS**: It's convenient, isn't it, that I chance to be bare-foot; you of course always are so. There will be no trouble in wading

in the stream, which is especially delightful at this hour of a summer's day.

SOCRATES: Lead on then, and look out for a place to sit down.

PHAEDRUS: You see that tall plane tree over there?

SOCRATES: To be sure.

b PHAEDRUS: There's some shade, and a little breeze, and grass to sit down on, or lie down if we like.

SOCRATES: Then make for it.

PHAEDRUS: Tell me, Socrates, isn't it somewhere about here that they say Boreas seized Orithyia from the river?

SOCRATES: Yes, that is the story.

PHAEDRUS: Was this the actual spot? Certainly the water looks charmingly pure and clear; it's just the place for girls to be playing beside the stream.

c SOCRATES: No, it was about a quarter of a mile lower down, where you cross to the sanctuary of Agra; there is, I believe, an altar dedicated to Boreas close by.

PHAEDRUS: I have never really noticed it, but pray tell me, Socrates, do you believe that story to be true?

SOCRATES: I should be quite in the fashion if I disbelieved it, as the men of science do. I might proceed to give a scientific account of how the maiden, while at play with Pharmacia, was blown by a gust of Boreas down from the rocks hard by, and having thus met her d death was said to have been seized by Boreas, though it may have happened on the Areopagus, according to another version of the occurrence. For my part, Phaedrus, I regard such theories as no doubt attractive, but as the invention of clever, industrious people who are not exactly to be envied, for the simple reason that they must then go on and tell us the real truth about the appearance of centaurs and the Chimera, not to mention a whole host of such creatures, Gorgons and e Pegasuses and countless other remarkable monsters of legend flocking in on them. If our skeptic, with his somewhat crude science, means to reduce every one of them to the standard of probability, he'll need a deal of time for it. I myself have certainly no time for the business, and I'll tell you why, my friend. I can't as yet 'know myself,' as the 230 inscription at Delphi enjoins, and so long as that ignorance remains it seems to me ridiculous to inquire into extraneous matters. Consequently I don't bother about such things, but accept the current beliefs about them, and direct my inquiries, as I have just said, rather to myself, to discover whether I really am a more complex creature and more puffed up with pride than Typhon, or a simpler, gentler being whom heaven has blessed with a quiet, un-Typhonic nature. By the way, isn't this the tree we were making for?

PHAEDRUS: Yes, that's the one.

SOCRATES: Upon my word, a delightful resting place, with this tall, spreading plane, and a lovely shade from the high branches of

the *agnos*. Now that it's in full flower, it will make the place ever so fragrant. And what a lovely stream under the plane tree, and how cool to the feet! Judging by the statuettes and images I should say it's consecrated to Achelous and some of the nymphs. And then too, c isn't the freshness of the air most welcome and pleasant, and the shrill summery music of the cicada choir! And as crowning delight the grass, thick enough on a gentle slope to rest your head on most comfortably. In fact, my dear Phaedrus, you have been the stranger's perfect guide.

PHAEDRUS: Whereas you, my excellent friend, strike me as the oddest of men. Anyone would take you, as you say, for a stranger being shown the country by a guide instead of a native—never leaving town to cross the frontier nor even, I believe, so much as setting foot outside the walls. d

SOCRATES: You must forgive me, dear friend; I'm a lover of learning, and trees and open country won't teach me anything, whereas men in the town do. Yet you seem to have discovered a recipe for getting me out. A hungry animal can be driven by dangling a carrot or a bit of greenstuff in front of it; similarly if you proffer me volumes of speeches I don't doubt you can cart me all round Attica, and anywhere else you please. Anyhow, now that we've got here I propose e for the time being to lie down, and you can choose whatever posture you think most convenient for reading, and proceed.

PHAEDRUS: Here you are then.

You know how I am situated, and I have told you that I think it to our advantage that this should happen. Now I claim that I should not be refused what I ask simply because I am not your lover. Lovers, 231 when their craving is at an end, repent of such benefits as they have conferred, but for the other sort no occasion arises for regretting what has passed. For being free agents under no constraint, they regulate their services by the scale of their means, with an eye to their own personal interest. Again, lovers weigh up profit and loss accruing to their account by reason of their passion, and with the extra item of labor expended decide that they have long since made full payment for favors received, whereas the nonlovers cannot allege any consequential neglect of their personal affairs, nor record any past exertions on the debit side, nor yet complain of having quarreled with their relatives; hence, with all these troubles removed, all they have left to do is to devote their energies to such conduct as they conceive likely to gratify the other party. b

Again, it is argued that a lover ought to be highly valued because c he professes to be especially kind toward the loved one, and ready to gratify him in words and deeds while arousing the dislike of everyone else. If this is true, however, it is obvious that he will set greater store by the loved one of tomorrow than by that of today, and will doubtless do an injury to the old love if required by the new.

And really, what sense is there in lavishing what is so precious upon one laboring under an affliction which nobody who knew anything of it would even attempt to remove? Why, the man himself admits that he is not sound, but sick, that he is aware of his folly, but cannot control himself. How then, when he comes to his senses, is he likely to approve of the intentions that he formed in his aberration?

And observe this. If you are to choose the best of a number of lovers, your choice will be only among a few, whereas a general choice of the person who most commends himself to you gives you a wide field, so that in that wide field you have a much better prospect of finding someone worthy of your friendship.

Now maybe you respect established conventions, and anticipate odium if people get to hear about you; if so, it may be expected that a lover, conceiving that everyone will admire him as he admires himself, will be proud to talk about it and flatter his vanity by declaring to all and sundry that his enterprise has been successful, whereas the other type, who can control themselves, will prefer to do what is best rather than shine in the eyes of their neighbors.

Again, a lover is bound to be heard about and seen by many people, consorting with his beloved and caring about little else, so that when they are observed talking to one another, the meeting is taken to imply the satisfaction, actual or prospective, of their desires, whereas, with the other sort, no one ever thinks of putting a bad construction on their association, realizing that a man must have someone to talk to by way of friendship or gratification of one sort or another.

And observe this. Perhaps you feel troubled by the reflection that it is hard for friendship to be preserved, and that whereas a quarrel arising from other sources will be a calamity shared by both parties, one that follows the sacrifice of your all will involve a grievous hurt to yourself; in that case it is doubtless the lover who should cause you the more alarm, for he is very ready to take offense, and thinks the whole affair is to his own hurt. Hence he discourages his beloved from consorting with anyone else, fearing that a wealthy rival may overreach him with his money, or a cultured one outdo him with his intelligence, and he is perpetually on guard against the influence of those who possess other advantages. So by persuading you to become estranged from such rivals he leaves you without a friend in the world; alternatively, if you look to your own interest and show more good sense than your lover, you will find yourself quarreling with him. On the other hand, one who is not a lover, but has achieved what he asked of you by reason of his merit, will not be jealous of others who seek your society, but will rather detest those who avoid it, in the belief that the latter look down on him, whereas the former are serv-

ing his turn. Consequently the object of his attentions is far more likely to make friends than enemies out of the affair.

And observe this. A lover more often than not wants to possess you before he has come to know your character or become familiar with your general personality, and that makes it uncertain whether he will still want to be your friend when his desires have waned, whereas in the other case, the fact that the pair were already friends before the affair took place makes it probable that instead of friendship diminishing as the result of favors received, these favors will abide as a memory and promise of more to come.

And observe this. It ought to be for your betterment to listen to me rather than to a lover, for a lover commends anything you say or do even when it is amiss, partly from fear that he may offend you, partly because his passion impairs his own judgment. For the record of Love's achievement is, first, that when things go badly, he makes a man count that an affliction which normally causes no distress; secondly, that when things go well, he compels his subjects to extol things that ought not to gratify them, which makes it fitting that they should be pitied far more than admired by the objects of their passion. On the other hand, if you listen to me, my intercourse with you will be a matter of ministering not to your immediate pleasure but to your future advantage, for I am the master of myself, rather than the victim of love; I do not bring bitter enmity upon myself by resenting trifling offenses. On the contrary, it is only on account of serious wrongs that I am moved, and that but slowly, to mild indignation, pardoning what is done unintentionally, and endeavoring to hinder what is done of intent, for these are the tokens of lasting friendship. If however you are disposed to think that there can be no firm friendship save with a lover, you should reflect that in that case we should not set store by sons, or fathers, or mothers, nor should we possess any trustworthy friends. No, it is not to erotic passion that we owe these, but to conduct of a different order.

Again, if we ought to favor those who press us most strongly, then in other matters too we should give our good offices not to the worthiest people but to the most destitute, for since their distress is the greatest, they will be the most thankful to us for relieving them. And observe this further consequence. When we give private banquets, the right people to invite will be not our friends but beggars and those in need of a good meal, for it is they that will be fond of us and attend upon us and flock to our doors; it is they that will be most delighted and most grateful and call down blessings on our heads. No, the proper course, surely, is to show favor not to the most importunate but to those most able to make us a return—not to mere beggars, but to the deserving; not to those who will regale themselves with your youthful beauty, but to those who will let you share their prosperity

when you are older; not to those who, when they have had their will of you, will flatter their vanity by telling the world, but to those who will keep a strict and modest silence; not to those who are devoted to you for a brief period, but to those who will continue to be your friends as long as you live; not to those who, when their passion is spent, will look for an excuse to turn against you, but to those who, when your beauty is past, will make that the time for displaying their own goodness.

b Do you therefore be mindful of what I have said and reflect that, while lovers are admonished by their friends and relatives for the wrongness of their conduct, the other sort have never been reproached by one of their family on the score of behaving to the detriment of their own interest.

Perhaps you will ask me whether I recommend you to accord your favors to all and sundry of this sort. Well, I do not suppose that even a lover would bid you to be favorable toward all and sundry lovers; in c the first place a recipient would not regard it as meriting so much gratitude, and in the second you would find it more difficult if you wished to keep your affairs concealed, and what is wanted is that the business should involve no harm, but mutual advantage.

And now I think I have said all that is needed; if you think I have neglected anything, and want more, let me know.

What do you think of the speech, Socrates? Isn't it extraordinarily fine, especially in point of language?

d SOCRATES: Amazingly fine indeed, my friend. I was thrilled by it. And it was you, Phaedrus, that made me feel as I did. I watched your apparent delight in the words as you read. And as I'm sure that you understand such matters better than I do, I took my cue from you, and therefore joined in the ecstasy of my right worshipful companion.

PHAEDRUS: Come, come! Do you mean to make a joke of it?

SOCRATES: Do you think I am joking, and don't mean it seriously?

e PHAEDRUS: No more of that, Socrates. Tell me truly, as one friend to another, do you think there is anyone in Greece who could make a finer and more exhaustive speech on the same subject?

SOCRATES: What? Are you and I required to extol the speech not merely on the score of its author's lucidity and terseness of expression, and his consistently precise and well-polished vocabulary, but also for his having said what he ought? If we are, we shall have to allow it only on your account, for my feeble intelligence failed 235 to appreciate it; I was only attending to it as a piece of rhetoric, and as such I couldn't think that even Lysias himself would deem it adequate. Perhaps you won't agree with me, Phaedrus, but really it seemed to me that he said the same things several times over. Maybe he's not very clever at expatiating at length on a single theme, or pos-

sibly he has no interest in such topics. In fact it struck me as an extravagant performance, to demonstrate his ability to say the same thing twice, in different words but with equal success.

PHAEDRUS: Not a bit of it, Socrates. The outstanding feature b of the discourse is just this, that it has not overlooked any important aspect of the subject, so making it impossible for anyone else to outdo what he has said with a fuller or more satisfactory oration.

SOCRATES: If you go as far as that I shall find it impossible to agree with you; if I were to assent out of politeness, I should be confuted by the wise men and women who in past ages have spoken and written on this theme.

PHAEDRUS: To whom do you refer? Where have you heard any- c thing better than this?

SOCRATES: I can't tell you offhand, but I'm sure I have heard something better, from the fair Sappho maybe, or the wise Anacreon, or perhaps some prose writer. What ground, you may ask, have I for saying so? Good sir, there is something welling up within my breast, which makes me feel that I could find something different, and something better, to say. I am of course well aware it can't be anything originating in my own mind, for I know my own ignorance; so I suppose it can only be that it has been poured into me, through my ears, as into a vessel, from some external source, though in my stupid d fashion I have actually forgotten how, and from whom, I heard it.

PHAEDRUS: Well said! You move me to admiration. I don't mind your not telling me, even though I should press you, from whom and how you heard it, provided you do just what you say. You have undertaken to make a better speech than that in the book here and one of not less length which shall owe nothing to it; I in my turn undertake like the nine Archons to set up at Delphi a golden life-sized e statue, not only of myself but of you also.

SOCRATES: How kind you are, Phaedrus, and what a pattern of golden-age simplicity, in supposing me to mean that Lysias has wholly missed the mark and that another speech could avoid all his points! Surely that couldn't be so even with the most worthless of writers. Thus, as regards the subject of the speech, do you imagine that anybody could argue that the nonlover should be favored, rather than the lover, without praising the wisdom of the one and censuring the folly of the other? That he could dispense with these essential points, and 236 then bring up something different? No, no, surely we must allow such arguments, and forgive the orator for using them, and in that sort of field what merits praise is not invention, but arrangement; but when it comes to nonessential points, that are difficult to invent, we should praise arrangement and invention too.

PHAEDRUS: I agree. What you say seems fair enough. For my part, this is what I will do. I will allow you to take it for granted that b the lover is less sane than the nonlover, and for the rest, if you can

replace what we have here by a fuller speech of superior merit, up with your statue in wrought gold beside the offering of the Cypselids at Olympia.

SOCRATES: Have you taken me seriously, Phaedrus, for teasing you with an attack on your darling Lysias? Can you possibly suppose that I shall make a real attempt to rival his cleverness with something more ornate?

PHAEDRUS: As to that, my friend, I've got you where I can return your fire. Assuredly you must do what you can in the way of a speech, or else we shall be driven, like vulgar comedians, to capping each other's remarks. Beware. Do not deliberately compel me to utter the words, 'Don't I know my Socrates? If not, I've forgotten my own identity,' or 'He wanted to speak, but made difficulties about it.' No, make up your mind that we're not going to leave this spot until you have delivered yourself of what you told me you had within your breast. We are by ourselves in a lonely place, and I am stronger and younger than you, for all which reasons 'mistake not thou my bidding' and please don't make me use force to open your lips.

SOCRATES: But, my dear good Phaedrus, it will be courting ridicule for an amateur like me to improvise on the same theme as an accomplished writer.

PHAEDRUS: Look here, I'll have no more of this affectation, for I'm pretty sure I have something to say which will compel you to speak.

SOCRATES: Then please don't say it.

PHAEDRUS: Oh, but I shall, here and now, and what I say will be on oath. I swear to you by—but by whom, by what god? Or shall it be by this plane tree? I swear that unless you deliver your speech here in its very presence, I will assuredly never again declaim nor report any other speech by any author whatsoever.

SOCRATES: Aha, you rogue! How clever of you to discover the means of compelling a lover of discourse to do your bidding!

PHAEDRUS: Then why all this twisting?

SOCRATES: I give it up, in view of what you've sworn. For how could I possibly do without such entertainment?

237 PHAEDRUS: Then proceed.

SOCRATES: Well, do you know what I'm going to do?

PHAEDRUS: Do about what?

SOCRATES: I shall cover my head before I begin; then I can rush through my speech at top speed without looking at you and breaking down for shame.

PHAEDRUS: You can do anything else you like, provided you make your speech.

SOCRATES: Come then, ye clear-voiced Muses, whether it be from the nature of your song, or from the musical people of Liguria that ye came to be so styled, 'assist the tale I tell' under compulsion

by my good friend here, to the end that he may think yet more highly of one dear to him, whom he already accounts a man of wisdom.

Well then, once upon a time there was a very handsome boy, or rather young man, who had a host of lovers, and one of them was wily, and had persuaded the boy that he was not in love with him, though really he was, quite as much as the others. And on one occasion, in pressing his suit he actually sought to convince him that he ought to favor a nonlover rather than a lover. And this is the purport of what he said.

My boy, if anyone means to deliberate successfully about anything, there is one thing he must do at the outset. He must know what it is he is deliberating about; otherwise he is bound to go utterly astray. Now most people fail to realize that they don't know what this or that really is; consequently when they start discussing something, they dispense with any agreed definition, assuming that they know the thing; then later on they naturally find, to their cost, that they agree neither with each other nor with themselves. That being so, you and I would do well to avoid what we charge against other people, and as the question before us is whether one should preferably consort with a lover or a nonlover, we ought to agree upon a definition of love which shows its nature and its effects, so that we may have it before our minds as something to refer to while we discuss whether love is beneficial or injurious.

Well now, it is plain to everyone that love is some sort of desire, and further we know that men desire that which is fair without being lovers. How then are we to distinguish one who loves from one who does not? We must go on to observe that within each one of us there are two sorts of ruling or guiding principle that we follow. One is an innate desire for pleasure, the other an acquired judgment that aims at what is best. Sometimes these internal guides are in accord, sometimes at variance; now one gains the mastery, now the other. And when judgment guides us rationally toward what is best, and has the mastery, that mastery is called temperance, but when desire drags us irrationally toward pleasure, and has come to rule within us, the name given to that rule is wantonness. But in truth wantonness itself has many names, as it has many branches or forms, and when one of these forms is conspicuously present in a man it makes that man bear its name, a name that it is no credit or distinction to possess. If it be in the matter of food that desire has the mastery over judgment of what is for the best, and over all other desires, it is called gluttony, and the person in question will be called a glutton, or again if desire has achieved domination in the matter of drink, it is plain what term we shall apply to its subject who is led down that path, and no less plain what are the appropriate names in the case of other such persons and of other such desires, according as this one or that holds sway.

Now the reason for saying all this can hardly remain in doubt;

yet even so a statement of it will be illuminating. When irrational desire, pursuing the enjoyment of beauty, has gained the mastery over judgment that prompts to right conduct, and has acquired from other desires, akin to it, fresh strength to strain toward bodily beauty, that very strength provides it with its name—it is the strong passion called love.

Well, Phaedrus my friend, do you think, as I do, that I am divinely inspired?

PHAEDRUS: Undoubtedly, Socrates, you have been vouchsafed a quite unusual eloquence.

SOCRATES: Then listen to me in silence. For truly there seems to be a divine presence in this spot, so that you must not be surprised if, as my speech proceeds, I become as one possessed; already my style is not far from dithyrambic.

PHAEDRUS: Very true.

SOCRATES: But for that you are responsible. Still, let me continue; possibly the menace may be averted. However, that must be as God wills; our business is to resume our address to the boy.

Very well then, my good friend, the true nature of that on which we have to deliberate has been stated and defined, and so, with that definition in mind, we may go on to say what advantage or detriment may be expected to result to one who accords his favor to a lover and a nonlover, respectively.

Now a man who is dominated by desire and enslaved to pleasure is of course bound to aim at getting the greatest possible pleasure out of his beloved, and what pleases a sick man is anything that does not thwart him, whereas anything that is as strong as, or stronger than, himself gives him offense. Hence he will not, if he can avoid it, put up with a favorite that matches or outdoes him in strength, but will always seek to make him weaker and feebler, and weakness is found in the ignorant, the cowardly, the poor speaker, the slow thinker, as against the wise, the brave, the eloquent, the quick-minded. All these defects of mind and more in the beloved are bound to be a source of pleasure to the lover; if they do not exist already as innate qualities, he will cultivate them, for not to do so means depriving himself of immediate pleasure. And of course he is bound to be jealous, constantly debarring the boy not only, to his great injury, from the advantages of consorting with others, which would make a real man of him, but, greatest injury of all, from consorting with that which would most increase his wisdom—by which I mean divine philosophy. No access to that can possibly be permitted by the lover, for he dreads becoming thereby an object of contempt. And in general he must aim at making the boy totally ignorant and totally dependent on his lover, by way of securing the maximum of pleasure for himself, and the maximum of damage to the other.

Hence in respect of the boy's mind it is anything but a profitable investment to have as guardian or partner a man in love.

After the mind, the body; we must see what sort of physical condition will be fostered, and how it will be fostered, in the boy that has become the possession of one who is under compulsion to pursue pleasure instead of goodness. We shall find him, of course, pursuing a weakling rather than a sturdy boy, one who has had a cozy, sheltered upbringing instead of being exposed to the open air, who has given himself up to a soft unmanly life instead of the toil and sweat of manly exercise, who for lack of natural charm tricks himself out with artificial cosmetics, and resorts to all sorts of other similar practices which are too obvious to need further enumeration. Yet before leaving the topic we may sum it up in a sentence. The boy will be of that physical type which in wartime, and other times that try a man's mettle, inspires confidence in his enemies and alarm in his friends, aye and in his very lovers too.

And now let us pass from these obvious considerations and raise the next question. What advantage or detriment in respect of property and possessions shall we find resulting from the society and guardianship of a lover? Well, one thing is plain enough to anyone, and especially to the lover, namely that his foremost wish will be for the boy to be bereft of his dearest possessions, his treasury of kindness and ideal affection—father and mother, kinsmen and friends—he will want him to be robbed of them all, as likely to make difficulties and raise objections to the intercourse which he finds so pleasant. If however the boy possesses property, in money or whatever it may be, he will reckon that he will not be so easy to capture, or if captured to manage; hence a lover is bound to nurse a grudge against one who possesses property, and to rejoice when he loses it. Furthermore he will want his beloved to remain as long as possible without wife or child or home, so as to enjoy for as long as may be his own delights.

There are, to be sure, other evils in life, but with most of them heaven has mixed some momentary pleasure. Thus in the parasite, a fearsome and most pernicious creature, nature has mingled a dash of pleasing wit or charm; a courtesan may well be branded as pernicious, not to mention many other similar creatures with their respective callings; yet in everyday life they can be very agreeable, but a lover, besides being pernicious, is the most disagreeable of all men for a boy to spend his days with. There's an old saying about 'not matching May with December,' based, I suppose, on the idea that similarity of age tends to similarity of pleasures and consequently makes a couple good friends; still even with such a couple the association is apt to pall. Then again, in addition to the dissimilarity of age, there is that compulsion which is burdensome for anybody in any circumstances, but especially so in the relations of such a pair.

The elderly lover will not, if he can help it, suffer any desertion by his beloved by day or by night; he is driven on by a compelling, goading power, lured by the continual promise of pleasure in the sight, hearing, touching, or other physical experience of the beloved; to

minister unflinchingly to the boy's needs is his delight. But what pleasure or what solace will he have to offer to the beloved? How will he save him from experiencing the extremity of discomfort in those long hours at his lover's side, as he looks upon a face which years have robbed of its beauty, together with other consequences which it is unpleasant even to hear mentioned, let alone to have continually to cope with in stark reality. And what of the suspicious precautions with which he is incessantly guarded, with whomsoever he associates, the unseasonable fulsome compliments to which he has to listen, alternating with reproaches which when uttered in soberness are hard to endure, but coming from one in his cups, in language of unlimited, undisguised coarseness, are both intolerable and disgusting?

To continue, if while his love lasts he is harmful and offensive, in later days, when it is spent, he will show his bad faith. He was lavish with promises, interspersed among his vows and entreaties, regarding those later days, contriving with some difficulty to secure his partner's endurance of an intercourse which even then was burdensome, by holding out hopes of benefits to come. But when the time comes for fulfilling the promises, a new authority takes the place within him of the former ruler; love and passion are replaced by wisdom and temperance; he has become a different person. But the boy does not realize it, and demands a return for what he gave in the past, reminding him of what had been done and said, as though he were talking to the same person, while the erstwhile lover, who has now acquired wisdom and temperance, cannot for very shame bring himself to declare that he has become a new man, nor yet see his way to redeeming the solemn assurances and promises made under the old regime of folly; he fears that if he were to go on acting as before he would revert to his old character, his former self. So he runs away from his obligations as one compelled to default; it's 'tails' this time instead of 'heads,' and he has to turn tail and rush away. But the boy must needs run after him, crying indignantly to high heaven, though from start to finish he has never understood that he ought not to have yielded to a lover inevitably devoid of reason, but far rather to one possessed of reason and not in love. He should have known that the wrong choice must mean surrendering himself to a faithless, peevish, jealous, and offensive captor, to one who would ruin his property, ruin his physique, and above all ruin his spiritual development, which is assuredly and ever will be of supreme value in the sight of gods and men alike.

Let that then, my boy, be your lesson. Be sure that the attentions of a lover carry no good will; they are no more than a glutting of his appetite, for 'As wolf to lamb, so lover to his lad.'

There, I knew I should [break out into verse], Phaedrus. Not a word more shall you have from me; let that be the end of my discourse.

PHAEDRUS: Why, I thought you were only halfway through

and would have an equal amount to say about the nonlover, enumerating his good points and showing that he should be the favored suitor. Why is it, Socrates, that instead of that you break off?

SOCRATES: My dear good man, haven't you noticed that I've got beyond dithyramb, and am breaking out into epic verse, despite my faultfinding? What do you suppose I shall do if I start extolling the other type? Don't you see that I shall clearly be possessed by those nymphs into whose clutches you deliberately threw me? I therefore tell you, in one short sentence, that to each evil for which I have abused the one party there is a corresponding good belonging to the other. So why waste words? All has been said that needs saying about them both. And that being so, my story can be left to the fate appropriate to it, and I will take myself off across the river here before you drive me to greater lengths.

PHAEDRUS: Oh, but you must wait until it gets cooler, Socrates. Don't you realize that it's just about the hour of 'scorching noonday,' as the phrase goes? Let us wait and discuss what we've heard; when it has got cool perhaps we will go.

SOCRATES: Phaedrus, your enthusiasm for discourse is sublime, and really moves me to admiration. Of the discourses pronounced during your lifetime no one, I fancy, has been responsible for more than you, whether by delivering them yourself or by compelling others to do so by one means or another—with one exception, Simmias of Thebes; you are well ahead of all the rest. And now it seems that once more you are the cause of my having to deliver myself.

PHAEDRUS: It might be a lot worse! But how so? To what do you refer?

SOCRATES: At the moment when I was about to cross the river, dear friend, there came to me my familiar divine sign—which always checks me when on the point of doing something or other—and all at once I seemed to hear a voice, forbidding me to leave the spot until I had made atonement for some offense to heaven. Now, you must know, I am a seer—not a very good one, it's true, but, like a poor scholar, good enough for my own purposes—hence I understand already well enough what my offense was. The fact is, you know, Phaedrus, the mind itself has a kind of divining power, for I felt disturbed some while ago as I was delivering that speech, and had a misgiving lest I might, in the words of Ibycus, 'By sinning in the sight of God win high renown from man.'<sup>2</sup> But now I realize my sin.

PHAEDRUS: And what is it?

SOCRATES: That was a terrible theory, Phaedrus, a terrible theory that you introduced and compelled me to expound.

PHAEDRUS: How so?

<sup>2</sup> Ibycus, fr. 24.



SOCRATES: It was foolish, and somewhat blasphemous, and what could be more terrible than that?

PHAEDRUS: I agree, if it merits your description.

SOCRATES: Well, do you not hold Love to be a god, the child of Aphrodite?

PHAEDRUS: He is certainly said to be.

SOCRATES: But not according to Lysias, and not according to that discourse of yours which you caused my lips to utter by putting a spell on them. If Love is, as he is indeed, a god or a divine being, he cannot be an evil thing; yet this pair of speeches treated him as evil. That then was their offense toward Love, to which was added the most exquisite folly of parading their pernicious rubbish as though it were good sense because it might deceive a few miserable people and win their applause.

And so, my friend, I have to purify myself. Now for such as offend in speaking of gods and heroes there is an ancient mode of purification, which was known to Stesichorus, though not to Homer. When Stesichorus lost the sight of his eyes because of his defamation of Helen, he was not, like Homer, at a loss to know why. As a true artist he understood the reason, and promptly wrote the lines:

False, false the tale.

Thou never didst sail in the well-decked ships  
Nor come to the towers of Troy.<sup>3</sup>

And after finishing the composition of his so-called palinode he straightway recovered his sight. Now it's here that I shall show greater wisdom than these poets. I shall attempt to make my due palinode to Love before any harm comes to me for my defamation of him, and no longer veiling my head for shame, but uncovered.

PHAEDRUS: Nothing you could say, Socrates, would please me more.

SOCRATES: Yes, dear Phaedrus, you understand how irreverent the two speeches were, the one in the book and that which followed. Suppose we were being listened to by a man of generous and humane character, who loved or had once loved another such as himself. Suppose he heard us saying that for some trifling cause lovers conceive bitter hatred and a spirit of malice and injury toward their loved ones. Wouldn't he be sure to think that we had been brought up among the scum of the people and had never seen a case of noble love? Wouldn't he utterly refuse to accept our vilification of Love?

PHAEDRUS: Indeed, Socrates, he well might.

SOCRATES: Then out of respect for him, and in awe of Love himself, I should like to wash the bitter taste out of my mouth with a

<sup>3</sup> Stesichorus, fr. 32.

draught of wholesome discourse, and my advice to Lysias is that he should lose no time in telling us that, other things being equal, favor should be accorded to the lover rather than to the nonlover.

PHAEDRUS: Rest assured; that will be done. When you have delivered your encomium of the lover, I shall most certainly make Lysias compose a new speech to the same purport.

SOCRATES: I'm sure of that, so long as you continue to be the man you are.

PHAEDRUS: Then you may confidently proceed.

SOCRATES: Where is that boy I was talking to? He must listen to me once more, and not rush off to yield to his nonlover before he hears what I have to say.

PHAEDRUS: Here he is, quite close beside you, whenever you want him.

SOCRATES: Now you must understand, fair boy, that whereas the preceding discourse was by Phaedrus, son of Pythocles, of Myrrhinus, that which I shall now pronounce is by Stesichorus, son of Euphemus, of Himera. This then is how it must run.

'False is the tale' that when a lover is at hand favor ought rather to be accorded to one who does not love, on the ground that the former is mad, and the latter sound of mind. That would be right if it were an invariable truth that madness is an evil, but in reality, the greatest blessings come by way of madness, indeed of madness that is heaven-sent. It was when they were mad that the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona achieved so much for which both states and individuals in Greece are thankful; when sane they did little or nothing. As for the Sibyl and others who by the power of inspired prophecy have so often foretold the future to so many, and guided them aright, I need not dwell on what is obvious to everyone. Yet it is in place to appeal to the fact that madness was accounted no shame nor disgrace by the men of old who gave things their names; otherwise they would not have connected that greatest of arts, whereby the future is discerned, with this very word 'madness,' and named it accordingly. No, it was because they held madness to be a valuable gift, when due to divine dispensation, that they named that art as they did, though the men of today, having no sense of values, have put in an extra letter, making it not *manic* but *mantic*. That is borne out by the name they gave to the art of those sane prophets who inquire into the future by means of birds and other signs; the name was '*oionoistic*,' which by its components indicated that the prophet attained understanding and information by a purely human activity of thought belonging to his own intelligence, though a younger generation has come to call it '*oionistic*,' lengthening the quantity of the *o* to make it sound impressive. You see then what this ancient evidence attests. Corresponding to the superior perfection and value of the prophecy of inspiration over that of omen reading, both in name

and in fact, is the superiority of heaven-sent madness over man-made sanity.

And in the second place, when grievous maladies and afflictions have beset certain families by reason of some ancient sin, madness has appeared among them, and breaking out into prophecy has secured relief by finding the means thereto, namely by recourse to prayer and worship, and in consequence thereof rites and means of purification were established, and the sufferer was brought out of danger, alike for the present and for the future. Thus did madness secure, for him that was maddened aright and possessed, deliverance from his troubles.

245 There is a third form of possession or madness, of which the Muses are the source. This seizes a tender, virgin soul and stimulates it to rapt passionate expression, especially in lyric poetry, glorifying the countless mighty deeds of ancient times for the instruction of posterity. But if any man come to the gates of poetry without the madness of the Muses, persuaded that skill alone will make him a good poet, then shall he and his works of sanity with him be brought to nought by the poetry of madness, and behold, their place is nowhere to be found.

b Such then is the tale, though I have not told it fully, of the achievements wrought by madness that comes from the gods. So let us have no fears simply on that score; let us not be disturbed by an argument that seeks to scare us into preferring the friendship of the sane to that of the passionate. For there is something more that it must prove if it is to carry the day, namely that love is not a thing sent from heaven for the advantage both of lover and beloved. What we c have to prove is the opposite, namely that this sort of madness is a gift of the gods, fraught with the highest bliss. And our proof assuredly will prevail with the wise, though not with the learned.

Now our first step toward attaining the truth of the matter is to discern the nature of soul, divine and human, its experiences, and its activities. Here then our proof begins.

All soul is immortal, for that which is ever in motion is immortal. But that which while imparting motion is itself moved by something else can cease to be in motion, and therefore can cease to live; it is only that which moves itself that never intermits its motion, inasmuch as it cannot abandon its own nature; moreover this self-mover is the source and first principle of motion for all other things that are d moved. Now a first principle cannot come into being, for while anything that comes to be must come to be from a first principle, the latter itself cannot come to be from anything whatsoever; if it did, it would cease any longer to be a first principle. Furthermore, since it does not come into being, it must be imperishable, for assuredly if a first principle were to be destroyed, nothing could come to be out of it, nor could anything bring the principle itself back into existence, see-

ing that a first principle is needed for anything to come into being.

The self-mover, then, is the first principle of motion, and it is as impossible that it should be destroyed as that it should come into being; were it otherwise, the whole universe, the whole of that which comes to be, would collapse into immobility, and never find another source of motion to bring it back into being.

And now that we have seen that that which is moved by itself is immortal, we shall feel no scruple in affirming that precisely that is the essence and definition of soul, to wit, self-motion. Any body that has an external source of motion is soulless, but a body deriving its motion from a source within itself is animate or *besouled*, which implies that the nature of soul is what has been said.

And if this last assertion is correct, namely that 'that which moves itself' is precisely identifiable with soul, it must follow that soul 246 is not born and does not die.

As to soul's immortality then we have said enough, but as to its nature there is this that must be said. What manner of thing it is would be a long tale to tell, and most assuredly a god alone could tell it, but what it resembles, that a man might tell in briefer compass. Let this therefore be our manner of discourse. Let it be likened to the union of powers in a team of winged steeds and their winged charioteer. Now all the gods' steeds and all their charioteers are good, and of good stock, but with other beings it is not wholly so. With us men, in b the first place, it is a pair of steeds that the charioteer controls; moreover one of them is noble and good, and of good stock, while the other has the opposite character, and his stock is opposite. Hence the task of our charioteer is difficult and troublesome.

And now we must essay to tell how it is that living beings are called mortal and immortal. All soul has the care of all that is inanimate, and traverses the whole universe, though in ever-changing forms. Thus when it is perfect and winged it journeys on high and c controls the whole world, but one that has shed its wings sinks down until it can fasten on something solid, and settling there it takes to itself an earthy body which seems by reason of the soul's power to move itself. This composite structure of soul and body is called a living being, and is further termed 'mortal'; 'immortal' is a term applied on no basis of reasoned argument at all, but our fancy pictures the god whom we have never seen, nor fully conceived, as an immortal living being, possessed of a soul and a body united for all time. How- d beit, let these matters, and our account thereof, be as God pleases; what we must understand is the reason why the soul's wings fall from it, and are lost. It is on this wise.

The natural property of a wing is to raise that which is heavy and carry it aloft to the region where the gods dwell, and more than any other bodily part it shares in the divine nature, which is fair, wise, e and good, and possessed of all other such excellences. Now by these

excellences especially is the soul's plumage nourished and fostered, while by their opposites, even by ugliness and evil, it is wasted and destroyed. And behold, there in the heaven Zeus, mighty leader, drives his winged team. First of the host of gods and daemons he proceeds, ordering all things and caring therefor, and the host follows  
 247 after him, marshaled in eleven companies. For Hestia abides alone in the gods' dwelling place, but for the rest, all such as are ranked in the number of the twelve as ruler gods lead their several companies, each according to his rank.

Now within the heavens are many spectacles of bliss upon the highways whereon the blessed gods pass to and fro, each doing his own work, and with them are all such as will and can follow them, for jealousy has no place in the choir divine. But at such times as they go to their feasting and banquet, behold they climb the steep ascent  
 b even unto the summit of the arch that supports the heavens, and easy is that ascent for the chariots of the gods, for they are well balanced and readily guided. But for the others it is hard, by reason of the heaviness of the steed of wickedness, which pulls down his driver with his weight, except that driver have schooled him well.

And now there awaits the soul the extreme of her toil and struggling. For the souls that are called immortal, so soon as they are at the summit, come forth and stand upon the back of the world, and  
 c straightway the revolving heaven carries them round, and they look upon the regions without.

Of that place beyond the heavens none of our earthly poets has yet sung, and none shall sing worthily. But this is the manner of it, for assuredly we must be bold to speak what is true, above all when our discourse is upon truth. It is there that true being dwells, without color or shape, that cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's pilot,  
 d can behold it, and all true knowledge is knowledge thereof. Now even as the mind of a god is nourished by reason and knowledge, so also is it with every soul that has a care to receive her proper food; wherefore when at last she has beheld being she is well content, and contemplating truth she is nourished and prospers, until the heaven's revolution brings her back full circle. And while she is borne round she discerns justice, its very self, and likewise temperance, and knowledge, not the knowledge that is neighbor to becoming and varies  
 e with the various objects to which we commonly ascribe being, but the veritable knowledge of being that veritably is. And when she has contemplated likewise and feasted upon all else that has true being, she descends again within the heavens and comes back home. And having so come, her charioteer sets his steeds at their manger, and puts ambrosia before them and draught of nectar to drink withal.

248 Such is the life of gods. Of the other souls that which best follows a god and becomes most like thereunto raises her charioteer's head into the outer region, and is carried round with the gods in the

revolution, but being confounded by her steeds she has much ado to discern the things that are; another now rises, and now sinks, and by reason of her unruly steeds sees in part, but in part sees not. As for the rest, though all are eager to reach the heights and seek to follow, they are not able; sucked down as they travel they trample and tread upon one another, this one striving to outstrip that. Thus confusion  
 b ensues, and conflict and grievous sweat. Whereupon, with their charioteers powerless, many are lamed, and many have their wings all broken, and for all their toiling they are balked, every one, of the full vision of being, and departing therefrom, they feed upon the food of semblance.

Now the reason wherefore the souls are fain and eager to behold the plain of Truth, and discover it, lies herein—to wit, that the pasturage that is proper to their noblest part comes from that meadow,  
 c and the plumage by which they are borne aloft is nourished thereby.

Hear now the ordinance of Necessity. Whatsoever soul has followed in the train of a god, and discerned something of truth, shall be kept from sorrow until a new revolution shall begin, and if she can do this always, she shall remain always free from hurt. But when she is not able so to follow, and sees none of it, but meeting with some mischance comes to be burdened with a load of forgetfulness and wrongdoing, and because of that burden sheds her wings and falls to the earth, then thus runs the law. In her first birth she shall not be  
 d planted in any brute beast, but the soul that hath seen the most of being shall enter into the human babe that shall grow into a seeker after wisdom or beauty, a follower of the Muses and a lover; the next, having seen less, shall dwell in a king that abides by law, or a warrior and ruler; the third in a statesman, a man of business, or a trader; the fourth in an athlete, or physical trainer, or physician; the fifth shall  
 e have the life of a prophet or a Mystery priest; to the sixth that of a poet or other imitative artist shall be fittingly given; the seventh shall live in an artisan or farmer; the eighth in a Sophist or demagogue; the ninth in a tyrant.

Now in all these incarnations he who lives righteously has a better lot for his portion, and he who lives unrighteously a worse. For a soul does not return to the place whence she came for ten thousand years, since in no lesser time can she regain her wings, save only his  
 249 soul who has sought after wisdom unfeignedly, or has conjoined his passion for a loved one with that seeking. Such a soul, if with three revolutions of a thousand years she has thrice chosen this philosophical life, regains thereby her wings, and speeds away after three thousand years; but the rest, when they have accomplished their first life, are brought to judgment, and after the judgment some are taken to be punished in places of chastisement beneath the earth, while others are borne aloft by Justice to a certain region of the heavens. there to live in such manner as is merited by their past life in the flesh. And after  
 b

a thousand years these and those alike come to the allotment and choice of their second life, each choosing according to her will; then does the soul of a man enter into the life of a beast, and the beast's soul that was aforetime in a man goes back to a man again. For only the soul that has beheld truth may enter into this our human form—seeing that man must needs understand the language of forms, passing from a plurality of perceptions to a unity gathered together by reasoning—and such understanding is a recollection of those things which our souls beheld aforetime as they journeyed with their god, looking down upon the things which now we suppose to be, and gazing up to that which truly is.

Therefore is it meet and right that the soul of the philosopher alone should recover her wings, for she, so far as may be, is ever near in memory to those things a god's nearness whereunto makes him truly god. Wherefore if a man makes right use of such means of remembrance, and ever approaches to the full vision of the perfect mysteries, he and he alone becomes truly perfect. Standing aside from the busy doings of mankind, and drawing nigh to the divine, he is rebuked by the multitude as being out of his wits, for they know not that he is possessed by a deity.

Mark therefore the sum and substance of all our discourse touching the fourth sort of madness—to wit, that this is the best of all forms of divine possession, both in itself and in its sources, both for him that has it and for him that shares therein—and when he that loves beauty is touched by such madness he is called a lover. Such a one, as soon as he beholds the beauty of this world, is reminded of true beauty, and his wings begin to grow; then is he fain to lift his wings and fly upward; yet he has not the power, but inasmuch as he gazes upward like a bird, and cares nothing for the world beneath, men charge it upon him that he is demented.

Now, as we have said, every human soul has, by reason of her nature, had contemplation of true being; else would she never have entered into this human creature; but to be put in mind thereof by things here is not easy for every soul. Some, when they had the vision, had it but for a moment; some when they had fallen to earth consorted unhappily with such as led them to deeds of unrighteousness, wherefore they forgot the holy objects of their vision. Few indeed are left that can still remember much, but when these discern some likeness of the things yonder, they are amazed, and no longer masters of themselves, and know not what is come upon them by reason of their perception being dim.

Now in the earthly likenesses of justice and temperance and all other prized possessions of the soul there dwells no luster; nay, so dull are the organs wherewith men approach their images that hardly can a few behold that which is imaged, but with beauty it is otherwise. Beauty it was ours to see in all its brightness in those days when,

amidst that happy company, we beheld with our eyes that blessed vision, ourselves in the train of Zeus, others following some other god; then were we all initiated into that mystery which is rightly accounted blessed beyond all others; whole and unblemished were we that did celebrate it, untouched by the evils that awaited us in days to come; whole and unblemished likewise, free from all alloy, steadfast and blissful were the spectacles on which we gazed in the moment of final revelation; pure was the light that shone around us, and pure were we, without taint of that prison house which now we are encompassed withal, and call a body, fast bound therein as an oyster in its shell.

There let it rest then, our tribute to a memory that has stirred us to linger awhile on those former joys for which we yearn. Now beauty, as we said, shone bright amidst these visions, and in this world below we apprehend it through the clearest of our senses, clear and resplendent. For sight is the keenest mode of perception vouchsafed us through the body; wisdom, indeed, we cannot see thereby—how passionate had been our desire for her, if she had granted us so clear an image of herself to gaze upon—nor yet any other of those beloved objects, save only beauty; for beauty alone this has been ordained, to be most manifest to sense and most lovely of them all.

Now he whose vision of the mystery is long past, or whose purity has been sullied, cannot pass swiftly hence to see beauty's self yonder, when he beholds that which is called beautiful here; wherefore he looks upon it with no reverence, and surrendering to pleasure he essays to go after the fashion of a four-footed beast, and to beget offspring of the flesh, or consorting with wantonness he has no fear nor shame in running after unnatural pleasure. But when one who is fresh from the mystery, and saw much of the vision, beholds a godlike face or bodily form that truly expresses beauty, first there come upon him a shuddering and a measure of that awe which the vision inspired, and then reverence as at the sight of a god, and but for fear of being deemed a very madman he would offer sacrifice to his beloved, as to a holy image of deity. Next, with the passing of the shudder, a strange sweating and fever seizes him. For by reason of the stream of beauty entering in through his eyes there comes a warmth, whereby his soul's plumage is fostered, and with that warmth the roots of the wings are melted, which for long had been so hardened and closed up that nothing could grow; then as the nourishment is poured in, the stump of the wing swells and hastens to grow from the root over the whole substance of the soul, for aforetime the whole soul was furnished with wings. Meanwhile she throbs with ferment in every part, and even as a teething child feels an aching and pain in its gums when a tooth has just come through, so does the soul of him who is beginning to grow his wings feel a ferment and painful irritation. Wherefore as she gazes upon the boy's beauty, she admits a flood of

particles streaming therefrom—that is why we speak of a ‘flood of passion’—whereby she is warmed and fostered; then has she respite from her anguish, and is filled with joy. But when she has been parted from him and become parched, the openings of those outlets at which the wings are sprouting dry up likewise and are closed, so that the wing’s germ is barred off. And behind its bars, together with the flood aforesaid, it throbs like a fevered pulse, and pricks at its proper outlet, and thereat the whole soul round about is stung and goaded into anguish; howbeit she remembers the beauty of her beloved, and rejoices again. So between joy and anguish she is distraught at being in such strange case, perplexed and frenzied; with madness upon her she can neither sleep by night nor keep still by day, but runs hither and thither, yearning for him in whom beauty dwells, if haply she may behold him. At last she does behold him, and lets the flood pour in upon her, releasing the imprisoned waters; then has she refreshment and respite from her stings and sufferings, and at that moment tastes a pleasure that is sweet beyond compare. Nor will she willingly give it up. Above all others does she esteem her beloved in his beauty; mother, brother, friends, she forgets them all. Nought does she reckon of losing worldly possessions through neglect. All the rules of conduct, all the graces of life, of which aforesaid she was proud, she now disdains, welcoming a slave’s estate and any couch where she may be suffered to lie down close beside her darling, for besides her reverence for the possessor of beauty she has found in him the only physician for her grievous suffering.

Hearken, fair boy to whom I speak. This is the experience that men term love (ἔρως), but when you hear what the gods call it, you will probably smile at its strangeness. There are a couple of verses on love quoted by certain Homeric scholars from the unpublished works, the second of which is remarkably bold and a trifle astray in its quantities. They run as follows:

Eros, cleaver of air, in mortals’ speech is he named,  
But, since he must grow wings, Pteros the celestials call him.

You may believe that or not, as you please; at all events the cause and the nature of the lover’s experience are in fact what I have said.

Now if he whom Love has caught be among the followers of Zeus, he is able to bear the burden of the winged one with some constancy, but they that attend upon Ares, and did range the heavens in his train, when they are caught by Love and fancy that their beloved is doing them some injury, will shed blood and not scruple to offer both themselves and their loved ones in sacrifice. And so does each lover live, after the manner of the god in whose company he once was, honoring him and copying him so far as may be, so long as he remains uncorrupt and is still living in his first earthly period, and in like manner does he comport himself toward his beloved and all his other as-

sociates. And so each selects a fair one for his love after his disposition, and even as if the beloved himself were a god he fashions for himself as it were an image, and adorns it to be the object of his veneration and worship.

Thus the followers of Zeus seek a beloved who is Zeuslike in soul; wherefore they look for one who is by nature disposed to the love of wisdom and the leading of men, and when they have found him and come to love him they do all in their power to foster that disposition. And if they have not aforesaid trodden this path, they now set out upon it, learning the way from any source that may offer or finding it for themselves, and as they follow up the trace within themselves of the nature of their own god their task is made easier, inasmuch as they are constrained to fix their gaze upon him, and reaching out after him in memory they are possessed by him, and from him they take their ways and manners of life, in so far as a man can partake of a god. But all this, mark you, they attribute to the beloved, and the draughts which they draw from Zeus they pour out, like bacchantes, into the soul of the beloved, thus creating in him the closest possible likeness to the god they worship.

Those who were in the train of Hera look for a royal nature, and when they have found him they do unto him all things in like fashion. And so it is with the followers of Apollo and each other god. Every lover is fain that his beloved should be of a nature like to his own god, and when he has won him, he leads him on to walk in the ways of their god, and after his likeness, patterning himself thereupon and giving counsel and discipline to the boy. There is no jealousy nor petty spitefulness in his dealings, but his every act is aimed at bringing the beloved to be every whit like unto himself and unto the god of their worship.

So therefore glorious and blissful is the endeavor of true lovers in that mystery rite, if they accomplish that which they endeavor after the fashion of which I speak, when mutual affection arises through the madness inspired by love. But the beloved must needs be captured, and the manner of that capture I will now tell.

In the beginning of our story we divided each soul into three parts, two being like steeds and the third like a charioteer. Well and good. Now of the steeds, so we declare, one is good and the other is not, but we have not described the excellence of the one nor the badness of the other, and that is what must now be done. He that is on the more honorable side is upright and clean-limbed, carrying his neck high, with something of a hooked nose; in color he is white, with black eyes; a lover of glory, but with temperance and modesty; one that consorts with genuine renown, and needs no whip, being driven by the word of command alone. The other is crooked of frame, a massive jumble of a creature, with thick short neck, snub nose, black skin, and gray eyes; hot-blooded, consorting with wantonness

and vainglory; shaggy of ear, deaf, and hard to control with whip and goad.

Now when the driver beholds the person of the beloved, and causes a sensation of warmth to suffuse the whole soul, he begins to  
 254 experience a tickling or pricking of desire, and the obedient steed, constrained now as always by modesty, refrains from leaping upon the beloved. But his fellow, heeding no more the driver's goad or whip, leaps and dashes on, sorely troubling his companion and his driver, and forcing them to approach the loved one and remind him of the  
 b delights of love's commerce. For a while they struggle, indignant that he should force them to a monstrous and forbidden act, but at last, finding no end to their evil plight, they yield and agree to do his bidding. And so he draws them on, and now they are quite close and behold the spectacle of the beloved flashing upon them. At that sight the driver's memory goes back to that form of beauty, and he sees her once again enthroned by the side of temperance upon her holy seat; then in awe and reverence he falls upon his back, and therewith is  
 c compelled to pull the reins so violently that he brings both steeds down on their haunches, the good one willing and unresistant, but the wanton sore against his will. Now that they are a little way off, the good horse in shame and horror drenches the whole soul with sweat, while the other, contriving to recover his wind after the pain of the bit and his fall, bursts into angry abuse, railing at the charioteer  
 d and his yokefellow as cowardly treacherous deserters. Once again he tries to force them to advance, and when they beg him to delay awhile he grudgingly consents. But when the time appointed is come, and they feign to have forgotten, he reminds them of it—struggling and neighing and pulling until he compels them a second time to approach the beloved and renew their offer—and when they have come close, with head down and tail stretched out he takes the bit between  
 e his teeth and shamelessly plunges on. But the driver, with resentment even stronger than before, like a racer recoiling from the starting rope, jerks back the bit in the mouth of the wanton horse with an even stronger pull, bespatters his railing tongue and his jaws with blood, and forcing him down on legs and haunches delivers him over to anguish.

And so it happens time and again, until the evil steed casts off his wantonness; humbled in the end, he obeys the counsel of his driver, and when he sees the fair beloved is like to die of fear. Wherefore at long last the soul of the lover follows after the beloved with reverence and awe.

255 Thus the loved one receives all manner of service, as peer of the gods, from a lover that is no pretender but loves in all sincerity; of his own nature, too, he is kindly disposed to him who pays such service. Now it may be that in time past he has been misled, by his school-fellows or others, who told him that it is shameful to have commerce

with a lover, and by reason of this he may repel his advances. Nevertheless as time goes on ripening age and the ordinance of destiny together lead him to welcome the other's society, for assuredly fate  
 b does not suffer one evil man to be friend to another, nor yet one good man to lack the friendship of another.

And now that he has come to welcome his lover and to take pleasure in his company and converse, it comes home to him what a depth of kindness he has found, and he is filled with amazement, for he perceives that all his other friends and kinsmen have nothing to offer in comparison with this friend in whom there dwells a god. So as he continues in this converse and society, and comes close to his lover in the gymnasium and elsewhere, that flowing stream which  
 c Zeus, as the lover of Ganymede, called the 'flood of passion,' pours in upon the lover. And part of it is absorbed within him, but when he can contain no more the rest flows away outside him, and as a breath of wind or an echo, rebounding from a smooth hard surface, goes back to its place of origin, even so the stream of beauty turns back and re-enters the eyes of the fair beloved. And so by the natural channel it reaches his soul and gives it fresh vigor, watering the roots of the wings and quickening them to growth, whereby the soul of the beloved,  
 d in its turn, is filled with love. So he loves, yet knows not what he loves; he does not understand, he cannot tell what has come upon him; like one that has caught a disease of the eye from another, he cannot account for it, not realizing that his lover is as it were a mirror in which he beholds himself. And when the other is beside him, he shares his respite from anguish; when he is absent, he likewise shares his longing and being longed for, since he possesses that counterlove which is the image of love, though he supposes it to be friend-  
 e ship rather than love, and calls it by that name. He feels a desire—like the lover's, yet not so strong—to behold, to touch, to kiss him, to share his couch, and now ere long the desire, as one might guess, leads to the act.

So when they lie side by side, the wanton horse of the lover's soul would have a word with the charioteer, claiming a little guerdon for all his trouble. The like steed in the soul of the beloved has no  
 256 word to say, but, swelling with desire for he knows not what, embraces and kisses the lover, in grateful acknowledgment of all his kindness. And when they lie by one another, he is minded not to refuse to do his part in gratifying his lover's entreaties: yet his yokefellow in turn, being moved by reverence and heedfulness, joins with the driver in resisting. And so, if the victory be won by the higher elements of mind guiding them into the ordered rule of the philosophical life, their days on earth will be blessed with happiness and concord, for  
 b the power of evil in the soul has been subjected, and the power of goodness liberated; they have won self-mastery and inward peace. And when life is over, with burden shed and wings recovered they stand

victorious in the first of the three rounds in that truly Olympic struggle; nor can any nobler prize be secured whether by the wisdom that is of man or by the madness that is of god.

c But if they turn to a way of life more ignoble and unphilosophical, yet covetous of honor, then mayhap in a careless hour, or when the wine is flowing, the wanton horses in their two souls will catch them off their guard, bring the pair together, and choosing that part which the multitude account blissful achieve their full desire. And this once done, they continue therein, albeit but rarely, seeing that their minds are not wholly set thereupon. Such a pair as this also are dear friends, but not so dear as that other pair, one to another, both in d time of their love and when love is past, for they feel that they have exchanged the most binding pledges, which it were a sin to break by becoming enemies. When death comes they quit the body wingless indeed, yet eager to be winged, and therefore they carry off no mean reward for their lovers' madness, for it is ordained that all such as have taken the first steps on the celestial highway shall no more return to the dark pathways beneath the earth, but shall walk together in a life e of shining bliss, and be furnished in due time with like plumage the one to the other, because of their love.

These then, my boy, are the blessings great and glorious which will come to you from the friendship of a lover. He who is not a lover can offer a mere acquaintance flavored with worldly wisdom, dispensing a niggardly measure of worldly goods; in the soul to which he is attached he will engender an ignoble quality extolled by the multitude as virtue, and condemn it to float for nine thousand years 257 hither and thither, around the earth and beneath it, bereft of understanding.

Thus then, dear god of love, I have offered the fairest recantation and fullest atonement that my powers could compass; some of its language, in particular, was perforce poetical, to please Phaedrus. Grant me thy pardon for what went before, and thy favor for what ensued; be merciful and gracious, and take not from me the lover's talent wherewith thou hast blessed me; neither let it wither by reason of thy displeasure, but grant me still to increase in the esteem of the b fair. And if anything that Phaedrus and I said earlier sounded discordant to thy ear, set it down to Lysias, the only begetter of that discourse, and staying him from discourses after this fashion turn him toward the love of wisdom, even as his brother Polemarchus has been turned. Then will his loving disciple here present no longer halt between two opinions, as now he does, but live for Love in singleness of purpose with the aid of philosophical discourse.

c PHAEDRUS: If that be for our good, Socrates, I join in your prayer for it. And I have this long while been filled with admiration for your speech as a far finer achievement than the one you made before. It makes me afraid that I shall find Lysias cutting a poor figure,

if he proves to be willing to compete with another speech of his own. The fact is that only the other day, my dear good sir, one of our politicians was railing at him and reproaching him on this very score, constantly dubbing him a 'speech writer'; so possibly we shall find him desisting from further composition to preserve his reputation.

SOCRATES: What a ridiculous line to take, young man! And how utterly you misjudge our friend, if you suppose him to be such a timid creature! Am I to believe you really do think that the person you speak of meant his raillery as a reproach?

PHAEDRUS: He gave me that impression, Socrates, and of course you know as well as I do that the men of greatest influence and dignity in political life are reluctant to write speeches and bequeath to posterity compositions of their own, for fear of the verdict of later ages, which might pronounce them Sophists.

SOCRATES: Phaedrus, you are unaware that the expression 'Pleasant Bend' comes from the long bend in the Nile, and besides e the matter of the Bend you are unaware that the proudest of politicians have the strongest desire to write speeches and bequeath compositions; why, whenever they write a speech, they are so pleased to have admirers that they put in a special clause at the beginning with the names of the persons who admire the speech in question.

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

SOCRATES: You don't understand that when a politician be- 258 gins a composition the first thing he writes is the name of his admirer.

PHAEDRUS: Is it?

SOCRATES: Yes, he says maybe, 'Resolved by the Council' or 'by the people' or by both, and then 'Proposed by so-and-so'—a pompous piece of self-advertisement on the part of the author—after which he proceeds with what he has to say, showing off his own wisdom to his admirers, sometimes in a very lengthy composition. This sort of thing amounts, don't you think, to composing a speech?

PHAEDRUS: Yes, I think it does. b

SOCRATES: Then if the speech holds its ground, the author quits the scene rejoicing, but if it is blotted out, and he loses his status as a recognized speech writer, he goes into mourning, and his friends with him.

PHAEDRUS: Quite so.

SOCRATES: Which clearly implies that their attitude to the profession is not one of disdain, but of admiration.

PHAEDRUS: To be sure.

SOCRATES: Tell me then, when an orator, or a king, succeeds in acquiring the power of a Lycurgus, a Solon, or a Darius, and so c winning immortality among his people as a speech writer, doesn't he deem himself a peer of the gods while still living, and do not people of later ages hold the same opinion of him when they contemplate his writings?

PHAEDRUS: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: Then do you suppose that anyone of that type, whoever he might be, and whatever his animosity toward Lysias, could reproach him simply on the ground that he writes?

PHAEDRUS: What you say certainly makes that improbable, for apparently he would be reproaching what he wanted to do himself.

d SOCRATES: Then the conclusion is obvious, that there is nothing shameful in the mere writing of speeches.

PHAEDRUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: But in speaking and writing shamefully and badly, instead of as one should, that is where the shame comes in, I take it.

PHAEDRUS: Clearly.

SOCRATES: Then what is the nature of good writing and bad? Is it incumbent on us, Phaedrus, to examine Lysias on this point, and all such as have written or mean to write anything at all, whether in the field of public affairs or private, whether in the verse of the poet or the plain speech of prose?

e PHAEDRUS: Is it incumbent! Why, life itself would hardly be worth living save for pleasures like this—certainly not for those pleasures that involve previous pain, as do almost all concerned with the body, which for that reason are rightly called slavish.

SOCRATES: Well, I suppose we can spare the time, and I think too that the cicadas overhead, singing after their wont in the hot sun and conversing with one another, don't fail to observe us as well. So 259 if they were to see us two behaving like ordinary folk at midday, not conversing but dozing lazy-minded under their spell, they would very properly have the laugh of us, taking us for a pair of slaves that had invaded their retreat like sheep, to have their midday sleep beside the spring. If however they see us conversing and steering clear of their bewitching Siren song, they might feel respect for us and grant us b that boon which heaven permits them to confer upon mortals.

PHAEDRUS: Oh, what is that? I don't think I have heard of it.

SOCRATES: Surely it is unbecoming in a devotee of the Muses not to have heard of a thing like that! The story is that once upon a time these creatures were men—men of an age before there were any Muses—and that when the latter came into the world, and music made its appearance, some of the people of those days were so thrilled c with pleasure that they went on singing, and quite forgot to eat and drink until they actually died without noticing it. From them in due course sprang the race of cicadas, to which the Muses have granted the boon of needing no sustenance right from their birth, but of singing from the very first, without food or drink, until the day of their death, after which they go and report to the Muses how they severally are paid honor among mankind, and by whom. So for those whom d Muse's favor, for those that have worshiped in the rites of love the

favor of Erato, and so with all the others, according to the nature of the worship paid to each. To the eldest, Calliope, and to her next sister, Urania, they tell of those who live a life of philosophy and so do honor to the music of those twain whose theme is the heavens and all the story of gods and men, and whose song is the noblest of them all.

Thus there is every reason for us not to yield to slumber in the noontide, but to pursue our talk.

PHAEDRUS: Of course we must pursue it.

SOCRATES: Well, the subject we proposed for inquiry just now e was the nature of good and bad speaking and writing; so we are to inquire into that.

PHAEDRUS: Plainly.

SOCRATES: Then does not a good and successful discourse presuppose a knowledge in the mind of the speaker of the truth about his subject?

PHAEDRUS: As to that, dear Socrates, what I have heard is that the intending orator is under no necessity of understanding what is 260 truly just, but only what is likely to be thought just by the body of men who are to give judgment; nor need he know what is truly good or noble, but what will be thought so, since it is on the latter, not the former, that persuasion depends.

SOCRATES: 'Not to be lightly rejected,'<sup>4</sup> Phaedrus, is any word of the wise. Perhaps they are right; one has to see. And in particular this present assertion must not be dismissed.

PHAEDRUS: I agree.

SOCRATES: Well, here is my suggestion for discussion.

PHAEDRUS: Yes?

SOCRATES: Suppose I tried to persuade you to acquire a horse to b use in battle against the enemy, and suppose that neither of us knew what a horse was, but I knew this much about you, that Phaedrus believes a horse to be that tame animal which possesses the largest ears.

PHAEDRUS: A ridiculous thing to suppose, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Wait a moment. Suppose I continued to urge upon you in all seriousness, with a studied encomium of a donkey, that it was what I called it, a horse, that it was highly important for you to possess the creature, both at home and in the field, that it was just the animal to ride on into battle, and that it was handy, into the bargain, c for carrying your equipment and so forth.

PHAEDRUS: To go to that length would be utterly ridiculous.

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

PHAEDRUS: I suppose it is.

SOCRATES: Then when a master of oratory, who is ignorant of good and evil, employs his power of persuasion on a community as

<sup>4</sup> *Iliad* 2.361.



ignorant as himself, not by extolling a miserable donkey as being really a horse, but by extolling evil as being really good, and when by studying the beliefs of the masses he persuades them to do evil instead of good, what kind of crop do you think his oratory is likely to reap from the seed thus sown?

PHAEDRUS: A pretty poor one.

SOCRATES: Well now, my good friend, have we been too scurrilous in our abuse of the art of speech? Might it not retort, 'Why do you extraordinary people talk such nonsense? I never insist on ignorance of the truth on the part of one who would learn to speak; on the contrary, if my advice goes for anything, it is that he should only resort to me after he has come into possession of truth; what I do however pride myself on is that without my aid knowledge of what is true will get a man no nearer to mastering the art of persuasion.'

PHAEDRUS: And will not such a retort be just?

SOCRATES: Yes, if the arguments advanced against oratory sustain its claim to be an art. In point of fact, I fancy I can hear certain arguments advancing, and protesting that the claim is false, that it is no art, but a knack that has nothing to do with art, inasmuch as there is, as the Spartans put it, no 'soothfast' art of speech, nor assuredly will there ever be one, without a grasp of truth.

PHAEDRUS: We must have these arguments, Socrates. Come, bring them up before us, and examine their purport.

SOCRATES: Come hither then, you worthy creatures, and impress upon Phaedrus, who is so blessed in his offspring, that unless he gets on with his philosophy he will never get on as a speaker on any subject, and let Phaedrus be your respondent.

PHAEDRUS: I await their questions.

SOCRATES: Must not the art of rhetoric, taken as a whole, be a kind of influencing of the mind by means of words, not only in courts of law and other public gatherings, but in private places also? And must it not be the same art that is concerned with great issues and small, its right employment commanding no more respect when dealing with important matters than with unimportant? Is that what you have been told about it?

PHAEDRUS: No indeed, not exactly that. It is principally, I should say, to lawsuits that an art of speaking and writing is applied—and of course to public harangues also. I know of no wider application.

SOCRATES: What? Are you acquainted only with the 'Arts' or manuals of oratory by Nestor and Odysseus, which they composed in their leisure hours at Troy? Have you never heard of the work of Palamedes?

PHAEDRUS: No, upon my word, nor of Nestor either, unless you are casting Gorgias for the role of Nestor, with Odysseus played by Thrasymachus, or maybe Theodorus.

SOCRATES: Perhaps I am. But anyway we may let them be, and do you tell me, what is it that the contending parties in law courts do? Do they not in fact contend with words, or how else should we put it?

PHAEDRUS: That is just what they do.

SOCRATES: About what is just and unjust?

PHAEDRUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And he who possesses the art of doing this can make the same thing appear to the same people now just, now unjust, at will?

PHAEDRUS: To be sure.

SOCRATES: And in public harangues, no doubt, he can make the same things seem to the community now good, and now the reverse of good?

PHAEDRUS: Just so.

SOCRATES: Then can we fail to see that the Palamedes of Elea has an art of speaking, such that he can make the same things appear to his audience like and unlike, or one and many, or again at rest and in motion?

PHAEDRUS: Indeed he can.

SOCRATES: So contending with words is a practice found not only in lawsuits and public harangues but, it seems, wherever men speak we find this single art, if indeed it is an art, which enables people to make out everything to be like everything else, within the limits of possible comparison, and to expose the corresponding attempts of others who disguise what they are doing.

PHAEDRUS: How so, pray?

SOCRATES: I think that will become clear if we put the following question. Are we misled when the difference between two things is wide, or narrow?

PHAEDRUS: When it is narrow.

SOCRATES: Well then, if you shift your ground little by little, you are more likely to pass undetected from so-and-so to its opposite than if you do so at one bound.

PHAEDRUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: It follows that anyone who intends to mislead another, without being misled himself, must discern precisely the degree of resemblance and dissimilarity between this and that.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, that is essential.

SOCRATES: Then if he does not know the truth about a given thing, how is he going to discern the degree of resemblance between that unknown thing and other things?

PHAEDRUS: It will be impossible.

SOCRATES: Well now, when people hold beliefs contrary to fact, and are misled, it is plain that the error has crept into their minds through the suggestion of some similarity or other.

PHAEDRUS: That certainly does happen.

SOCRATES: But can anyone possibly master the art of using similarities for the purpose of bringing people round, and leading them away from the truth about this or that to the opposite of the truth, or again can anyone possibly avoid this happening to himself, unless he has knowledge of what the thing in question really is?

PHAEDRUS: No, never.

c SOCRATES: It would seem to follow, my friend, that the art of speech displayed by one who has gone chasing after beliefs, instead of knowing the truth, will be a comical sort of art, in fact no art at all.

PHAEDRUS: I dare say.

SOCRATES: Then would you like to observe some instances of what I call the presence and absence of art in that speech of Lysias which you are carrying, and in those which I have delivered?

PHAEDRUS: Yes, by all means. At present our discussion is somewhat abstract, for want of adequate illustrations.

d SOCRATES: Why, as to that it seems a stroke of luck that in the two speeches we have a sort of illustration of the way in which one who knows the truth can mislead his audience by playing an oratorical joke on them. I myself, Phaedrus, put that down to the local deities, or perhaps those mouthpieces of the Muses that are chirping over our heads have vouchsafed us their inspiration, for of course I don't lay claim to any oratorical skill myself.

PHAEDRUS: I dare say that is so, but please explain your point.

SOOCRATES: Well, come along, read the beginning of Lysias' speech.

e PHAEDRUS: 'You know how I am situated, and I have told you that I think it to our advantage that the thing should be done. Now I claim that I should not be refused what I ask simply because I am not your lover. Lovers repent when . . .'

SOOCRATES: Stop. Our business is to indicate where the speaker is at fault, and shows absence of art, isn't it?

263 PHAEDRUS: Yes.

SOOCRATES: Well now, is not the following assertion obviously true—that there are some words about which we all agree, and others about which we are at variance?

PHAEDRUS: I think I grasp your meaning, but you might make it still plainer.

SOOCRATES: When someone utters the word 'iron' or 'silver,' we all have the same object before our minds, haven't we?

PHAEDRUS: Certainly.

SOOCRATES: But what about the words 'just' and 'good'? Don't we diverge, and dispute not only with one another but with our own selves?

PHAEDRUS: Yes indeed.

b SOOCRATES: So in some cases we agree, and in others we don't.

PHAEDRUS: Quite so.

SOOCRATES: Now in which of the cases are we more apt to be misled, and in which is rhetoric more effective?

PHAEDRUS: Plainly in the case where we fluctuate.

SOOCRATES: Then the intending student of the art of rhetoric ought, in the first place, to make a systematic division of words, and get hold of some mark distinguishing the two kinds of words, those namely in the use of which the multitude are bound to fluctuate, and those in which they are not.

PHAEDRUS: To grasp that, Socrates, would certainly be an excellent piece of discernment.

SOOCRATES: And secondly, I take it, when he comes across a particular word he must realize what it is, and be swift to perceive which of the two kinds the thing he proposes to discuss really belongs to.

PHAEDRUS: To be sure.

SOOCRATES: Well then, shall we reckon love as one of the disputed terms, or as one of the other sort?

PHAEDRUS: As a disputed term, surely. Otherwise can you suppose it would have been possible for you to say of it what you said just now, namely that it is harmful both to the beloved and the lover, and then to turn round and say that it is really the greatest of goods?

SOOCRATES: An excellent point. But now tell me this, for thanks to my inspired condition I can't quite remember. Did I define love at the beginning of my speech?

PHAEDRUS: Yes indeed, and immensely thorough you were about it.

SOOCRATES: Upon my word, you rate the nymphs of Achelous and Pan, son of Hermes, much higher as artists in oratory than Lysias, son of Cephalus. Or am I quite wrong? Did Lysias at the beginning of his discourse on love compel us to conceive of it as a certain definite entity, with a meaning he had himself decided upon? And did he proceed to bring all his subsequent remarks, from first to last, into line with that meaning? Shall we read his first words once again?

PHAEDRUS: If you like, but what you are looking for isn't there.

SOOCRATES: Read it out, so that I can listen to the author himself.

PHAEDRUS: 'You know how I am situated, and I have told you that I think it to our advantage that the thing should be done. Now I claim that I should not be refused what I ask simply because I am not your lover. Lovers, when their craving is at an end, repent of such benefits as they have conferred.'

SOOCRATES: No, he doesn't seem to get anywhere near what we are looking for; he goes about it like a man swimming on his back, in reverse, and starts from the end instead of the beginning; his opening words are what the lover would naturally say to his boy only when he had finished. Or am I quite wrong, dear Phaedrus?

b PHAEDRUS: I grant you, Socrates, that the substance of his address is really a peroration.

SOCRATES: And to pass to other points, doesn't his matter strike you as thrown out at haphazard? Do you find any cogent reason for his next remark, or indeed any of his remarks, occupying the place it does? I myself, in my ignorance, thought that the writer, with a fine abandon, put down just what came into his head. Can you find any cogent principle of composition which he observed in setting down his observations in this particular order?

c PHAEDRUS: You flatter me in supposing that I am competent to see into his mind with all that accuracy.

SOCRATES: Well, there is one point at least which I think you will admit, namely that any discourse ought to be constructed like a living creature, with its own body, as it were; it must not lack either head or feet; it must have a middle and extremities so composed as to suit each other and the whole work.

PHAEDRUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: Then ask yourself whether that is or is not the case with your friend's speech. You will find that it is just like the epitaph said to have been carved on the tomb of Midas the Phrygian.

d PHAEDRUS: What is that, and what's wrong with it?

SOCRATES: It runs like this:

A maid of bronze I stand on Midas' tomb,  
So long as waters flow and trees grow tall,  
Abiding here on his lamented grave,  
I tell the traveler Midas here is laid.

e I expect you notice that it makes no difference what order the lines come in.

PHAEDRUS: Socrates, you are making a joke of our speech!

SOCRATES: Well, to avoid distressing you, let us say no more of that—though indeed I think it provides many examples which it would be profitable to notice, provided one were chary of imitating them—and let us pass to the other speeches, for they, I think, presented a certain feature which everyone desirous of examining oratory would do well to observe.

265 PHAEDRUS: To what do you refer?

SOCRATES: They were of opposite purport, one maintaining that the lover should be favored, the other the nonlover.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, they did so very manfully.

SOCRATES: I thought you were going to say—and with truth—madly, but that reminds me of what I was about to ask. We said, did we not, that love is a sort of madness?

PHAEDRUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And that there are two kinds of madness, one resulting from human ailments, the other from a divine disturbance of our conventions of conduct.

PHAEDRUS: Quite so.

b SOCRATES: And in the divine kind we distinguished four types, ascribing them to four gods: the inspiration of the prophet to Apollo, that of the mystic to Dionysus, that of the poet to the Muses, and a fourth type which we declared to be the highest, the madness of the lover, to Aphrodite and Eros. Moreover we painted, after a fashion, a picture of the lover's experience, in which perhaps we attained some degree of truth, though we may well have sometimes gone astray—the blend resulting in a discourse which had some claim to plausibility, or shall we say a mythical hymn of praise, in due religious c language, a festal celebration of my master and yours too, Phaedrus, that god of love who watches over the young and fair.

PHAEDRUS: It certainly gave me great pleasure to listen to it.

SOCRATES: Then let us take one feature of it, the way in which the discourse contrived to pass from censure to encomium.

PHAEDRUS: Well now, what do you make of that?

SOCRATES: For the most part I think our festal hymn has really been just a festive entertainment, but we did casually allude to a certain pair of procedures, and it would be very agreeable if we could d seize their significance in a scientific fashion.

PHAEDRUS: What procedures do you mean?

SOCRATES: The first is that in which we bring a dispersed plurality under a single form, seeing it all together—the purpose being to define so-and-so, and thus to make plain whatever may be chosen as the topic for exposition. For example, take the definition given just now of love. Whether it was right or wrong, at all events it was that which enabled our discourse to achieve lucidity and consistency.

PHAEDRUS: And what is the second procedure you speak of, Socrates?

e SOCRATES: The reverse of the other, whereby we are enabled to divide into forms, following the objective articulation; we are not to attempt to hack off parts like a clumsy butcher, but to take example from our two recent speeches. The single general form which they postulated was irrationality; next, on the analogy of a single natural 266 body with its pairs of like-named members, right arm or leg, as we say, and left, they conceived of madness as a single objective form existing in human beings. Wherefore the first speech divided off a part on the left, and continued to make divisions, never desisting until it discovered one particular part bearing the name of 'sinister' love, on which it very properly poured abuse. The other speech conducted us to the forms of madness which lay on the right-hand side, and upon discovering a type of love that shared its name with the other but was divine, displayed it to our view and extolled it as the source of the b greatest goods that can befall us.

PHAEDRUS: That is perfectly true.

SOCRATES: Believe me, Phaedrus, I am myself a lover of these divisions and collections, that I may gain the power to speak and to

think, and whenever I deem another man able to discern an objective unity and plurality, I follow 'in his footsteps where he leadeth as a god.'<sup>5</sup> Furthermore—whether I am right or wrong in doing so, God alone knows—it is those that have this ability whom for the present I call dialecticians.

c But now tell me what we ought to call them if we take instruction from Lysias and yourself. Or is what I have been describing precisely that art of oratory thanks to which Thrasymachus and the rest of them have not only made themselves masterly orators, but can do the same for anyone else who cares to bring offerings to these princes among men?

PHAEDRUS: Doubtless they behave like princes, but assuredly they do not possess the kind of knowledge to which you refer. No, I think you are right in calling the procedure that you have described dialectic, but we still seem to be in the dark about rhetoric.

d SOCRATES: What? Can there really be anything of value that admits of scientific acquisition despite the lack of that procedure? If so, you and I should certainly not disdain it, but should explain what this residuum of rhetoric actually consists in.

PHAEDRUS: Well, Socrates, of course there is plenty of matter in the rhetorical manuals.

SOCRATES: Thank you for the reminder. The first point, I suppose, is that a speech must begin with a preamble. You are referring, are you not, to such niceties of the art?

e PHAEDRUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And next comes exposition accompanied by direct evidence; thirdly, indirect evidence; fourthly, probabilities; besides which there are the proof and supplementary proof mentioned by the Byzantine master of rhetorical artifice.

PHAEDRUS: You mean the worthy Theodorus?

267 SOCRATES: Of course. And we are to have a refutation and supplementary refutation both for prosecution and defense. And can we leave the admirable Evenus of Paros out of the picture, the inventor of covert allusion and indirect compliment and, according to some accounts, of the indirect censure in mnemonic verse? A real master, that. But we won't disturb the rest of Tisias and Gorgias, who realized that probability deserves more respect than truth, who could make trifles seem important and important points trifles by the force of their b language, who dressed up novelties as antiques and vice versa, and found out how to argue concisely or at interminable length about anything and everything. This last accomplishment provoked Prodicus once to mirth when he heard me mention it; he remarked that he and he alone had discovered what sort of speeches the art demands—to wit, neither long ones nor short, but of fitting length.

<sup>5</sup> *Odyssey* 5.193.

PHAEDRUS: Masterly, Prodicus!

SOCRATES: Are we forgetting Hippias? I think Prodicus' view would be supported by the man of Elis.

PHAEDRUS: No doubt.

SOCRATES: And then Polus. What are we to say of his *Muses' Treasury of Phrases* with its reduplications and maxims and similes, c and of words à la Licymnius which that master made him a present of as a contribution to his fine writing?

PHAEDRUS: But didn't Protagoras in point of fact produce some such works, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Yes, my young friend, there is his *Correct Diction*, and many other excellent works. But to pass now to the application of pathetic language to the poor and aged, the master in that style seems to me to be the mighty man of Chalcedon, who was also expert at rousing a crowd to anger and then soothing them down again with his spells, to quote his own saying, while at casting aspersions and dissipating them, whatever their source, he was unbeatable. d

But to resume, on the way to conclude a speech there seems to be general agreement, though some call it recapitulation and others by some other name.

PHAEDRUS: You mean the practice of reminding the audience e toward the end of a speech of its main points?

SOCRATES: Yes. And now if you have anything further to add about the art of rhetoric . . .

PHAEDRUS: Only a few unimportant points.

SOCRATES: If they are unimportant, we may pass them over. 268 But let us look at what we have got in a clearer light, to see what power the art possesses, and when.

PHAEDRUS: A very substantial power, Socrates, at all events in large assemblies.

SOCRATES: Yes indeed. But have a look at it, my good sir, and see whether you discern some holes in the fabric, as I do.

PHAEDRUS: Do show them me.

SOCRATES: Well, look here. Suppose someone went up to your friend Eryximachus, or his father Acumenus, and said, 'I know how to apply such treatment to a patient's body as will induce warmth or coolness, as I choose; I can make him vomit, if I see fit, or go to stool, b and so on and so forth. And on the strength of this knowledge I claim to be a competent physician, and to make a competent physician of anyone to whom I communicate this knowledge.' What do you imagine they would have to say to that?

PHAEDRUS: They would ask him, of course, whether he also knew which patients ought to be given the various treatments, and when, and for how long.

SOCRATES: Then what if he said, 'Oh, no, but I expect my pupils to manage what you refer to by themselves'? c

PHAEDRUS: I expect they would say, 'The man is mad; he thinks he has made himself a doctor by picking up something out of a book, or coming across some common drug or other, without any real knowledge of medicine.'

SOCRATES: Now suppose someone went up to Sophocles or Euripides and said he knew how to compose lengthy dramatic speeches about a trifling matter, and quite short ones about a matter of moment, that he could write pathetic passages when he chose, or again passages of intimidation and menace, and so forth, and that he considered that by teaching these accomplishments he could turn a pupil into a tragic poet.

PHAEDRUS: I imagine that they too would laugh at anyone who supposed that you could make a tragedy otherwise than by so arranging such passages as to exhibit a proper relation to one another and to the whole of which they are parts.

SOCRATES: Still I don't think they would abuse him rudely, but rather treat him as a musician would treat a man who fancied himself to be a master of harmony simply because he knew how to produce the highest possible note and the lowest possible on his strings. The musician would not be so rude as to say, 'You miserable fellow, you're off your head,' but rather, in the gentler language befitting his profession. 'My good sir, it is true that one who proposes to become a master of harmony must know the things you speak of, but it is perfectly possible for one who has got as far as yourself to have not the slightest real knowledge of harmony. You are acquainted with what has to be learned before studying harmony, but of harmony itself you know nothing.'

PHAEDRUS: Perfectly true.

269 SOCRATES: Similarly then Sophocles would tell the man who sought to show off to himself and Euripides that what he knew was not tragic composition but its antecedents, and Acumenus would make the same distinction between medicine and the antecedents of medicine.

PHAEDRUS: I entirely agree.

SOCRATES: And if 'mellifluous'<sup>6</sup> Adrastus, or shall we say Pericles, were to hear of those admirable artifices that we were referring to just now—the brachylogies and imageries and all the rest of them, which we enumerated and deemed it necessary to examine in a clear light—are we to suppose that they would address those who practice and teach this sort of thing, under the name of the art of rhetoric, with the severity you and I displayed, and in rude, coarse language? Or would they, in their ampler wisdom, actually reproach us and say, 'Phaedrus and Socrates, you ought not to get angry, but to make allowances for such people; it is because they are ignorant of dialectic that they are incapable of properly defining rhetoric, and that in turn

<sup>6</sup> Tyrtaeus, fr. 9, 7.

leads them to imagine that by possessing themselves of the requisite antecedent learning they have discovered the art itself. And so they teach these antecedents to their pupils, and believe that that constitutes a complete instruction in rhetoric; they don't bother about employing the various artifices in such a way that they will be effective, or about organizing a work as a whole; that is for the pupils to see to for themselves when they come to make speeches.'

PHAEDRUS: Well yes, Socrates, I dare say that does more or less describe what the teachers and writers in question regard as the art of rhetoric; personally I think what you say is true. But now by what means and from what source can one attain the art of the true rhetorician, the real master of persuasion?

SOCRATES: If you mean how can one become a finished performer, then probably—indeed I might say undoubtedly—it is the same as with anything else. If you have an innate capacity for rhetoric, you will become a famous rhetorician, provided you also acquire knowledge and practice, but if you lack any of these three you will be correspondingly unfinished. As regards the art itself, as distinct from the artist, I fancy that the line of approach adopted by Lysias and Thrasymachus is not the one I have in view.

PHAEDRUS: Then what is?

SOCRATES: I am inclined to think, my good friend, that it was not surprising that Pericles became the most finished exponent of rhetoric there has ever been.

PHAEDRUS: Why so?

SOCRATES: All the great arts need supplementing by a study of nature; your artist must cultivate garrulity and high-flown speculation; from that source alone can come the mental elevation and thoroughly finished execution of which you are thinking, and that is what Pericles acquired to supplement his inborn capacity. He came across the right sort of man, I fancy, in Anaxagoras, and by enriching himself with high speculation and coming to recognize the nature of wisdom and folly—on which topics of course Anaxagoras was always discoursing—he drew from that source and applied to the art of rhetoric what was suitable thereto.

PHAEDRUS: How do you mean?

SOCRATES: Rhetoric is in the same case as medicine, don't you think?

PHAEDRUS: How so?

SOCRATES: In both cases there is a nature that we have to determine, the nature of body in the one, and of soul in the other, if we mean to be scientific and not content with mere empirical routine when we apply medicine and diet to induce health and strength, or words and rules of conduct to implant such convictions and virtues as we desire.

PHAEDRUS: You are probably right, Socrates.

c SOCRATES: Then do you think it possible to understand the nature of the soul satisfactorily without taking it as a whole?

PHAEDRUS: If we are to believe Hippocrates, the Asclepiad, we can't understand even the body without such a procedure.

SOCRATES: No, my friend, and he is right. But we must not just rely on Hippocrates; we must examine the assertion and see whether it accords with the truth.

PHAEDRUS: Yes.

d SOCRATES: Then what is it that Hippocrates and the truth have to say on this matter of nature? I suggest that the way to reflect about the nature of anything is as follows: first, to decide whether the object in respect of which we desire to have scientific knowledge, and to be able to impart it to others, is simple or complex; secondly, if it is simple, to inquire what natural capacity it has of acting upon another thing, and through what means; or by what other thing, and through what means, it can be acted upon; or, if it is complex, to enumerate its parts and observe in respect of each what we observe in the case of the simple object, to wit what its natural capacity, active or passive, consists in.

PHAEDRUS: Perhaps so, Socrates.

e SOCRATES: Well, at all events, to pursue an inquiry without doing so would be like a blind man's progress. Surely we mustn't make out that any sort of scientific inquirer resembles a blind or deaf person. No, it is plain that if we are to address people scientifically, we shall show them precisely what is the real and true nature of that object on which our discourse is brought to bear. And that object, I take it, is the soul.

PHAEDRUS: To be sure.

271 SOCRATES: Hence the speaker's whole effort is concentrated on that, for it is there that he is attempting to implant conviction. Isn't that so?

PHAEDRUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then it is plain that Thrasymachus, or anyone else who seriously proffers a scientific rhetoric, will, in the first place, describe the soul very precisely, and let us see whether it is single and uniform in nature or, analogously to the body, complex. For to do that is, we maintain, to show a thing's nature.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, undoubtedly.

SOCRATES: And secondly he will describe what natural capacity it has to act upon what, and through what means, or by what it can be acted upon.

PHAEDRUS: Quite so.

b SOCRATES: Thirdly, he will classify the types of discourse and the types of soul, and the various ways in which souls are affected, explaining the reasons in each case, suggesting the type of speech appropriate to each type of soul, and showing what kind of speech can be

relied on to create belief in one soul and disbelief in another, and why.

PHAEDRUS: I certainly think that would be an excellent procedure.

SOCRATES: Yes, in fact I can assure you, my friend, that no other scientific method of treating either our present subject or any other will ever be found, whether in the models of the schools or in speeches actually delivered. But the present-day authors of manuals of rhetoric, of whom you have heard, are cunning folk who know all about the soul but keep their knowledge out of sight. So don't let us admit their claim to write scientifically until they compose their speeches and writings in the way we have indicated.

PHAEDRUS: And what way is that?

SOCRATES: To give the actual words would be troublesome, but I am quite ready to say how one ought to compose if he means to be as scientific as possible.

PHAEDRUS: Then please do.

SOCRATES: Since the function of oratory is in fact to influence men's souls, the intending orator must know what types of soul there are. Now these are of a determinate number, and their variety results in a variety of individuals. To the types of soul thus discriminated there corresponds a determinate number of types of discourse. Hence a certain type of hearer will be easy to persuade by a certain type of speech to take such and such action for such and such reason, while another type will be hard to persuade. All this the orator must fully understand, and next he must watch it actually occurring, exemplified in men's conduct, and must cultivate a keenness of perception in following it, if he is going to get any advantage out of the previous instruction that he was given in the school. And when he is competent to say what type of man is susceptible to what kind of discourse; when, further, he can, on catching sight of so-and-so, tell himself, 'That is the man, that character now actually before me is the one I heard about in school, and in order to persuade him of so-and-so I have to apply these arguments in this fashion'; and when, on top of all this, he has further grasped the right occasions for speaking and for keeping quiet, and has come to recognize the right and the wrong time for the brachylogy, the pathetic passage, the exacerbation, and all the rest of his accomplishments—then and not till then has he well and truly achieved the art. But if in his speaking or teaching or writing he fails in any of these requirements, he may tell you that he has the art of speech, but one mustn't believe all one is told.

And now maybe our author will say, 'Well, what of it, Phaedrus and Socrates? Do you agree with me, or should we accept some other account of the art of speech?'

PHAEDRUS: Surely we can't accept any other, Socrates; still it does seem a considerable business.

SOCRATES: You are right, and that makes it necessary

thoroughly to overhaul all our arguments, and see whether there is some easier and shorter way of arriving at the art; we don't want to waste effort in going off on a long rough road, when we might take a short smooth one. But if you can help us at all through what you have heard from Lysias or anyone else, do try to recall it.

PHAEDRUS: As far as trying goes, I might, but I can suggest nothing on the spur of the moment.

SOCRATES: Then would you like me to tell you something I have heard from those concerned with these matters?

PHAEDRUS: Why, yes.

SOCRATES: Anyhow, Phaedrus, we are told that even the devil's advocate ought to be heard.

PHAEDRUS: Then you can put his case.

SOCRATES: Well, they tell us that there is no need to make such a solemn business of it, or fetch such a long compass on an uphill road. As we remarked at the beginning of this discussion, there is, they maintain, absolutely no need for the budding orator to concern himself with the truth about what is just or good conduct, nor indeed about who are just and good men whether by nature or education. In the law courts nobody cares a rap for the truth about these matters, but only about what is plausible. And that is the same as what is probable, and is what must occupy the attention of the would-be master of the art of speech. Even actual facts ought sometimes not to be stated, if they don't tally with probability; they should be replaced by what is probable, whether in prosecution or defense; whatever you say, you simply must pursue this probability they talk of, and can say good-bye to the truth forever. Stick to that all through your speech, and you are equipped with the art complete.

PHAEDRUS: Your account, Socrates, precisely reproduces what is said by those who claim to be experts in the art of speech. I remember that we did touch briefly on this sort of contention a while ago, and the professionals regard it as a highly important point.

SOCRATES: Very well then, take Tisias himself; you have thumbed him carefully, so let Tisias tell us this. Does he maintain that the probable is anything other than that which commends itself to the multitude?

PHAEDRUS: How could it be anything else?

SOCRATES: Then in consequence, it would seem, of that profound scientific discovery he laid down that if a weak but brave man is arrested for assaulting a strong but cowardly one, whom he has robbed of his cloak or some other garment, neither of them ought to state the true facts; the coward should say that the brave man didn't assault him singlehanded, and the brave man should contend that there were only the two of them, and then have recourse to the famous plea, 'How could a little fellow like me have attacked a big fellow like him?' Upon which the big fellow will not avow his own poltroon-

ery but will try to invent some fresh lie which will probably supply his opponent with a means of refuting him. And similar 'scientific' rules are given for other cases of the kind. Isn't that so, Phaedrus?

PHAEDRUS: To be sure.

SOCRATES: Bless my soul! It appears that he made a brilliant discovery of a buried art, your Tisias, or whoever it really was and whatever he is pleased to be called after. But, my friend, shall we or shall we not say to him . . .

PHAEDRUS: Say what?

SOCRATES: This. 'In point of fact, Tisias, we have for some time before you came on the scene been saying that the multitude get their notion of probability as the result of a likeness to truth, and we explained just now that these likenesses can always be best discovered by one who knows the truth. Therefore if you have anything else to say about the art of speech, we should be glad to hear it, but if not we shall adhere to the point we made just now, namely that unless the aspirant to oratory can on the one hand list the various natures among his prospective audiences, and on the other divide things into their kinds and embrace each individual thing under a single form, he will never attain such success as is within the grasp of mankind. Yet he will assuredly never acquire such competence without considerable diligence, which the wise man should exert not for the sake of speaking to and dealing with his fellow men, but that he may be able to speak what is pleasing to the gods, and in all his dealings to do their pleasure to the best of his ability. For you see, Tisias, what we are told by those wiser than ourselves is true, that a man of sense ought never to study the gratification of his fellow slaves, save as a minor consideration, but that of his most excellent masters. So don't be surprised that we have to make a long detour; it is because the goal is glorious, though not the goal you think of.' Not but what those lesser objects also, if you would have them, can best be attained, so our argument assures us, as a consequence of the greater.

PHAEDRUS: Your project seems to be excellent, Socrates, if only one could carry it out.

SOCRATES: Well, when a man sets his hand to something good, it is good that he should take what comes to him.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, of course.

SOCRATES: Then we may feel that we have said enough about the art of speech, both the true art and the false?

PHAEDRUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: But there remains the question of propriety and impropriety in writing, that is to say the conditions which make it proper or improper. Isn't that so?

PHAEDRUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Now do you know how we may best please God, in practice and in theory, in this matter of words?

PHAEDRUS: No indeed. Do you?

c SOCRATES: I can tell you the tradition that has come down from our forefathers, but they alone know the truth of it. However, if we could discover that for ourselves, should we still be concerned with the fancies of mankind?

PHAEDRUS: What a ridiculous question! But tell me the tradition you speak of.

SOCRATES: Very well. The story is that in the region of Naucratis in Egypt there dwelt one of the old gods of the country, the god to whom the bird called Ibis is sacred, his own name being Theuth. He d it was that invented number and calculation, geometry and astronomy, not to speak of draughts and dice, and above all writing. Now the king of the whole country at that time was Thamus, who dwelt in the great city of Upper Egypt which the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes, while Thamus they call Ammon. To him came Theuth, and revealed his arts, saying that they ought to be passed on to the Egyptians in general. Thamus asked what was the use of them all, and when e Theuth explained, he condemned what he thought the bad points and praised what he thought the good. On each art, we are told, Thamus had plenty of views both for and against; it would take too long to give them in detail. But when it came to writing Theuth said, 'Here, O king, is a branch of learning that will make the people of Egypt wiser and improve their memories; my discovery provides a recipe for memory and wisdom.' But the king answered and said, 'O man full of arts, to one it is given to create the things of art, and to another to judge what measure of harm and of profit they have for those that shall employ 275 them. And so it is that you, by reason of your tender regard for the writing that is your offspring, have declared the very opposite of its true effect. If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder. And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples, but only its semblance, for by telling them of many things without teaching them you will make them b seem to know much, while for the most part they know nothing, and as men filled, not with wisdom, but with the conceit of wisdom, they will be a burden to their fellows.'

PHAEDRUS: It is easy for you, Socrates, to make up tales from Egypt or anywhere else you fancy.

c SOCRATES: Oh, but the authorities of the temple of Zeus at Dodona, my friend, said that the first prophetic utterances came from an oak tree. In fact the people of those days, lacking the wisdom of you young people, were content in their simplicity to listen to trees or rocks, provided these told the truth. For you apparently it makes a difference who the speaker is, and what country he comes from; you don't merely ask whether what he says is true or false.

PHAEDRUS: I deserve your rebuke, and I agree that the man of Thebes is right in what he said about writing.

SOCRATES: Then anyone who leaves behind him a written manual, and likewise anyone who takes it over from him, on the supposition that such writing will provide something reliable and permanent, must be exceedingly simple-minded; he must really be ignorant of Ammon's utterance, if he imagines that written words can do anything more than remind one who knows that which the writing is concerned with. d

PHAEDRUS: Very true.

SOCRATES: You know, Phaedrus, that's the strange thing about writing, which makes it truly analogous to painting. The painter's products stand before us as though they were alive, but if you question them, they maintain a most majestic silence. It is the same with written words; they seem to talk to you as though they were intelligent, but if you ask them anything about what they say, from a desire to be instructed, they go on telling you just the same thing forever. And once a thing is put in writing, the composition, whatever it may e be, drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it, but equally of those who have no business with it; it doesn't know how to address the right people, and not address the wrong. And when it is ill-treated and unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its help, being unable to defend or help itself.

PHAEDRUS: Once again you are perfectly right.

SOCRATES: But now tell me, is there another sort of discourse, 276 that is brother to the written speech, but of unquestioned legitimacy? Can we see how it originates, and how much better and more effective it is than the other?

PHAEDRUS: What sort of discourse have you now in mind, and what is its origin?

SOCRATES: The sort that goes together with knowledge, and is written in the soul of the learner, that can defend itself, and knows to whom it should speak and to whom it should say nothing.

PHAEDRUS: You mean no dead discourse, but the living speech, the original of which the written discourse may fairly be called a kind of image.

SOCRATES: Precisely. And now tell me this. If a sensible farmer b had some seeds to look after and wanted them to bear fruit, would he with serious intent plant them during the summer in a garden of Adonis, and enjoy watching it producing fine fruit within eight days? If he did so at all, wouldn't it be in a holiday spirit, just by way of pastime? For serious purposes wouldn't he behave like a scientific farmer, sow his seeds in suitable soil, and be well content if they came to maturity within eight months?

c PHAEDRUS: I think we may distinguish as you say, Socrates, between what the farmer would do seriously and what he would do in a different spirit.



SOCRATES: And are we to maintain that he who has knowledge of what is just, honorable, and good has less sense than the farmer in dealing with his seeds?

PHAEDRUS: Of course not.

SOCRATES: Then it won't be with serious intent that he writes them in water' or that black fluid we call ink, using his pen to sow words that can't either speak in their own defense or present the truth adequately.

PHAEDRUS: It certainly isn't likely.

d SOCRATES: No, it is not. He will sow his seed in literary gardens, I take it, and write when he does write by way of pastime, collecting a store of refreshment both for his own memory, against the day 'when age oblivious comes,' and for all such as tread in his footsteps, and he will take pleasure in watching the tender plants grow up. And when other men resort to other pastimes, regaling themselves with drinking parties and suchlike, he will doubtless prefer to indulge in the recreation I refer to.

e PHAEDRUS: And what an excellent one it is, Socrates! How far superior to the other sort is the recreation that a man finds in words, when he discourses about justice and the other topics you speak of.

SOCRATES: Yes indeed, dear Phaedrus. But far more excellent, I think, is the serious treatment of them, which employs the art of dialectic. The dialectician selects a soul of the right type, and in it he plants and sows his words founded on knowledge, words which can  
277 defend both themselves and him who planted them, words which instead of remaining barren contain a seed whence new words grow up in new characters, whereby the seed is vouchsafed immortality, and its possessor the fullest measure of blessedness that man can attain unto.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, that is a far more excellent way.

SOCRATES: Then now that that has been settled, Phaedrus, we can proceed to the other point.

PHAEDRUS: What is that?

b SOCRATES: The point that we wanted to look into before we arrived at our present conclusion. Our intention was to examine the reproach leveled against Lysias on the score of speech writing, and therewith the general question of speech writing and what does and does not make it an art. Now I think we have pretty well cleared up the question of art.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, we did think so, but please remind me how we did it.

SOCRATES: The conditions to be fulfilled are these. First, you must know the truth about the subject that you speak or write about; that is to say, you must be able to isolate it in definition, and having so defined it you must next understand how to divide it into kinds, until you reach the limit of division; secondly, you must have a correspond-

ing discernment of the nature of the soul, discover the type of speech appropriate to each nature, and order and arrange your discourse accordingly, addressing a variegated soul in a variegated style that ranges over the whole gamut of tones, and a simple soul in a simple style. All this must be done if you are to become competent, within human limits, as a scientific practitioner of speech, whether you propose to expound or to persuade. Such is the clear purport of all our foregoing discussion.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, that was undoubtedly how we came to see the matter.

SOCRATES: And now to revert to our other question, whether the delivery and composition of speeches is honorable or base, and in what circumstances they may properly become a matter of reproach, our earlier conclusions have, I think, shown . . .

PHAEDRUS: Which conclusions?

SOCRATES: They have shown that any work, in the past or in the future, whether by Lysias or anyone else, whether composed in a private capacity or in the role of a public man who by proposing a law becomes the author of a political composition, is a matter of reproach to its author—whether or no the reproach is actually voiced—if he regards it as containing important truth of permanent validity. For ignorance of what is a waking vision and what is a mere dream image of justice and injustice, good and evil, cannot truly be acquitted of involving reproach, even if the mass of men extol it.

PHAEDRUS: No indeed.

SOCRATES: On the other hand, if a man believes that a written discourse on any subject is bound to contain much that is fanciful, that nothing that has ever been written whether in verse or prose merits much serious attention—and for that matter nothing that has ever been spoken in the declamatory fashion which aims at mere persuasion without any questioning or exposition—that in reality such compositions are, at the best, a means of reminding those who know the truth, that lucidity and completeness and serious importance belong only to those lessons on justice and honor and goodness that are expounded and set forth for the sake of instruction, and are veritably written in the soul of the listener, and that such discourses as these ought to be accounted a man's own legitimate children—a title to be applied primarily to such as originate within the man himself, and secondarily to such of their sons and brothers as have grown up aright in the souls of other men—the man, I say, who believes this, and disdains all manner of discourse other than this, is, I would venture to affirm, the man whose example you and I would pray that we might follow.

PHAEDRUS: My own wishes and prayers are most certainly to that effect.

SOCRATES: Then we may regard our literary pastime as having

reached a satisfactory conclusion. Do you now go and tell Lysias that we two went down to the stream where is the holy place of the nymphs, and there listened to words which charged us to deliver a message, first to Lysias and all other composers of discourses, secondly to Homer and all others who have written poetry whether to be read or sung, and thirdly to Solon and all such as are authors of political compositions under the name of laws—to wit, that if any of them has done his work with a knowledge of the truth, can defend his statements when challenged, and can demonstrate the inferiority of his writings out of his own mouth, he ought not to be designated by a name drawn from those writings, but by one that indicates his serious pursuit.

PHAEDRUS: Then what names would you assign him?

SOCRATES: To call him wise, Phaedrus, would, I think be going too far; the epithet is proper only to a god. A name that would fit him better, and have more seemliness, would be 'lover of wisdom,' or something similar.

PHAEDRUS: Yes, that would be quite in keeping.

SOCRATES: On the other hand, one who has nothing to show of more value than the literary works on whose phrases he spends hours, twisting them this way and that, pasting them together and pulling them apart, will rightly, I suggest, be called a poet or speech writer or law writer.

PHAEDRUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: Then that is what you must tell your friend.

PHAEDRUS: But what about yourself? What are you going to do? You too have a friend who should not be passed over.

SOCRATES: Who is that?

PHAEDRUS: The fair Isocrates. What will be your message to him, Socrates, and what shall we call him?

SOCRATES: Isocrates is still young, Phaedrus, but I don't mind telling you the future I prophesy for him.

PHAEDRUS: Oh, what is that?

SOCRATES: It seems to me that his natural powers give him a superiority over anything that Lysias has achieved in literature, and also that in point of character he is of a nobler composition; hence it would not surprise me if with advancing years he made all his literary predecessors look like very small-fry—that is, supposing him to persist in the actual type of writing in which he engages at present—still more so, if he should become dissatisfied with such work, and a sublimer impulse lead him to do greater things. For that mind of his, Phaedrus, contains an innate tincture of philosophy.

Well then, there's the report I convey from the gods of this place to Isocrates my beloved, and there's yours for your beloved Lysias.

PHAEDRUS: So be it. But let us be going, now that it has become less oppressively hot.

SOCRATES: Oughtn't we first to offer a prayer to the divinities here?

PHAEDRUS: To be sure.

SOCRATES: Dear Pan, and all ye other gods that dwell in this place, grant that I may become fair within, and that such outward things as I have may not war against the spirit within me. May I count him rich who is wise, and as for gold, may I possess so much of it as only a temperate man might bear and carry with him.

Is there anything more we can ask for, Phaedrus? The prayer contents me.

PHAEDRUS: Make it a prayer for me too, since friends have all things in common.

SOCRATES: Let us be going.