

and good. The doctrine of eternal Forms itself (never argued but taken for granted, 65 d) and the theory of recollection are ancillary to this, and the need to make the soul's tendance our paramount consideration is no more than an important consequence (107c). To persuade us of it Plato uses every possible approach, and two in particular, as Olympiodorus¹ said: 'the one mythical and Orphic, the other dialectical and philosophic'. The inadequacy (from today's standpoint) and 'foreignness' of the reasoning must always militate against a definitive interpretation. Reading the literature only shows how equally good scholars can disagree about the arguments because of our alien ways of thinking. In Plato's way, logic and philosophical method, still at an early stage, are nowhere treated for their own sake, but must be extracted from an amalgam of ontology, theory of causation, exhortation and consolation. Scarcely any philosophical work has been subjected to such gruelling, word-for-word inquisition,² yet we might do well to emulate the hesitation which Socrates's friends felt in pressing their counter-arguments on such an occasion (84d). For Plato, one of the most powerful ingredients of the 'charm' was undoubtedly the calm, humorous confidence with which Socrates left the world behind him on that day. 'Bury me as you like, Crito, if you can catch me. . . I'm afraid Crito has been deaf to what I have been saying to console you and myself, that when I drink the poison I shall not remain with you [as a corpse] but be off to share the joys of the blessed.'

Very tentatively I would go further. We know by now how carefully Plato selects the circumstances and characters of a dialogue to fit the kind of arguments he wants to use. If he chose at this time to make Socrates expound the doctrine of Forms and a conception of the soul in a talk on the day of his death, with friends and sympathizers ready to meet him half way, rather than in, say, paternal, maieutic discussion with a young boy or argument with a Sophist, this was because they were for him articles of semi-religious belief: he is convinced of their truth, but not yet ready to offer full dialectical proof. Both these

¹ In *Ph.* pp. 1 and 17 Norvin. See Frank, *P. u. sog. Pyth.* 293.

² An example is the 38½ pp. of K. W. Mills in *Phron.* 1957 and 1958 on 74b7-c6. H. Erbse, in a sympathetic article (*Phron.* 1969), illustrates the mistake of those who 'condemn P. without basing themselves on the groundwork of his own presuppositions' (p. 101).

central doctrines appear later in a changed form which takes account of some of the reasoned objections to which they are here open. As dialectic progresses, the field of mythical expression is reduced, and the philosopher's aim is to reduce it as far as possible; but unlike his greatest pupil he would never deny that there are some truths, and those the greatest, which can never be demonstrated by the methods of dialectical reasoning. At no stage would he have called myths 'sophisms' and dismissed them as 'not worth serious consideration'.¹

(2) THE SYMPOSIUM²

Date. A *terminus post quem* is generally thought to be furnished by the words 'as the Arcadians were split up by the Spartans' (193a), regarded as an anachronistic reference to the dispersion of the Mantineans in 385. To put it soon after this accords with another general impression, that in feeling it is close to the *Phaedo*. This depends, however, on what one thinks of Plato's attitude to immortality in the *Symposium* (pp. 387-92 below). In subject-matter it is closest to the *Phaedrus*, and almost certainly earlier. Xenophon's *Symposium* is a very different work, and there is not much point in prolonging the controversy over which came first.³

Dramatic date. The scene of the main narrative is the dinner given to his friends by the tragic poet Agathon when he won the prize

¹ Arist., *Metaph.* 1000a18. These remarks on P.'s attitude to myth are amplified in my *OGR* 239f.

² Extensive bibliographies will be found in Capelle's revision of Apelt's ed. (1960, compiled by Wilpert) and Rosen (1968).

³ Wilamowitz (*Pl.* I, 372 n. 1; II, 176-8) argued, against the general assumption of an anachronism, that 193a referred to events of 418. This view, revived by Mattingley in 1958, was again opposed in detail by Dover, *Phron.* 1965. For earlier views see Robin, *TPA* 55-63. Because he thinks *Symp.* excludes immortality, Morrison (*CQ* 1964, 43-6) would even put it before *Gorg.*, *Meno* and the first Italian visit, which I find improbable. On its relation to *Phaedrus* (Robin, *TPA* 63-109) Bury changed his mind between his first and second editions. Apart from their general subject-matter, he noted over a dozen more or less similar short passages in both dialogues (p. lxvii n. 2). There is something to be said too for the view expressed by Bernhardt as 'le Banquet prélude au Phédon' (*P. et Mat. Anc.* 211). Tredennick (*Xen's. Mem. and Symp.* 19) thinks Dover in *Phron.* 1965, 9-16, has settled the priority of P. over Xen. (See also vol. III, 342 with n. 2.) This would settle a controversy of (on Dover's own statement) over 160 years, on which e.g. Robin (Budé ed. cix-cxv) could only pronounce a 'non liquet'. On Xenophon's *Symp.* in general see vol. III, 340-4.

with Phaedrus, and some have seen deep significance in this order.¹ I doubt if Plato was troubling himself much about it. Aristodemus himself was placed next to Eryximachus (175a), i.e. between him and Agathon, yet he makes no mention of either speaking or being excused, and between Phaedrus and Pausanias were 'several others' whose speeches are not recorded.

The dialogue

(The reported and direct dramatic forms are so interwoven that one cannot assign it to one or the other. For the prologue, see above, pp. 365f.)

Introduction (172a-178a). Aristodemus the eye-witness narrator met Socrates looking unusually clean and well dressed and learned that he was going to a private dinner-party of Agathon's on the evening after the public celebration of his theatrical triumph. S. suggested that Aristodemus should come with him, and he would take responsibility for the invitation. However, on the way, struck by some thought, he stopped, telling Aristodemus not to wait for him, and Aristodemus was in the embarrassing position of arriving alone. However, Agathon courteously invited him to join the rest, and learning what had happened, sent a servant to look for S. On hearing that he was standing in a neighbour's porch and would not budge, he was for using stronger measures, but Aristodemus dissuaded him; this was a way S. had, and he would come in his own time.²

When he came in half-way through the meal, Agathon placed him next to himself, and after some friendly banter between them,³ S. addressed himself to his dinner. After the post-prandial ceremonies, when the *symposion* proper began, Pausanias suggested that since they were all suffering from the effects of the previous day's public celebrations, the drinking should be moderate and voluntary. This

¹ Rosen 31f. criticizes the attempts of Isenberg, *Order of Discourses* etc. and Plochmann, *Hiccups*. Cf. also Wilamowitz, *Pl.* 1, 367, on P.'s superiority to such considerations.

² On this habit of withdrawal, of which Alcibiades at 220c-d gives a more striking example, see vol. III, 404f. Here the fit of abstraction is said to have lasted 'quite a short time for him'.

³ On Agathon's suggestion that he might absorb S.'s wisdom by physical contact, see vol. III, 400f.

being agreed, Eryximachus proposed that they dismiss the flute-girl and entertain themselves with talk. Each in turn shall deliver an encomium on Eros, god of love, beginning with Phaedrus (who is the real 'father' of the proposal through his constant complaints to Eryximachus that Eros never gets his due).¹ Socrates ('expert in matters of love alone') enthusiastically agrees, as do the others, and Phaedrus begins.

Speech of Phaedrus (178a-180b). Eros is the oldest and most reverend of the gods, and brings out all that is best in a man. There is no one by whom a lover would be so ashamed to be seen in any cowardly, mean or disgraceful action as by his beloved. Only lovers will sacrifice life itself for another - women as well as men, as witness Alcestis, whereas Orpheus failed to regain Eurydice because his love was not strong enough to face death. Such sacrifice is even more admired by the gods if it be offered by the beloved, as when Achilles accepted death to avenge and join Patroclus, for he has not, like his lover, the inspiration afforded by divine possession.

Speech of Pausanias (180c-185c). Which Eros am I to praise? Since there are two Aphrodites of different parentage, the Heavenly and the Vulgar or Popular (Pandemos), there must be two Eroses. Love, like every other activity, is either good or bad according to the way it is practised. The son of Aphrodite Pandemos is indeed vulgar, standing for physical rather than spiritual love, of women as much as boys, and even preferring the object of its passion to be stupid. The other Eros comes from Heavenly Aphrodite who, being motherless, has nothing about her of the female. He presides over love of males, not wanton or promiscuous sensual desire but an attachment to those already reaching years of discretion, based on intellectual sympathy and forming the foundation for a lifelong association. Connexions with young boys, which can only be for passing pleasure, should be forbidden by law.

Some Greek states encourage love between males, others like the Ionians forbid it, under Oriental influence; for Oriental rulers are

¹ On the justice of this complaint see Gould, *PL* 24.

tyrants, who regard strong personal attachments as a threat to their power, like intellectual and athletic achievement. It is not to the credit of a country that the indulgence of a lover should be either condemned wholesale or approved unreservedly. The complex Athenian attitude is better. On the one hand a lover has no need to conceal his passion, especially if its object be worthy, and behaviour which in other contexts would be reprehensible, even perjury, is condoned on the ground that his aim is a noble one. When we see however that tutors are strictly charged by fathers to allow a boy no communication with a lover, and that the contemporaries of such a boy will insult him unrebuked, we might suppose that love is thought disgraceful. In fact, as I say, it is in itself neither good nor bad, but depends for its worth on the way it is practised. The object of our tradition is to test the lover, whether he be of the sensual, inconstant type which should be rejected, or one who will be a true friend to the object of his love, and assist his advance in goodness and wisdom. Only to such a one is it right to yield. Therefore a youth must yield neither quickly, before time has tested the character of his lover, nor from motives of fear, greed, ambition, or anything else but desire for moral and intellectual improvement. This is the Heavenly Eros, all other is the Vulgar.

Aristophanes has hiccups (185c–e). It was now the turn of Aristophanes, but he had hiccups, so he turned to his medical neighbour and said, 'Eryximachus, you must either cure my hiccups or take my turn to speak.' 'I will do both', said E., and having prescribed a remedial procedure, began as follows.

Speech of Eryximachus (185e–188e). Pausanias was right to mention the duality of Eros, but he did not bring out what my medical education has taught me, that his influence is not confined to human beings, but universal. Take medicine itself. Healthy and sick bodies have contrary desires; and just as Pausanias said one must gratify good men and refuse the base, a good doctor must gratify the good and healthy parts of the body and deny the morbid. Medicine is entirely within the province of Eros, since its function is to unite

in love and harmony the most hostile elements in the body – that is, the opposites hot and cold, bitter and sweet, wet and dry etc. Similarly music exhibits understanding of love in the sphere of high and low notes and slow and fast rhythms (which is probably what Heraclitus meant to say, though he put it badly). The same is true of physical training and agriculture, and the weather too.¹ Under the influence of the good Eros the elements are temperate and health-giving, but when the wanton Eros controls them, their disorderly arrogance brings plague and sickness on animals and plants alike. In religion too Eros is at work, indeed he is everywhere omnipotent. The good Eros is the greater, who brings self-control and justice and is responsible for our happiness and harmonious relations with each other and the gods. The lower one should only be indulged cautiously and without excess.

Aristophanes had now cured his hiccups by the last of Eryximachus's prescriptions, the sneeze, and after asking Aristophanically whether it can really be the good love in his body that demands such noise and irritation, and being warned against making such jokes if he wants his speech to be taken seriously, he began.

Speech of Aristophanes (189a–193d). To understand the power of Eros, and how much we are indebted to him, one must know the nature and history of mankind. Originally there were three sexes, male, female and hermaphrodite. Individuals were round in shape, back and sides forming a circle – with four arms and four legs, one head with two faces and four ears, two sets of reproductive organs and everything else to match. They walked upright, but to run fast they simply turned cartwheels, using all eight limbs. Males sprang from the sun, females from the earth, and hermaphrodites from the moon – hence the circular² shape – and in the pride of their strength they attacked the gods. In this dilemma (for to destroy the race would

¹ The effect on character of the various musical modes (ἁρμονίαι), in which P. strongly believed, is elaborated in the *Rep.* (398c ff.). On E.'s quotation here of Heraclitus fr. 51 see vol. 1, 436f.

² Round is στρογγύλος, circle κύκλος, circular περιφερής. Morrison in *Phron.* 1959, 108f., argues with some plausibility that these beings were not spherical as editors and translators have usually assumed (though this does not prove his case against the sphericity of the earth in *Phaedo*, for which see p. 366 n. 1 above).

deprive them of sacrifice and worship) Zeus had an idea. To weaken men without destroying them he sliced each in half like a hard-boiled egg, leaving them only two legs to walk on, with the threat of further bisection if they did not behave. Then Apollo, on his orders, turned the faces round to the cut side, pulled the skin together and tied it in the middle, forming the navel.

This done, each half was seized with such longing to be re-joined to its fellow that they spent all their time locked in embraces and were dying of starvation and inertia, until Zeus, in pity, had the further idea of moving their reproductive organs to the front. In their former state, with these on the outside, they had begotten not on each other but on the earth,¹ but now they could beget by intercourse between male and female, or if male joined to male, at least the desire for togetherness was satisfied and they could turn to the other business of life.

So the instinct of love is an attempt to restore our original state. Halves of hermaphrodites are heterosexual, halves of women are Lesbians and those of men are drawn to men from their boyhood. It is wrong to stigmatize these boys as shameless and immoral. They are the best of our youth, inspired not by wantonness but by courage and masculinity, and in maturity provide the finest statesmen. They become lovers of boys in their turn, and only marry and have children from a sense of duty. When a lover – whether of boys or not – has the luck to meet his own actual other half, the pair are so overcome with affection and the feeling of belonging that they cannot bear to be apart, and their friendship is for life. This is no mere physical urge, but an inexpressive longing of the soul. Eryximachus may say that I am getting at Pausanias and Agathon, but I am speaking quite generally of men and women alike. For our happiness we must take Eros as leader, and obeying his command find our true mate, or at least the one most congenial to our own nature, and by fulfilling our love return as nearly as possible to our pristine state.

Socrates and Agathon (1) (194a–e). This left only Agathon and Socrates, and S., via his own expression of misgivings about following Agathon

¹ 'Like cicadas', he adds. Cf. Guthrie, *In the B.* 114f.

after the latter's splendid display of eloquence in the theatre, and Agathon's response that he finds a small but intelligent company more formidable than a crowd, tries to lead him into a question-and-answer discussion: if he had done something to be ashamed of, would he feel shame before 'the many' as he would before the wise? But Phaedrus knows his man, and soon puts a stop to this. If A. lets himself be inveigled into a Socratic argument, it will be all up with their plan. Let each pay his tribute to Eros, then they can converse as much as they like. A. agrees and begins.

Speech of Agathon (194e–197e). We must praise Eros himself, not only his gifts. Of all the blessed gods, he is most blessed and fairest. First, he is (*pace* Phaedrus) the youngest, the very antithesis of old age. If he had, as Hesiod said, been there from the beginning, none of the early quarrels and violence among the gods would have occurred. Since his coming among them, they have lived in peaceful accord. Tender he is too, dwelling in those tender spots, the hearts of men and gods (for he shuns the hard-hearted), and supple.¹ How otherwise could he insinuate himself, unperceived, into – and again steal out of – those hearts? With this go his gracefulness, shapeliness and blooming beauty: he is the enemy of all ugliness, and settles only where there is blossom and fragrance, be it in body, soul or elsewhere.

Besides beauty, he possesses all the virtues. He is just, for everyone serves him willingly, and in mutual consent is no wrong; self-controlled, for that means mastering pleasures and desires, and no pleasure is stronger than love; brave, for he overcame the god of war himself.² As for his genius,³ to copy Eryximachus and take my own craft first, he is a poet and can create poets: anyone touched by love turns poet. That he can create living creatures everyone knows, and it was under the guidance of love and desire that every other skill was

¹ For the meaning of ὑγρός (*lit.* moist or liquid) see vol. 1, 61f.

² A reference to the story of Ares and Aphrodite in Homer, *Od.* 8.266ff.

³ *Sophia*, regularly, as we know, accounted one of the cardinal virtues. 'Wisdom' is scarcely appropriate in this context. For the connexion with practical skills see vol. III, 27f. 'Genius' (M. Joyce) is perhaps the best choice.

discovered by the appropriate god.¹ Thus he is both beautiful and good and the cause of beauty and goodness for others.

So after a poetic outburst and a grandiloquent peroration heaping on Eros every laudatory epithet and all the gems of the rhetorical *technai*, A. ceased with the remark that he had done his best to honour the god in a mixture of play and earnest.

Socrates and Agathon (2) (198b–201c). Enthusiastic applause greeted the host's speech, and S. lamented his lot in having to follow such unattainable brilliance, worthy of Gorgias. In his folly he had supposed that one simply had to speak the truth – selecting and arranging it to the best advantage no doubt – whereas what seems to have been agreed was to ascribe all beauty and every virtue to the subject whether truly or falsely. He could not be a party to this. It was all a misunderstanding, and he had better cry off unless he can just speak in his own way. Competing with the others would only make him ridiculous. Told to do as he pleased, he asked permission to put 'a few small questions' to Agathon first, to get his agreement before beginning.

The upshot of these questions is that love or desire is a relative term, and Eros therefore exists only relationally: as a father or brother must be father or brother *of* somebody, so love or desire is *of* somebody or something. But one only desires what one lacks, so if Eros desires beauty and goodness he cannot possess them, i.e. cannot be beautiful and good.² With this established, S. proceeds.

Speech of Socrates (201d–212c). I will tell what I learned of love from Diotima, a wise woman of Mantinea. I had been calling Eros a great, good and beautiful god, and she had brought against me the arguments which I have just put to A. Astonished, I asked, 'What? Is he ugly and bad?' Not at all. One does not have to be at one or the other of two extremes. Eros is between the two, just as there is a

¹ He mentions archery, prophecy, medicine (Apollo), music (the Muses), metal-work (Hephaestus), weaving (Athena), and government (Zeus); but leaves us to guess what can be the connexion of Love with all these.

² On the apparent confusion here between love and the lover see Allen in *Monist* 1966.

state between knowledge and ignorance, namely guessing right without being able to justify your conviction. Similarly it is wrong to call him a god, for gods are happy and beautiful, and Eros cannot be happy if (as is now admitted) he lacks goodness and beauty. Nor is he mortal. He belongs to the spirits (*daimones*), who mediate between gods and mortals, conveying upwards the prayers and sacrifices of men, and downwards the commands and answers from the gods. Without them, heaven and earth would fall apart, for there is no direct intercourse between god and man. Prophets, and those skilled in rites and charms, are 'spiritual' men who can ensure this communication. The spirits are of many sorts, and Eros is one of them.

His birth came about thus. At the feast of the gods to celebrate the birth of Aphrodite, Poros¹ got drunk and was found by Penia (Poverty) asleep in Zeus's garden. She lay down beside him and conceived Eros. First then, begotten on Aphrodite's birthday, he is her follower in loving beauty. As son of Poverty he is not tender and fair as usually supposed, but tough, barefoot and homeless, sleeping rough in doorways and streets; but from his father he inherits all sorts of plans to acquire the beauty and good that he longs for; is enterprising, vigorous, full of devices, seeking wisdom ('philosophizing') always, a wizard and a sophist, dying and reviving, losing what he gains, midway between wisdom and ignorance. Those who suppose him good and beautiful confuse him with the *object* of love, whereas Eros is the lover.

Eros then represents love of beauty. The question 'And what advantage will possession of beauty give anyone?' is easier to answer if we substitute 'goodness',² for we agreed that to possess what is good is to be happy, and that is a final answer. It is senseless to ask why anyone wants to be happy. This then is what love means, though the name is commonly applied to what is only one species (*eidos* 205b) of it, just as poetry (*poiesis*, lit. 'making') has usurped a more general term. We do not call all craftsmen poets, nor do we call

¹ Poros means 'finding a way', resourcefulness. Whoever has it enjoys εὐπορία, plenty (Democr. fr. 101 DK). So Spenser calls Love 'begot of Plentie and of Penurie'. Penia on the other hand is 'resourceless' (ἐπιπορος 204b7).

² On this substitution cf. p. 247 n. 1 above.

lovers those whose desires express themselves in business, athletics or philosophy. Love is desire for what is good – not even for what is our own (as some say that in love we are seeking our other halves) unless what belongs to us is good. Men will have their very limbs amputated rather than keep them if they are poisoned. Love, then, is *desire for permanent possession of the good*.

But how does it seek its goal? What is its activity? This she described as *bringing forth in beauty* (or the beautiful), which puzzled me, and she explained that everyone is pregnant, in body and soul, and on reaching a certain age we have a natural desire to give birth. This impulse is divine, a spark of immortality in the mortal, and cannot be fulfilled in what is out of harmony with the divine, as ugliness is. Eileithyia, goddess of birth, is in fact Beauty. So in the presence of beauty the pregnant is relaxed and at ease and gives birth, but on the approach of ugliness it contracts and shrinks away and cannot be relieved of its burden. The thrill which beauty imparts lies in the hope that it will bring deliverance from travail.

Another time she asked if I knew why there was this fierce urge to breed and to feed and protect the young – not only among men (who might be actuated by reason) but among animals and birds, and when I confessed ignorance she explained it by the natural longing of all mortal creatures to exist for ever, the only possible form of immortality being to leave behind another like oneself. Even in this life, what we call one identical man has from boyhood to age suffered many changes of both body and personality. Ambition has the same motive, to live for ever at least in men's memories: it is the spur to all noble deeds. Finally there are the spiritually pregnant, whose desire is for offspring of the soul, for wisdom and virtue. Such are poets, inventors, and above all those who produce justice and moderation in the ordering of society.

A young man blessed with this spiritual pregnancy seeks the beauty in which he can bring forth. Physical beauty will attract him, and when he finds it united with beauty of soul he is delivered, and he and his friend bring up the offspring together; that is, he educates him, speaking to him of what a good man should be and do. This tie is stronger than that between children and parents, inasmuch as the

'children' are finer and more immortal.¹ Were not the laws of Lycurgus and Solon a finer progeny than any mortal children could be?

These are the lesser mysteries of love. The final revelation might, she thought, be beyond my grasp, but she would speak of it nevertheless. The candidate for full initiation must first fall in love with one fair body and beget noble thoughts. Soon he must see that visible beauty is everywhere the same, and despise the passion he felt for a single manifestation of it. The next step is to rate beauty of soul higher than bodily beauty, and loving it even in an ill-favoured frame, to bring forth the sort of ideas which make young people better. This will lead him to look at the beauty in ways of life and laws,² and seeing that all this is related, to think little of mere physical beauty. From there he must be guided to the beauty of knowledge in all its forms, and so will no longer be devoted to one boy or man or activity but gazing on the whole sea of beauty will bring forth magnificent thoughts in the abundance of philosophy until, thus fortified, he catches sight of a knowledge of beauty such as I shall now describe. Try, said she, to follow me closely.

All that went before has been preparation for the sudden glimpse of this amazing beauty. It is eternal and changeless, never in any respect, in any part, or by any standard other than beautiful; not physical, not reason or knowledge, not *in* anything, but absolute and unique. All other beauties share it, yet so that their birth or passing away leave it unaffected. This is the true progress of love, to start with a fair body and climb as by a ladder to the vision of Beauty itself, pure of all flesh or colour or other mortal rubbish. Only by intercourse with that will the lover bring forth true, not counterfeit, virtue, for truth is his consort. Such a man the gods love, and to him if anyone will immortality be granted.

Such was her teaching, and, believing it, I try to persuade others to honour Eros in practising love as I do, for none will help us more to gain this supreme gift.

¹ Can one be 'more immortal'? Yes, according to Diotima (ἀθανατωτέρων).

² We must remember that beauty, beautiful, here simply stand for the Greek *kalon*, on the wide meaning of which see pp. 177f., 181f. above. To speak of activities and laws as *kala* is a perfectly natural way of commending them.

Entry of Alcibiades (212c-215a). When S. had finished, there were heard sounds of revelry, a knock on the door, and the voice of Alcibiades loudly demanding Agathon. Standing in the doorway, supported by a flute-girl and his companions and with a wreath on his head, he asked if he might join the party, drunk as he was. At least he would crown Agathon with his wreath. Everyone called to him to come and sit down, and his friends put him between Agathon and S.; but having the ribbons of the wreath in front of his eyes as he tried to crown Agathon, he did not at first see S. When he did, he jumped up and shouted, 'Socrates! It's an ambush! And how did you manage to sit next the handsomest man in the room?' S. in mock terror called on Agathon to protect him from the jealous rage of his favourite, and Alcibiades went on: 'I'll settle with you later. Now Agathon, give me some of those ribbons back to crown the wondrous head of the world champion of words – not just once like you, but always.' After crowning S. and sitting down, he complained that the company was still sober, called for a wine-cooler holding nearly four pints, emptied it and had it refilled for S., who, he remarked, would drink as much as you told him to and be none the worse for it.

At this point Eryximachus intervened and explained their plan. Alcibiades had had his drink, so he must make his speech. He replied, first, that it was unfair to ask a man already half-seas-over to compete with the sober, and secondly that in S.'s presence he could never praise anyone else. 'All right, give us a eulogy of S., then'; and in spite of S.'s protests, he begins.

Speech of Alcibiades (215a-222b). I shall have to rely on similes. S. is like the Sileni you see in sculptors' shops, which open up and have images of gods inside, or like Marsyas the Satyr. Apart from having a satyr's looks and impudence, he can do by mere words what Marsyas did with music – send people crazy, with leaping hearts and streaming eyes, as no orator could. He even makes *me* feel ashamed, as if with my life of politics I was neglecting myself and my shortcomings. I know he's right, yet when I'm away from him I can't resist the lure of popularity. I sometimes wish him dead – but if he were, I'd be even more upset.

As for the Sileni, outwardly he is always falling for young men,

but open him up and you find glorious treasure¹ within, and a miraculous self-control. He thinks nothing of good looks, any more than of wealth or rank. I speak from experience. I was proud of my good looks, and supposing him serious in his passion for me,² I thought that by giving him what he wanted I would get his knowledge in return. After several indirect attempts, I got him to dine and spend the night with me and told him frankly what was in my mind. He replied with his usual irony that if I really thought he could make me a better man, the beauty of that so much surpassed my own that the bargain savoured of sharp practice; but that I should think it over, because very probably I was mistaken in him. Some day we should talk it over and do whatever was best for both of us. So I spent the night with him as if with a father or elder brother. After that I was in a worse state than ever, torn between my own humiliation and admiration for his strength of mind, unable either to forgo his company or make him do what I wanted.

His courage and endurance I learned to know on campaigns, in a freezing northern winter and in battle at Potidaea, where he saved my life and ought to have had the award that was made to me, as well as in the retreat from Delium.³ There simply is no one like him, hence my resort to the Sileni for a comparison. I forgot to say that it applies to his talk too. On the surface it's absurd, all about blacksmiths and cobblers and tanners and always repeating itself.⁴ But open it up and you find inside the only arguments that make sense, together with divine images of virtue and everything one needs to study to be a proper man.

¹ This is the word (ἀγκλματα, 216e6) used earlier for images of the gods, but literally meaning anything conferring honour, glory or delight.

² For S.'s supposed passion for Alc. see vol. III, 395 (where in n. 1 the fr. of Aeschines should be 11c, not 10c).

³ The stories Alc. told to illustrate S.'s indifference to his surroundings and power of withdrawal have been told in vol. III, 389 and 404. How he saved Alc.'s life at Potidaea is also told by Plutarch in his life of Alc. (ch. 7, 194e-195a, where we learn that the award in question was a wreath and a suit of armour), and his service there is mentioned at *Charm.* 153a. Laches praises his conduct in the retreat from Delium at *Laches* 181b, and he himself mentions the campaigns he served on at *Apol.* 28e.

⁴ 221e αἰεὶ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν τὰ αὐτὰ φαίνεται λέγειν. For the charge of harping on banalistic occupations and always repeating the same things cf. *Gorg.* 490e-491a and *Xen. Mem.* 4.4.5-6. S.'s stock reply ('Yes, and on the same subjects') amounts to a boast of consistency. Cf. *Thuc.* 1.22.3 for the opposite fault: even eye-witnesses of an event οὐ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τὰ αὐτὰ ἔλεγον.

Well, gentlemen, that's what S. has done to me – and to Charmides and a lot of others – pretending to be in love with us when it's really the other way round. Be warned by our experience and don't let him take you in.

Conclusion (222c–223d). S. declared that Alcibiades was simply trying to make trouble between him and Agathon, and while some byplay was going on between them the room was invaded by an uproarious band of revellers and orderly conversation became impossible. Some of the party left, Aristodemus fell asleep and awoke at cockcrow to find only S., Agathon and Aristophanes awake, and passing round a large cup while S. proved to them that a good tragic poet could also write comedies and vice versa.¹ Eventually both nodded off, and S. left them, had a bath, and spent the day as usual.

Comment

'Before the entrance to the Academy there is an altar of Love.'

(Pausanias 1.30.1)

Many of Plato's works baffle the pedestrian commentator with their wayward brilliance, but none is so deeply embedded in the ethos of its time as the *Symposium*. Apart from the attitude to sexual love, the after-dinner *symposion*, with its rules and *arbiter bibendi*, has no precise modern parallel. Later it became a literary vehicle for imaginary exchanges of views and information, but the comparative lifelessness of these productions only shows up by contrast the dramatic realism of the characters in Plato's original.² As usual, Plato's aims were complex, but one of them was certainly to round off his portrait of Socrates by showing him in a relaxed and convivial mood,³ and

¹ At *Rep.* 395a P. makes him say the opposite. Adam *ad loc.* suggests a plausible explanation, and Bury (*Symp.* p. 171) professes to tell us 'the point of S.'s argument'. Since we are not told what S.'s argument was, this seems a little bold. No classical poet wrote both tragedies and comedies (presumably the reference is not to satyr-plays), and most probably the remark is simply a humorous final comment on S.'s character: talking and listening throughout the whole night, and drinking gallons of wine, could never quench his ardour for arguing the most paradoxical theses.

² And, to do him justice, Xenophon's. For the error of regarding these two simply as members of an existing series, see vol. III, 344 n. 2 (where I fear I have attributed Breitenbach's contribution to Treu; see *RE*, 2. Reihe, XVIII. Halbb., col. 1928). For the *symposion* as an institution see Robin, *Symp.* xii f., and for extant *Symposia* ib. xiii n. 3; or, more fully, J. Martin, *Symposion: Gesch. einer lit. Form*.

³ Like Xen., but Xen. had to say he was doing it (*Symp.* 1.1).

through the mouth of the disreputable Alcibiades himself to refute the charge that Socrates had been his evil genius. But to Jowett this was one of those writings which 'hardly admit of a more distinct interpretation than a musical composition... and can with difficulty be rendered in any words but the writer's own'. Plato also shows his versatility (as in the *Phaedrus*) by writing not only dialogue but a series of set speeches reasonably characterized by S. Rosen as 'rhetorical exercises rather than complex philosophical statements'.¹

First *Phaedrus*,² in a brief trifle, shows himself the admirer of both Love and Lysias that he is in the dialogue named after him. His is an artificial affair of literary allusions and rhetorical tricks of style and content, notably the conceit about the beloved's loyalty being finer than the lover's. Its most remarkable feature is that, while accepting the convention of love between males as normal and right, he actually chooses a woman as an example of supreme devotion.

Pausanias introduces the dual nature of Eros, heavenly and earthly, spiritual and physical, confines heterosexual love to the latter and defends pederasty if it goes with intellectual companionship. His account of the complex Athenian attitude to homosexuality is of sociological interest,³ and the double Eros is a small step on the way to Diotima's teaching. Socrates could also have agreed that many actions at least are in themselves neutral and depend for their value on *how* they are performed, for it tallies with his view that the worth of both material goods and spiritual gifts lies not in themselves but in how they are used.⁴ In Diotima's speech the value of Eros is determined by its object. This and the notions that spiritual love is

¹ Jowett, *Dialogues* 1, 488; Rosen, *Symp.* xxxvi.

² For fuller appraisals of the early speeches, not always in agreement, see Bury xxiv–xxxvi, Taylor *PMW* 212–23, and (more imaginative) Friedländer, *Pl.* III, 11–23. (Bury lists the technical rhetorical tropes in those of Phaedrus, Pausanias and Agathon.) For a modern reader Gould's *PL* ch. 2 is one of the best introductions.

³ Vol. III, 391f. Some passages of Aeschines in *Timarch.* (9–12, 16–21) are often quoted as evidence that the laws against pederasty at Athens were particularly severe, but in fact they deal only with offences against children, and prostitution or procuring for gain, thus endorsing Pausanias's standards.

⁴ *Meno* 87e–88a, *Euthyd.* 280e, 281d–e.

superior to physical (though for Pausanias it should accompany, not replace it) and that true love does not depend on youthful charm but is for life (181d-e) arouse the suspicion that Plato is giving a kind of parody of Socrates to show how easily his teaching could be misunderstood or misapplied.¹

The hiccups of Aristophanes, which lead to a change in the order of speakers, have been given various inner meanings by commentators.² Their variety shows at least that if Plato intended any deep symbolism, it is difficult to be sure what it was. Perhaps it is enough to remember that this is a realistic account of a convivial occasion and that hiccups are an affliction not unlikely to visit at least one of those who had dined well and were now engaged in drinking; and what more suitable victim than Aristophanes, the natural laugh-raiser?

Eryximachus follows up the dual Eros of Pausanias, but his real starting-point was in the opening words of Phaedrus about Eros as one of the original cosmic powers, with its corollary that he is active not only in men and animals, but universally as the author of unity and combination in the whole physical world. This is the Love of which Aeschylus and Euripides wrote that it inspires the Sky with passion to impregnate Earth, and Earth to win her marriage, so that when the fertilizing drops fall on her she can bring forth sheep and corn and fruits; the Eros of whom the birds in Aristophanes's comedy sang that only by his mingling of one thing with another were Heaven, Oceanus, Earth and all the blessed gods created; the cosmogonic Love of Orphic poetry and above all of the poet-scientist Empedocles, which blends and reconciles opposites wherever they are, a force both physical and moral. This 'Eros or desire', said

¹ Cf. *Alc. I* 131c-d; vol. III, 395, 472.

² For older (including ancient) views see Bury xxiif., and for more recent Rosen 90f. with n. 3. More recent still is K. Dorter, 'The Significance of the Speeches in P.'s *Symp.*', *Phil. and Rhet.* 1969. If P. had simply wanted E. to speak first (according to those who believe in a 'dialectical ascent' of the speeches) he could have altered the table-plan. Quite probably he wants to warn the reader that the order of speeches is not significant but accidental. If intended as 'vengeance' for the portrayal of S. in the *Clouds*, the hiccups are an incredibly feeble revenge. It is an odd coincidence that the name Eryximachus should mean 'Hiccups-fighter', but no odder than that S.'s midwife-mother should be Phaenarete (vol. III, 378 n. 1), and it was certainly his real name. It may have been what gave P. the idea.

Aristotle, was assumed by the earliest thinkers because of the need of a first cause to get things moving and make them combine.¹ One of the eulogists obviously had to celebrate Eros in this widely attested universal aspect, and the medical man was best qualified to do so. Contemporary medical practice relied largely on general theories about the basic opposites hot-cold, wet-dry, bitter-sweet etc., theories of which the attainment of a harmonious blend in a healthy body was only a special application, and the Hippocratic treatises range widely, and often critically, over the whole field of natural philosophy.² So Eryximachus has no difficulty in finding Love at work as the reconciler of opposites in medicine, music and climate. Religion is seen rather in terms of the antithesis between good and bad Eros, which in the earlier examples played a minor role. In fact the claim to have taken this antithesis from Pausanias is artificial (as connexions in after-dinner speeches often are), for in this speech the second member is not Love at all but an anti-Love which could much better be called Strife as by Empedocles. But having retained it, he can use it when he returns to the theme of love in the narrow sense (187d-e).

Morally Eryximachus is on a lower level than Pausanias, for he does not condemn the vulgar love outright, but in contrasting it with the heavenly recommends indulging in it 'cautiously, so as to enjoy its pleasure without excess', as a doctor limits indulgence of the desire for rich food only to the point of avoiding disease (187d-e). The analogy is invalid, for unless disease is caused only the good love is at work (186b).

The contribution of Aristophanes, wild extravaganzas though it is, has also some roots in existing mythology and natural philosophy, which

¹ Aesch. fr. 44, Eur. fr. 898, Ar. *Birds* 699-702, Aristotle, *Metaph.* 984b 23ff. For Emped. see vol. II, 155 ff.; for Love as moral force in the *Purif.* 248f. In the extant fr. he calls it Aphrodite not Eros, though Plut. (*De facie* 927a) speaks of 'friendship, Aphrodite or Eros, as Emped. says'. For the Orphic Eros see Guthrie, *G. and G.* 319, *OGR* ch. 4. I should add that neither Aeschylus, Aristophanes nor Empedocles, whom I have introduced as background, is mentioned by Eryximachus, but only Heraclitus, as to whom see vol. I, 435-7.

² E.'s speech has been thought of as a parody of Hippocr. π. διαίτης (Pfleiderer; see Bury xxix n. 2), whereas Edelstein was reminded rather of π. ἀρχ. ιητρ. See also Rosen 95f. In this article in *TAPA* 1945 Edelstein has in my view vindicated P.'s portrait of the doctor as no caricature but realistic and sympathetic, though Dover (*JHS* 1966, 49 n. 44) thinks differently. See also Rosen 95f.

add to its effectiveness as a skit on the erudition of the others, especially Eryximachus. Bisexual beings were not unknown. In Empedocles, 'androgynes' arose with other now extinct creatures at an early stage of the world ordered by Love, and the Orphic god Phanes was bisexual and further resembled the circular men in having genitals 'in the rear on the rump'. By Plato's time the cult of Hermaphroditos was probably known at Athens.¹ Bisexual beings are frequent in Oriental mythologies, and some have sought an Oriental origin for the circular men,² but it is not easy to find earlier models for their most striking features: the all-male and all-female doubles as well as the male-female, the duplication of faces and limbs and the cartwheel mode of progression.³

The conclusion (one can hardly speak of a *moral* in a comic burlesque) is that sexual love is a natural urge to restore our original dual nature.⁴ Its application to love of the same or the other sex seems a little confused. Both should be equally natural, depending on the type of which each of us is a half, save that only love between man and woman can ensure the perpetuation of the race (191c). Yet as examples of this Aristophanes mentions not, as one might expect, married couples, but only adulterers (191d-e), and his highest praise is reserved for male lovers, on the grounds of their courage and statesmanlike qualities. We may take this as a reminder by Plato that the poet is still following his comic Muse (189b), when we remember how in the *Clouds* the political success of homosexuals is referred to as the knock-out blow of the Unjust Argument. The terms applied to them there are not complimentary.⁵

¹ Emp. fr. 61, 3f. (vol. II, 203-5). For Phanes and Hermaphroditos, Guthrie, *OGR* 101 and 145 nn. 24 and 25.

² Some reff. in Friedländer, *Pl.* 1, 369 n. 11 and Gould, *PL* 191 n. 41. W. Koster in ch. v of his *Mythe de P.* etc. considers and rejects an oriental origin for the Aristophanes myth, and Wilamowitz, *Pl.* 1, 372 championed its purely Greek origin. For stories of the origin of sexual love in 'many different cultures' see reff. in Dover, *JHS* 1966, 42 n. 8. The allusions to Empedocles (which Dover denies, p. 46) are not only to the androgynes but to his seriously-held view that the potency of Love is universal, not confined to sentient beings.

³ The nearest to A.'s double men in Greek mythology are the sons of Actor and Molione as described by Hesiod (fr. 18 Merk.-West) and Ibycus (fr. 2 Diehl).

⁴ The perfection of love is reached when we meet not merely one of the right sex, but actually our own other half. How the present generation can contain matching halves, when the dichotomy took place in the prehistoric past, it would be unfair to ask.

⁵ *Clouds* 1089-92. Attention was drawn to this passage by Dover, *JHS* 1966, 45. The words used are εὐρύπρωκτοι and δημηγορεῖν.

Agathon lives up to his reputation as a poet¹ (the most amusing touch in his speech being the ingenious arguments to show that Eros possesses all the virtues), and only *Socrates* remains. He is allowed a brief exercise of his own dialectical method to establish the preliminary point that Agathon was wrong because Eros stands for desire itself and not its object, and then throws his own speech into the form of a conversation between himself and a wise woman, Diotima. Whether or not anyone of the name existed, she is here simply a double of the Platonic Socrates, while he himself takes the part of a Charmides or Lysis.² The question-and-answer method is *her* speciality! (201e.) This fiction enables him, first, to keep up the pretence of Socratic ignorance, like the imaginary boorish relative in the *Hippias Major* or Aspasia in the *Menexenus* (who scolds Socrates as does Diotima at 207c). Secondly it enables him to retain the dialogue form while nominally adhering to the rules of the symposium.³

Leaving aside the poetry and religious fervour of Diotima's message (which though integral and essential to it must be sought in Plato's own words), it amounts to an extension, in the light of the developed doctrine of Forms, of two points made earlier in the *Lysis*. First, the loving or desiring subject is an 'in-between', neither good nor bad,

¹ For contrasting aesthetic judgements on his speech, see Taylor, *PMW* 221, and Grube, *P.'s Th.* 100.

² Some regard the mention of her postponement of the plague at Athens (201d) as evidence of historicity, e.g. Bölte in *RE* xxviii. Halbb. 1321, Taylor, *PMW* 224, and see Friedländer, *Pl.* 1, 365 n. 14. Kranz (Hermes 1926) believed her historical, but thought the question of no importance for understanding the *Symp.* Robin (Budé ed. xxii-xxvii) argued against Taylor, and Bury (xxxix) also thought her fictitious. Another Socratic trick is her assumption of agreement by the interlocutor, to his own astonishment: neither she *nor* he thinks Eros a god. (Cf. *Gorg.* 466e.) Also, she has apparently listened to Aristophanes's speech (205d). I cannot support the opinions of Wilamowitz (*Pl.* 1, 380) and Neumann (*AJP* 1950) that D.'s teaching is not Socratic but in fact a kind of sophistic with no absolute worth, tempting though it may be to find such an easy way out of a difficulty like that of her views on immortality. ὥσπερ οὐ τέλει σοφιστὰς at 208c simply gives the effect of 'like a real schoolmistress' (or perhaps 'a finished orator'; cf. *Crat.* 403e), implying nothing about the content of her teaching. S. himself, of course, is never didactic, but he can report the lessons of someone else! See also vol. III, 31.

³ These seem sufficient reasons for D.'s presence. Some, like Cornford (*U. Ph.* 71), allege courtesy to Agathon, but if, as he says, she was an 'invention', the company would know, and the courtesy be somewhat hollow. Of course some entire dialogues are, in form, continuous narrations by S.

as instanced by the philo-sopher, who, desiring wisdom, must be neither wise nor so ignorant and stupid as not to recognize its worth (*Lys.* 217e–218b, pp. 141, 149 above). Once again we are told that the worst sort of ignorance is to think yourself wise when you are not (204a; and yet there are some who still think that Diotima is other than Socrates himself!). Eros, then, at his best is a philosopher, for he represents love of beauty, and wisdom is most beautiful (*Symp.* 203d7, 204a–b). Secondly, the ‘primary object of love’, for whose sake all else is desirable (*Lys.* 219c–d, pp. 151f. above), has shed its ambiguous status and emerged as the transcendent Form of Beauty, the final revelation of the mysteries of Love.

Eros is in every way intermediate, between beautiful and ugly, good and bad, wise and foolish,¹ and between mortals and immortals he is also *intermediary*. That gods do not have direct contact with men is scarcely a general, certainly not a Homeric, Greek belief, but consistent with Plato’s reservation of converse with the gods in the *Phaedo* to the happy souls living on the true surface of the earth (p. 336 above). As the state between ignorance and wisdom, Plato again mentions true *doxa* (belief, judgement or guessing), which still, as in the *Meno* (pp. 261ff. above), ‘hits on reality’ (202a) though unlike knowledge it cannot ‘render an account’. In the *Republic* knowledge and *doxa* appear to differ in their actual objects, not simply in their mode of apprehension, and this apparent inconsistency is something to keep in mind. (We return to it on pp. 489ff. below.)

The idea that we only value something as ‘belonging’ to us in so far as it is *good* (205d–e) is a favourite with Plato. In the *Charmides* it is attributed to Critias, but *Lys.* 222a, c–d with *Rep.* 586e show it to have been Plato’s own. In full, we desire what naturally belongs to us, and that is the good, for ‘no one desires evil’ (*Meno* 78a–b).²

¹ For ‘in between’ and ‘other than’ in P. and his commentators, here and in *Prot.* and *Gorg.*, see pp. 224–6 above; for the contemporary philosophical importance of the distinction, p. 148.

² *Charm.* 163c (where S.’s slighting reply may suggest that here too P. has taken over a Sophistic cliché to raise it to a different level), p. 159 with n. 4 above. For *Meno* see pp. 246f.

Spiritual pregnancy and parturition. Diotima’s references to intercourse, pregnancy and birth sit very lightly to the facts of nature. ‘Bringing forth in beauty’ (206b) is sometimes passed by without comment, sometimes taken to mean begetting on beauty as the male on the female;¹ but Beauty’s role is that of Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth who gives easy delivery (206d). Pregnancy is not the *result* of love excited by the beautiful, but a universal state which *causes* excitement at an encounter with beauty (206d). The young man seeks beautiful bodies and souls because *already* pregnant in his own soul (209b).² Then ‘in contact and association with the beautiful he brings to birth what he has long been pregnant with’. This universal pregnancy stands for a longing to bear offspring, whether of body or mind. Every adult is potentially a creator, of children or great deeds or ideas, and unless he becomes so in reality, feels baffled and unfulfilled. Beauty provides the environment in which delivery can take place. In another dialogue it is Socrates himself who assists, as midwife, the delivery of other men’s thoughts.³ Plato saw both the Eros which is philosophy, and the Beauty which it seeks and which will help it through its pangs, summed up in a person.

Immortality. In this part of her speech Diotima claims that the ultimate impulse behind erotic desire is the natural mortal longing for immortality, which can never be literally satisfied. Has Plato then given up (or perhaps not yet reached) the belief in immortality which is one of the keystones of his mature philosophy? Has he become an Aristotelian? Aristotle’s view is astonishingly like Diotima’s (*De an.*

¹ So Joyce, ‘to bring forth upon the beautiful’. Bury’s ‘in the sphere of the beautiful’ (xliii) is comfortably vague. Better Bluck, *Ph.* 4, ‘in a medium of beauty’. *τίκτειν ἐν* does mean to impregnate in Aristoph.’s speech (191c), though the preceding *ἐς* is commoner. LSJ’s examples suggest that neither *τίκτειν ἐν* nor *ἐντίκτειν* is commonly used with this meaning.

² If the sentence 206c5–6 is genuine, D. does refer once to literal conception as the result of coition between man and woman, but many edd. from Ast to Bury have rejected it. In any case it is ‘men pregnant in body’ who are attracted to women, and for the most part *κτείν* refers to males and their mental pregnancy. See further on this Morrison, *CQ* 1964, 51–5.

³ Being himself barren. See *Theaet.* 150c–d (vol. III, 444). One should not say with Bury (xxxviii) that S. ‘deposits the fruits of his pregnant mind’ in Agathon’s soul. He has, he would claim, only asked questions, thereby eliciting, as he did from Meno’s slave, truths with which Agathon’s mind was already pregnant. Alcibiades takes him at his word (216d): ‘he is utterly ignorant and knows nothing’.

415a26ff., repeated in *GA* 731b31-5):¹ to reproduce their kind is natural to all living things

that they may partake as far as possible in the everlasting and divine... Since they cannot do this by actual continuity (for nothing perishable can remain one and the same), each partakes in it so far as it can, some more some less; it persists not as itself but in something *like* itself, specifically one though not numerically.

Plato's words are (208a7):

In this way everything mortal is perpetuated, not like the divine by being in every way the same, but by leaving behind, as it wastes away and grows old, a new being such as it was itself. By this device mortal partakes of immortality, both corporeally and in other ways; but it is otherwise with the immortal.²

On the face of it this passage seems to deny the immortality of the soul of which Socrates is persuaded in the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, and Hackforth maintained that the *Symposium* shows 'a lapse into temporary scepticism' on Plato's part.³ He pointed out that when immortality is defended in presumably later works (*Rep.* 10, *Phaedrus*, *Laws* 10) it is by quite different arguments, suggesting that those in the *Phaedo* had ceased to satisfy him.

The majority who think differently point (rightly in my view) to the contrast, certainly a Platonic one, between immortality in time (everlastingness) and eternal life.⁴ Most men can only conceive of the

¹ It does not do to say (with e.g. Wipern) that even for Aristotle, though the rest of *psyche* as the 'form' of the body was inseparable from it, *nous* was still immortal and divine (*De an.* 413b24 and bk 3, chh. 4 and 5, *GA* 736b27f.), for the immortal part seems to be something completely impersonal. Ar. had no use for doctrines of individual survival, *anamnesis* and reincarnation.

² The last clause in the MSS and *Oxy. Pap.* 843 is ἀθάνατον δὲ ἄλλη. Bury and Burnet (not Robin) adopt Creuzer's emendation ἀδύνατον. In either case it means that the mortal cannot put on immortality as the immortal (i.e. divine) does.

³ Hackforth in *CR* 1950. Morrison (*CQ* 1964) agreed with the fact, but accounted for it by supposing that *Symp.* was written much earlier than is generally thought. It shares, he thinks, the 'cheerful humanism' of the *Prot.*, a judgement difficult to reconcile with Diotima's speech. See also Crombie, *EPD* 1, 361-3. Hackforth was answered by Luce in *CR* 1952. Wilamowitz, Gomperz, Gaye, Shorey, Bury, Robin, Taylor, Bluck, Wipern, and, I believe, everybody else, have taken *Symp.* to presuppose immortality in the *Phaedo* sense. See especially Bluck's additions to Luce's arguments, *Phaedo* 28 n. 1.

⁴ See Luce, *CR* 1952, 139 and Cornford *U. Ph.* 75. The distinction between everlasting and timelessly eternal is most clearly made at *Tim.* 37c-38b.

former, which, like the animals, they pursue through physical or spiritual procreation. The philosopher achieves *his* immortality through contact with the divine, eternal Forms. But this contact, vision or knowledge, so graphically described in the *Symposium*, is only reached through *anamnesis* which in turn implies reincarnation and immortality. The doctrine of Forms and the immortality of the soul 'by itself' (αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτήν *Ph.* 79d, i.e. the mind) are inseparable. When Diotima speaks of reproduction as the only means of immortality, and Socrates in the *Phaedo* of our souls as genuinely immortal, they are speaking of different things: the substitute-immortality of the mortal part of us, which is dissolved at death, and the true immortality of our divine *psyche*, that is, reason.¹ The point is made clear in the *Phaedrus* (246c-d). The soul has been declared immortal. It can, however, 'lose its wings', then sinks down and '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 (ζῶον), and is further termed mortal.'

It is commonly overlooked that vicarious immortality is expounded as part of the 'lesser mysteries' of Love. As such, it is sought through physical procreation, ambition for lasting fame, poetic creation, technological inventiveness, and good sense and justice in the political sphere perpetuated in constitutions and other laws (208e-209e). That is, the means to it do not go beyond what in the *Phaedo* is designated 'popular and political virtue', which is not true virtue and is practised for the wrong motives (82a, 68b-69d). As in the *Symposium*, philosophic virtue is there contrasted with it and compared to the state of the fully initiated.² Hackforth claimed that even the immortality of the philosopher, when he has received the final initiation and seen the divine Form of Beauty itself, was vicarious like that of others, because it springs 'from the begetting of true virtue (sc. in another's soul)'. This is a point not met by his critics. First, however, the words 'in another's soul' are not in Plato, and Hackforth seems to

¹ See especially Luce, *l.c.* 140 and Wipern, *Synusia* 134.

² Neglect of this point vitiates such criticism as that of Gomperz (*GT* 11, 394), who declared that a 'chasm yawns' between 'the justification of ambition in this dialogue and its rejection in the *Republic*'. This is part of his case that P. in the *Symp.* 'placed himself in fundamental contradiction to the views expressed both in his earlier and his later works'.

have misunderstood his double use of the word 'in' in this context of metaphorical pregnancy and birth. He refers to 209c, where however Socrates says that a man pregnant in *his own* soul (209b1), when he converses with a fair youth, brings forth what he has long been pregnant with,¹ and the two cherish it together. Now to translate the relevant passage (211e4–212a7):

Do you think his would be a poor life who gazes thither and beholds *that* [i.e. Beauty itself, pure, bodiless, and divine] with the appropriate faculty² and dwells with it? Do you not see that it is in that place alone, seeing Beauty with that by which she may be seen, that he brings forth not phantoms of virtue³ but true virtue, as his contact is with no phantom but with truth? And he who bears and nurtures true virtue is dear to the gods, and is immortal if any man is. This, Phaedrus and gentlemen, is what Diotima said and I believe, and believing it I try to persuade others too that towards gaining this possession human nature can have no better helper than Eros.

'This possession', I submit, is the immortality to which the philosopher looks forward in the *Phaedo*. Immortality is not the main theme of the *Symposium*, and Plato has no wish to go over the same ground again. One might wonder, for instance, if only the philosopher is immortal, how there can be, as there is in the *Phaedo*, an appropriate fate after death – good, bad or indifferent – for everyone. Plato has not said, but he would never dignify with the title of immortality (which he, like all Greeks,⁴ equated with divinity) the continued existence in the wheel of births of a soul not yet purified of the body's weight.⁵

There remains a curious passage in which Diotima seems to

¹ & πάλαί ἐκύει τίς τε καὶ γεννᾷ 209c3. Cf. the next sentence: καὶ πῶς ἂν δέξαίτο ἑαυτῶ τοιούτους παῖδας μᾶλλον γεγενῆσθαι.

² I.e. intellect (νοῦς). See the parallel passages in Bury, *ad loc.*

³ εἰδῶλα ἀρετῆς, i.e. those of the 'lesser mysteries'. Similarly in *Phaedo* popular ἀρετή is contrasted with ἀληθὴς ἀρετή σκιαγραφία τις (69b).

⁴ Guthrie, *G. and G.* 115f. This I find the chief obstacle to agreement with Bernhard's thoughtful interpretation of immortality in the *Symp.* (*P. et le M.A.*, app. 11): it involves supposing that, there and in *Phaedo* as well, not only νοῦς but the whole soul as it functions in bodily life, even (because of transmigration) in animals, is immortal.

⁵ As is often pointed out, *Laws* bk 4 (721b–c) also speaks of procreation as the only immortality attainable. Yet in bk 10 of the same work individuals last on to experience *either* terrors in the underworld or 'if through intercourse with divine virtue they have become divine', translation to 'somewhere better' (904c–e).

enunciate what Crombie has called a 'Humian conception of a man's self as a succession of mental states'.¹ The problem may be insoluble, but let us see what she says (207d–208a). A man retains his identity throughout life, although not only is he constantly wasting and being renewed in body (as Cebes said in the *Phaedo*, 87d), but even in his personality (*psyche*), his character, habits, views, desires, pleasures, pains and fears never remain the same. Even more surprising (as Diotima calls it and some may agree), in our knowledge too we are never the same. Items of knowledge come and go: we lose them through forgetfulness and regain them through recollection. The first list of characteristics and emotions raises no difficulty, for all belong only to the soul in its embodied state: this is expressly asserted in the *Phaedo* (65d, 66c) of pains and pleasures, desires and fears, and is obviously true of the rest, so that their undeniable mutability has no relevance to the immortal intellect, which, while incarnate, must act to some extent 'with the body' (*Ph.* 66e) but will employ it as little as possible. As for knowledge, forgetfulness and recollection are equally undeniable facts to illustrate the changes in our mental life. We (our *psychai*) forget and remember because association with the body in this life prevents our knowledge from being perfect, and Diotima is talking of living human beings. The *Phaedo* is really the best commentary on this passage (66d):

If we are ever to know anything clearly, we must rid ourselves of the body and with the soul itself contemplate things in themselves. Then, when we are dead, as the argument shows, we shall get what we desire and claim to love, namely wisdom, but not while we live. If we cannot know anything clearly while with the body there are two alternatives: either we can never acquire knowledge or we can acquire it after death, since only then is the soul by itself, apart from the body. While we live, we shall be nearest to knowledge if we have only the minimum possible converse or association with the body – the barest necessity – and keep ourselves pure and uninfected by its nature until God himself releases us. Then in full purity and freed from the body's folly, we shall, we may be sure, join our fellows and know by our own powers the full unadulterated truth.

¹ *EPD* 1, 361–3; cf. II, 23 and 323. The label of a philosopher who lived many centuries later, in a very different climate of thought, is always an invitation to take a second look. For a discussion of the Humian position see Patterson, *P. on I.* 66ff.

Plato (as why should he not?) in different contexts uses 'knowledge' to mean both what we call knowledge in this life, subject to loss and recovery, and the perfect knowledge of the philosophic soul after its release; and *psyche* to mean the soul performing all vital functions (nourishment, reproduction, sensation as well as thought) through the medium of the body which inevitably causes it to suffer and change (πάσχειν), and also the soul (mind) 'itself by itself', the immortal part which (if in this life we have been lovers of wisdom) will escape to its divine kin and have perfect and direct knowledge of (communion with) the Forms. This should not cause difficulty. The one difference between *Phaedo* and *Symposium* is that in the latter Plato is more optimistic: even in this life the philosophic follower of Eros may regain the intellectual vision of the invisible Beauty itself.

Dialectic and the Forms. Beauty in the *Symposium* (described in the summary, p. 377 above) is the very paradigm of a Platonic Form, foreshadowed in the *Hippias Major* and enlarged on in the *Republic*. It is what all beautiful particulars share, yet exists also by itself, unaffected by whatever happens to them. Philosophic reasoning must precede its apprehension, which however is an instantaneous act of mental vision *transcending* thought, just as it is not itself a thought or knowledge (211a). The process leading to it is what the *Republic* (e.g. 532a) calls 'dialectic', in which the mind first becomes aware of the shared Forms in sets of particulars, then, discarding the senses, ascends 'by itself' to the grasp of higher (more universal) Forms and ultimately to the vision of the supreme Form of the Good, here represented in its aspect as Beauty, as is appropriate to a symposium on Love.¹ The progress from perception of particulars to apprehension of a Form, here vividly described as progress in Love, is equated with *anamnesis* at *Phaedrus* 249b–c, and so far it is legitimate to supplement one dialogue by another. From the *Phaedrus* we shall learn more about the Form of Beauty and our relation to it.

¹ The two are regarded as interchangeable at 204e (cf. also 201c), and commonly, though not always fairly, equated by P. So *Lys.* 216d, *Prot.* 360b, *Tim.* 87c, *Meno* 77b (where their equation is misleading, see p. 247 n. 1 above and cf. the defeat of Polus, pp. 288f.). I speak here of Forms, but for a different view see Moravcsik, *Reason and Eros* 295.

'*Sublimation*'. Since Freud, this word must inevitably occur to a reader of the *Symposium*. Cornford remarked (*U. Ph.* 78) that the ancient and modern doctrines of Eros have been compared¹ and even identified. He himself regarded them as opposed in one essential respect, that the concept of evolution, dominant in modern science and known to earlier Greek thought, was deliberately rejected by Plato. It is true that he is the enemy of any form of reductionism. He would never say that sexuality on a physical level is the most deeply rooted instinct in human nature. We share it with the beasts, and it is a Platonic axiom that what is most truly our own nature is what is *peculiar* to humanity. The soul (mind) is each of us, and the body, essentially alien, the instrument through which we must express ourselves in this temporary state. Freud² expressly preferred the Aristophanic view of the erotic instinct as a desire for regress to an earlier state of things.

Nevertheless, to borrow an Aristotelian tag, if in the species perfection is prior, the individual has to start from the bottom. Cornford's view might lead us into the error of Taylor, who called Eros 'a cosmogonic figure whose significance is hopelessly obscured by any identification with the principle of "sex"':³ Diotima's speech 'has left sexuality far behind'. At its climax of course it has, but even the philosopher can only reach his goal through an appreciation of beauty at its visible, physical level, indeed in a single handsome male body (211c). Only later will he learn to recognize beauty of

¹ He gives no ref. We may mention Dodds, *G. and I.* 218: 'Plato in fact comes very close here to the Freudian concept of libido and sublimation.' There is also S. Nachmansohn, 'Freuds Libidotheorie verglichen m. d. Eroslehre Platons', *Zschr. f. ärtzt. Psychoanalyse* 1915. The best full account of Platonic *eros* in the light of the psychological knowledge of its time (1926) is Lagerborg's *Plat. Liebe*, whose theses are summarized by Levinson, *D. of P.* 124f. (n. 129). Levinson's own chapter, though frankly a 'defence', is also well balanced and should be read by everyone who wishes to understand this side of Plato in his historical setting. For Cornford's view see also his article in *Hibbert J.* 1930, 218f.

² Quoted by T. Gould, *PL* 33f. For the relation between P. and Freud see also pp. 23f.

³ *PMW* 209. In fact Eros is a cosmogonic figure simply because in early belief the world was produced by sexual generation. Similarly Moravcsik (*Reason and Eros* 289, 291) regards it as impossible for P. to have meant either (a) that 'nobody can appreciate the beauty of mathematics without having appreciated bodily beauty', or (b) that 'one has to overcome one's sexual desire towards one person and direct it towards many'. So difficult is it (as I mentioned at the beginning) for a modern man to understand what philosophical *eros* meant to P.: (b) he expressly states at 210a–b. In general M.'s is an article curiously out of touch with the mood of the *Symp.* See also Rosen 225 n. 79 and 265 n. 143.

soul in a less favoured frame (210b). We shall be told in the *Phaedrus* that active indulgence of desire at the lowest level hampers the ascent; Plato never approves of homosexual intercourse. But the ascent is still described as 'a right use of boy-love' (τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστᾶν 211b), and the explaining away of the barrenness of pederasty at 209c as fecundity in children worthier than those produced by marriage of man and woman (which will in any case not be to everybody's taste) is in striking contrast to the violent condemnation of it in the *Laws* as deliberate murder of the human race. (At *Phaedrus* 251a it is 'an unnatural pleasure'.) Yet the message of the two works is essentially the same. The 'third type of lover' in the *Laws* is surely the philosophic lover of the *Symposium* – in fact, for Plato, Socrates himself.

There is a third category, compounded of the other two. The first problem is to discover what this third kind of lover is really after. There is the further difficulty that he himself is confused and torn between two opposing instincts; the one tells him to enjoy his beloved, the other forbids him. The lover of the body, hungry for his partner who is ripe to be enjoyed, like a luscious fruit, tells himself to have his fill, without showing any consideration for his beloved's character and disposition. But in another case physical desire will count for very little and the lover will be content to gaze upon his beloved without lusting for him – a mature and genuine desire of soul for soul. That body should sate itself with body he'll think outrageous; his reverence and respect for self control, courage, high principles and good judgement will make him want to lead a life of purity, chaste lover with chaste beloved. The combination of the first two is the 'third' love we enumerated a moment ago.¹

There are many indications that Socrates belonged to the 'mixed' type, and did not rise without a struggle from the popular to the philosophic Eros;² but the progress becomes easier as it continues, for as Diotima hints and the *Republic* asserts, when the stream of Eros is channelled in one direction its force is lessened in others.³ For this progress 'sublimation' is a temptingly convenient term,

¹ *Laws* 838e and 837b–d (trans. Saunders with one small alteration).

² See vol. III, 393–8, especially the quotation from *Charm.* and the story of Zopyrus (pp. 394 and 397).

³ *Rep.* 485d. Cf. Cornford, *U. Ph.* 72f.

provided we understand the different philosophical backgrounds against which it is being used: the purification of Eros is achieved by conscious effort, whereas Freudian sublimation is an unconscious re-channelling of unconscious (because repressed) impulses. But how much Freud had in common with at least the Lesser Mysteries appears from this sentence about his teaching: 'The world of cultural achievement is won only by denying to the instincts the direct gratifications which they seek and by using the energy so released in sublimated forms for the tasks of art and science.'¹

Alcibiades. When Alcibiades knew Socrates (some twenty years his senior), the internal conflict was long over, and Socrates could talk to him as he does in Plato's *First Alcibiades* and exhibit the super-human self-control which Alcibiades so shamelessly and inimitably describes here. Diotima's last words were that the man who has seen Beauty itself, 'having brought forth and nurtured true goodness, will have the privilege of being beloved of God, and becoming, if ever a man can, immortal himself' (trans. Hamilton). This lofty conclusion is the climax of the whole work, and a lesser writer might have made it the end. But Plato will not have us forget that we are at a party. The convivial is as important as the serious, and any difference of emphasis between the treatment of sex here and in the *Laws* is fully accounted for by the fact that in the latter three elderly gentlemen are solemnly discussing legislation in the middle of the day, whereas the theme of these after-dinner improvisations over the wine bowl is the praise of Love. We are not to remain on the heights of philosophy, and the sudden appearance of Alcibiades swaying and shouting in the doorway effectively brings us back to earth. His way of complying with the rule of the house is to offer an encomium on Socrates instead of Eros. The meaning is plain. He is not evading the rule, for Eros is made visible in Socrates, the daemonic² figure not to be compared to any other man who ever lived, but only to the demigods (221d). The greatest Socratic paradox is Socrates himself: the ideal statesman

¹ A. MacIntyre, art. 'Freud' in *Ency. Phil.* III, 251.

² Cf. 203a, the δαιμόνιος ἄνθρωπος who is σοφός in the art of bringing man and god into communication.

who took no part in public life (*Gorg.* 521d), the embodiment of Love who is proof against all sexual temptation, the ugly satyr who is 'divine and golden, beautiful and wonderful' within.

(3) THE PHAEDRUS

*Date.*¹ The opinion that the *Phaedrus* was Plato's earliest work was expressed in ancient times and survived into the nineteenth century. In both periods it was mainly based on the supposed youthful freshness of subject and treatment and lyricism of style. It was even suggested by Pohlenz that in his fifties Plato could not have written of sensual passion as he did! Nowadays it is placed fairly late in the middle period. Most would say it was written after the *Phaedo*, *Symposium* and *Republic*, a few after the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus* or even the *Sophist*. Stylometric evidence is said to have 'cumulative weight' (de Vries 11, i.e. in favour of a fairly late date), but must surely face peculiar difficulties in a work containing a speech allegedly (and perhaps actually) by the orator Lysias, another in competition with it, and long sections in a highly lyrical vein. 'The *Phaedrus* is out of the general line of Plato's development, and its metre has a logaedic character' (Shewring, *CQ* 1931, 14). As for its philosophy, Plato's refusal to confine one dialogue to a single subject has upset his critics, who do not always see connexions where he did. His enthusiastic talk of love, of the soul and its immortality, of the Forms and *anamnesis* and a place above the heavens would relate the *Phaedrus* closely to *Phaedo* and *Symposium*, but some think that he has introduced a completely new dialectical method which recurs in *Sophist* and *Politicus*, thus putting it firmly, and perhaps even late, in the 'critical' group. It certainly introduces without warning a proof of

¹ For full orientation see Robin, *TPA* 63-109 and Budé ed. ii-ix, Hackforth 3-7, Jowett III, 107 n. 1, de Vries 7-11. (Reff. to Hackforth and de Vries are to their editions of the dialogue.) The ancient testimonies (D.L. 3.38 and Olympiod. *V. Plat.* 3) are quoted by de Vries, 7. In addition note (a) that Levinson in 1953 still championed a fairly early date on the familiar psychological grounds (*D. of P.* 96 n. 48: certain features 'all bespeak a younger and less tranquil psyche' than P.'s when he wrote *Rep.*); (b) that Runciman (*PLE* 3) would put *Phdr.* between *Parm.* and *Theaet.* on the grounds that the former marks P.'s renunciation of the hypothetical method and paves the way for the method of *diairesis*, but cf. p. 431 n. 1 below. Gulley (*PTK* 108) and Robinson (*Essays* 58) follow von Arnim in putting it after the *Theaetetus*.

immortality unconnected with those in *Phaedo* or *Republic* and turning up again in the *Laws*. Added to all this, its ostensible subject is rhetoric.¹ Truly, as Stenzel said, 'the brilliant argument of the *Phaedrus* turns to ridicule all our ideas of chronology'. In my own view the novelty of the method of collection and division has been exaggerated, and the *Phaedrus* is much more in the spirit of the middle group than of the *Sophist*. (Cf. pp. 430f. below.)

Time, place and characters. If we wish to press Plato on the date of the conversation, a number of facts must be taken into account which are not easy to reconcile.² But in view of the magical air of unreality which is shed over this ideal summer's day, we may be content to place it, with Robin, 'en dehors de toute histoire'. Not that this applies to the scene of the conversation. 'The spot in question', said Thompson in 1868 (p. 9), 'is easily discovered by the visitor at the present day; there is indeed but one place answering the conditions, and it answers them perfectly'; and Robin accompanies the dialogue with an archaeological description and sketch-map, while admitting that the neighbourhood is sadly changed (ed., x-xii). To its ideal character we shall return later. Here I will content myself with a quotation from Cornford (*Princ. Sap.* 66f.):

This is the only Socratic dialogue of which the scene is laid in the open country. Socrates remarks that such surroundings are strange to him: he never leaves the city, because fields and trees have nothing to teach him. On this occasion, however, he breaks out in admiration of the trees and grass, the fragrance of the flowering shrubs, and the shrill music of the cicadas. The place, too, is consecrated to Achelous and the nymphs. Socrates gradually falls under its inspiration and speaks in lyrical language, which, as the astonished *Phaedrus* notes, is very unlike his usual manner. Throughout the dialogue, up to the prayer to Pan at its close, we are not allowed to forget the influences of nature and of inspiration which haunt the spot.

This singularly elaborate and beautiful setting is symbolic. Socrates is taken out of the surroundings which he never left. Within the limits of his dramatic art Plato could not have indicated more clearly that this poetic and inspired Socrates was not known to his habitual companions.

¹ For its relation to other dialogues see also p. 324 above.

² For a succinct statement of them all, combine Hackforth 8 with de Vries 7.

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