principle. The lover will believe that by being of service in any way to the beloved who has gratified him he will be justified in so serving him. The beloved will believe that by helping in any way the one who is making him wise and good he too will be justified in so helping him. Thus the lover will be able to contribute to his beloved’s understanding and excellence in general, and the beloved will seek to acquire these qualities for his education and his wisdom in general. Therefore, when these two principles exist and are directed to the same end, then and only then does it come about that it is right for a beloved to gratify his lover; otherwise, not.

‘In this circumstance, even being deceived is not shameful, but in all other cases gratification brings shame on the beloved whether he is deceived or not. For if the beloved, believing his lover to be rich, gratifies him for the sake of money, but is deceived and gets no money because the lover turns out to be poor, it is still shameful because a beloved like that seems to reveal his true character. He shows that he is prepared to do any service to anyone for the sake of money, and this behaviour is not right. By the same token, if a beloved gratifies a lover on the grounds that the man is good and that he himself will become a better person through that man’s love, but is deceived and the man turns out to be bad and devoid of excellence, in this case his being deceived is a noble error. This beloved too seems to have made clear his own character, but he shows that he is keen to do anything for anybody for the sake of excellence and becoming a better person, and this is the noblest thing of all. Thus it is entirely right to gratify a lover when it is for the sake of excellence. This is the love that belongs to the heavenly goddess, and it is itself heavenly and of great value to the state and to individuals alike, since it compels the lover to take great care with regard to his own excellence and the beloved to do the same. But all other kinds of love belong to the other goddess, the common one.

‘This is my contribution, Phaedrus, the best I can deliver on the spur of the moment, on the subject of Love’.

Pausanias came to a pause (those experts in rhetoric teach me to speak in this balanced way). Aristodemus said that it was Aristophanes’

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74 nomos. 75 phronesis.
76 ‘Pausanias came to a pause’ translates the Greek Pausaniai pausamenou, two very similar-sounding words, each with four syllables of corresponding length; hence the reference to balance.
77 ‘the sophos’ (plural of sophos, see sophia).
The Symposium ('The Drinking Party')

...turn to speak, but either through over-eating or for some other reason he had an attack of hiccups and could not do so. The doctor Eryximachus was reclining on the next couch, so Aristophanes turned to him. 'You are just the person, Eryximachus,' ²⁸ either to put a stop to my hiccups or to speak instead of me until I stop myself'.

'I will do both', replied Eryximachus. 'I will speak in your place, and you can speak in mine when you have recovered. If in the course of my speech you hold your breath for a while and your hiccups are disposed to stop, all well and good. But if that fails, gargle with water. However, if the hiccups are very persistent, find something to tickle your nose with and make yourself sneeze. If you do this once or twice even the most obstinate case will stop',

'Start speaking now', said Aristophanes, 'and I shall do what you say'. So Eryximachus began to address them.

'Well now, Pausanias made a good start to his speech but failed to end it adequately, so I think that I have to try to give it a proper conclusion. It seems to me that Pausanias is right in distinguishing two kinds of Love; but the fact is that Love influences not only human souls²⁹ in response to physical beauty,³⁰ he has influence on all other things and on their responses as well. Love pervades the bodies of all animals and all that is produced in the earth, which means that Love pervades virtually everything that exists. All this is something I feel I have observed from my own profession of medicine, and I know how great and wonderful the god is and how his influence extends over all things both human and divine.

'I shall start by speaking about medicine, in order to give pride of place to that profession.³¹ It is the nature of bodies to have these two kinds of Love in them. As everyone agrees, bodily health and bodily sickness are different and unlike things, and when things are unlike the objects of their love and desire are unlike also. So love in the healthy body is one thing, and love in the unhealthy body is quite another. Now, Pausanias was saying a moment ago that it is right to gratify good men and wrong to gratify the immoral, and so it is with the body. It is right and, indeed, obligatory to gratify the good and healthy parts; that is what we call medicine. It is wrong to gratify the bad and diseased parts, and one

²⁸ His name could be penned upon as 'Hiccup-fighter'. ²⁹ paideia. ³⁰ The Greek indicates male beauty, but could include female beauty. ³¹ technē.
truly versed in the practice of medicine will refuse to do so. In brief, medicine is knowledge of the influence of love on the body in respect of replenishment and depletion;\textsuperscript{82} and the man with the best medical knowledge is the one who can distinguish the right from the wrong kind of love in these processes. And the man who knows how to bring about change so as to convert the one into the other, and who also knows how to implant love where it is required and remove it where it is not, is a skilful practitioner.\textsuperscript{83} In fact he must be able to reconcile the most hostile elements in the body and make them love\textsuperscript{84} one another. The most hostile are the extreme opposites, hot and cold, bitter and sweet, dry and moist, and so on. It was because he knew how to impart love and unanimity to these opposites that our forebear Asclepius founded our profession,\textsuperscript{85} or so say the poets — like those here\textsuperscript{86} — and I believe them. Medicine therefore is, as I say, entirely directed by this god, as are gymnastic training and agriculture also.

Now, it is obvious to anyone who gives even the slightest thought to the matter that the same reconciliation of opposites applies in music. This perhaps is what Heraclitus meant,\textsuperscript{87} although his actual wording is not accurate; for he says of “the One”\textsuperscript{88} that “it is in agreement while being in disagreement with itself, like the harmony\textsuperscript{89} of the taut bow or the lyre”. However, to speak of a harmony as being in disagreement with itself, or as existing when it is composed of elements still in disagreement, is quite absurd. But perhaps what he meant was that harmony is created out of elements, namely the high and the low, that were originally in disagreement but were subsequently brought into agreement through the art of music. For of course harmony could not arise out of the elements high and low while they were still in disagreement, because harmony is concord and concord is a kind of agreement, and agreement is impossible between elements that are in disagreement as long as they remain.

\textsuperscript{82} Ill-health was sometimes ascribed to an imbalance of elements in the body, which might be thought to be overfull of one element and empty of another.

\textsuperscript{83} agathos demuographos.\textsuperscript{44} tran.\textsuperscript{45} techne.\textsuperscript{46} Agathon and Aristophanes.

\textsuperscript{87} The philosopher Heraclitus was notorious for the obscurity of his sayings. This saying can be found in H. Diels and W. Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker (often reprinted), Vol. 1, Heraclitos B51.

\textsuperscript{88} The universe.

\textsuperscript{89} harmonia; the fundamental meaning is ‘a fitting together’, ‘structure’, but the word has musical connotations also. ‘Harmony’ as understood in ancient Greek music does not exactly correspond with the modern notion of harmony.
in that state. It is impossible to create harmony where instead of agreement there is disagreement. The same is true of rhythm. Rhythm is created when elements which were originally in disagreement, namely the fast and the slow, are subsequently brought into agreement. Here it is music that creates agreement in all these things by implanting mutual love and unanimity between the different elements, just as in the previous case it was medicine. Music too, therefore, is knowledge of the influence of love, in this case in respect of harmony and rhythm.

'Now, in the construction of harmony and rhythm there is no difficulty in discerning the influence of love, and love as a duality is not as yet in evidence here. But when it is a case of employing rhythm and harmony in real life, either when creating new music, that is to say in composition, or when making correct use of tunes and metres that already exist, that is to say in education, at this point difficulties arise and there is need of a skilful practitioner. We return yet again to the same theme, that it is the well-ordered individuals, including those who, while not yet well-ordered, will be helped by love to become so, who should be gratified, and their love safeguarded. Theirs is the beautiful, the heavenly Love, the Love that comes from the muse Urania. But the other Love, the common one, comes from Polyynia, and should be used, if at all, with caution, so that the pleasure he brings may be enjoyed but no licentiousness implanted. Similarly, in my own profession, it is no small effort to deal properly with the appetites stimulated by cookery in order that the pleasure this brings may be enjoyed without ill effect. So, in music, in medicine and in every thing else, human as well as divine, one must, so far as possible, watch out for both kinds of Love; for they are both present.

'Even the seasons of the year have a full measure of both kinds of Love in their composition. When the elements I was mentioning just now, hot and cold, dry and wet, enjoy the advantage of orderly love in

\[^{98}\] This refers to that part of elementary education which consisted of learning poetry by heart and then how to sing it to the lyre.

\[^{99}\] *koumias*; see *koumis*.

\[^{99}\] 'The heavenly one', the name of one of the Muses, who were the goddesses of artistic inspiration. Eryximachus is suggesting that the poetry and music inspired by Urania is morally good, but the kind inspired by Polyymnia (another Muse; her name may also be spelled Polumnia) might not be so. The name Polyymnia, 'she of many hymns', suggests plurality and so, perhaps, vulgarity. The *Republic* suggests that Plato himself thought that the moral effect of most kinds of poetry and music was bad.
their relations with one another, they achieve a harmony and a blending in the right proportions.  Then they bring abundance and well-being not only to humans but to all other animals and plant life, and do no harm. But whenever the other, violent sort of Love gains control of the seasons, he causes much destruction and harm. This is when plague and many other abnormal diseases tend to appear and afflict animals and plants. Frost, hail and blight arise from excess or disorder in the balance of such erotic influences. It is the knowledge of the relationship of these things to the movements of the heavenly bodies and the seasons of the year which we call astronomy.

‘Furthermore, all sacrifices and all matters that are the province of seers — that is to say, all the ways in which gods and men have dealings with one another — are entirely concerned with either the safeguarding or the cure of Love. For if, instead of gratifying and honouring the moderate Love and giving him pride of place in every enterprise, people honour the other Love, then every kind of impiety, towards parents living or dead as well as towards the gods, is likely to result. Indeed divination has been charged with the task of watching out for those who have this sort of love, and curing them. Divination is also the agent which brings about good relations between gods and humans because it knows what aspects of love in people’s lives have an effect on correct religious behaviour.

‘This is how great, how mighty, in short how complete the power of Love is in all his aspects. But it is the Love who is concerned with the good and finds fulfilment in it in company with temperance and justice, whether here on earth or among the gods, who has the greatest power and gives us all our happiness. It is he who enables us to associate and be friends with one another and with the gods, our masters.

‘Well now, I too may have passed over many things in my praise of Love, but if so it was not deliberate. If I have omitted anything it is up to you, Aristophanes, to fill the gap. However, if you have it in mind to praise the god in some other way, then proceed, and praise him, since you have got rid of your hiccups’.

Aristodemus said that Aristophanes duly took his turn. ‘The hiccups have certainly stopped’, he said, ‘though not before I applied the sneezing cure. It surprises me that the good order94 of one’s body

93 ‘in the right proportions’ translates sophros; see sophrosyne.
94 A sly joke against Eryximachus’ speech, hence the latter’s sharp response.
The Symposium ('The Drinking Party')

desires the kind of ticklings and noises that make up a sneeze. When I resorted to sneezing the hiccups stopped immediately’.

‘Watch what you are saying, my dear Aristophanes’, said Eryximachus.

189b ‘If you play the fool beforehand you force me to look out for more jokes during your speech as well, when you could speak without interruption’.

Aristophanes laughed and replied, ‘Well said, Eryximachus, and please forget I spoke. There is no need for you to be on the look-out, because I am anxious enough on my own behalf about what I am going to say. My fear is not of being funny — that would be a bonus and very suitable for one of my profession — but of being ridiculous’.

‘You think you’ll get away with your barbed remarks, Aristophanes’, Eryximachus said. ‘But be careful and do not say what you cannot justify later. Then perhaps I will decide to let you off’.

189c ‘In fact, Eryximachus’, said Aristophanes. ‘it is my intention to take a different line from you and Pausanias. It is my belief that people have entirely failed to understand the power of Love, for if they had understood they would have erected the greatest temples and altars to him and would offer up the largest sacrifices. As it is, nothing of the sort is done for him, though he deserves it more than anyone else. For he is the most benevolent of gods to humankind, our helper and the healer of those ills whose cure would bring the greatest happiness to the human race. I am going to try to explain his power to you all, and then you in your turn can teach everyone else. In the first place you have to understand the nature of our human anatomy and what it has undergone. Once upon a time our anatomy was quite different from what it is now. In the first place there were not merely two sexes as there are now, male and female, but three, and the third was a combination of the other two. This sex itself has disappeared but its name, androgynous, survives. At that time the androgynous sex was distinct in form and name, having physical features from both the male and the female, but only the name now exists, and that as a term of insult.95

189d ‘Secondly, the form of every person was completely round, with back and sides making a circle, and with four arms, the same number of legs,

95 Aristophanes’ story, which resembles a folk-tale or a fable, is not known elsewhere.

96 androgynous: For the Greeks generally it denoted not Aristophanes’ creation but an effeminate or cowardly man.
and two faces exactly alike set on a round neck. There was one head for the two faces (which looked in opposite ways), four ears, two sets of genitals and everything else as you might guess from these particulars. They walked about upright, as we do today, backwards or forwards as they pleased. Whenever they wanted to move fast they pushed off from the ground and quickly wheeled over and over in a circle with their eight limbs, like those acrobats who perform cartwheels by whirling round with their legs straight out.

‘The reason for the sexes being as they were and three in number is that originally the male was the offspring of the Sun, the female of the Earth, and the androgynous of the Moon,97 which shares the nature of both Sun and Earth. Because they resembled their parents the offspring themselves were round and their movement was circular also. They were awesome in strength and might, and their ambition was great too. They made an assault on the gods, and what Homer says about Ephialtes and Otus98 is said about these too, that they tried to make an ascent to heaven in order to attack the gods.

Zeus and the other gods deliberated about what they should do but found no solution. They could hardly kill them and annihilate the whole race with thunderbolts as they had the giants, for then they would be putting an end also to the worship and sacrifices they received from human beings, but neither could they put up with their insolence. After much hard thought Zeus delivered his conclusion. ‘I think I have a plan’, he said, ‘that will allow humans to exist but at the same time put an end to their outrageous behaviour by making them weaker. For the present I shall split each one of them in half, and that will make them weaker, and at the same time they will be more useful to us by being greater in number. They will walk upright on two legs, and if they persist in their insolence and refuse to keep quiet I will split them in half again, and they will have to hop about on one leg only’.

So saying he proceeded to cut everyone in two, just as people cut up sorb-apples for preserving or slice eggs with a hair. As he divided them he told Apollo to take each separated half and turn round the face and half neck to the cut side, so that each person by contemplating its own cut surface might behave more moderately. He also told Apollo to heal

97 See Helios, Gaea and Selene in Glossary of names.
98 Mythical giants. See Odyssey 11, 305-20.
their wounds. So Apollo proceeded to turn the faces round and gathered the skin all together on the belly, as we now call it, like a purse with a drawstring, leaving one opening in the centre which he fastened with a knot, and which is now called the navel. He also smoothed out most of the wrinkles and fashioned the chest, using a tool such as shoemakers use when they smooth out wrinkles in leather on the last. But he let a few wrinkles remain, around the belly and navel, to be a reminder of what happened ages ago.

'After the original nature of every human being had been severed in this way, the two parts longed for each other and tried to come together again. They threw their arms around one another in close embrace, desiring to be reunited, and they began to die of hunger and general inactivity because they refused to do anything at all as separate beings. Whenever one of the two died and the other was left alone, the survivor would look for another mate to embrace, either the half of an original woman, as we now call it, or the half of a man. But in any case they were beginning to die out until Zeus took pity on them and thought up another plan: he moved their genital organs round to the front. Up until then they had their genitals on (what was originally) the outside of their bodies, and conception and birth took place not in the body after physical union but, as with cicadas, in the ground. By moving their genitals round to the front, Zeus now caused them to reproduce by intercourse with one another through these organs, the male penetrating the female. He did this in order that when couples encountered one another and embraced, if a man encountered a woman, he might impregnate her and the race might continue, and if a man encountered another man, at any rate they might achieve satisfaction from the union and after this respite turn to their tasks and get on with the business of life.

'So it is that ever since that far-off time, love of one person for another has been inborn in human beings, and its role is to restore us to our ancient state by trying to make unity out of duality and to heal our human condition. For each of us is a mere tally of a person, one of two sides of a filleted fish, one half of an original whole. We are all continually searching for our other half. Those men who are sliced from originals

99 It is not clear what Plato thought about the reproductive behaviour of cicadas.
100 eros.
101 A tally is one of two corresponding halves of a small object such as a coin or a dice (see 193a), one part being kept by each of two parties as proof of a transaction between them.
which comprised both sexes (formerly called androgynous) are lovers of women, and most adulterers originate from this sex, as do adulteresses and all women who are lovers of men. Women who are sliced from the wholly female sex are not at all interested in men but are attracted towards other women, and female homosexuals come from this original sex. Men who are sliced from the wholly male original seek out males, and being slices of the male, while they are still boys they feel affection for men and take pleasure in lying beside or entwined with them. In youth and young manhood this sort of male is the best because he is by nature the most manly. Some people say such males are without shame, but that is not true. They do what they do not out of shamelessness but out of confidence, courage and manliness, and they embrace that which is like themselves. And there is good evidence for this in the fact that only males of this type, when they are grown up, prove to be the real men in politics. Once they reach manhood, they become lovers of boys and are not naturally inclined to marry or produce children, though they are compelled by convention. They are quite content to live out their lives with one another and not marry. In short, such a male is as a boy a lover of men, and as a man a lover of boys, always embracing his own kind.

‘Now, whenever a lover of boys, or anyone else for that matter, meets his own actual other half, the pair are overcome to an extraordinary degree by sensations of affection, intimacy and love, and they virtually refuse to be parted from each other even for a short time. These are the couples who pass their whole lives together; yet they could not say what it is they want from one another. For no one would suppose it to be only the desire for love-making that causes the one to yearn for the other so intensely. It is clear that the soul of each wants something else which it cannot put into words but it feels instinctively what it wants and expresses it in riddles. If the god Hephaestus, welding tools in hand, were to stand over them where they lie together, and ask, “What is it that you two want from each other?” they would be unable to answer. Suppose he were to ask them again, “Is this your desire to be always together, as close as possible, and never parted from each other day or night? If this is what you want, I am ready to join you together and fuse you until, instead of two, you become one. For your

191c philein. 191d or ‘bravest’; see under andros. 192a phila; see philein. 192b oikeiotes.
192c eros. 192d epitheumai.
whole lives long the two of you will live together as one, and when you
die you will die together and even in the Underworld you will be one
rather than two. 'Tell me if this is what you long for and if it will
satisfy you to achieve this'.

'We know that no one who heard these words would deny them or
would admit to wanting anything else. He would simply think that to
join with and melt into his beloved, so that instead of two they should
become one, was exactly what he had so long desired. The reason is that
our nature was originally like this and we were a whole, and the desire
and pursuit of the whole is called love. In the past, as I say, we were
one, but at the present time through our wrongdoing we have been
made by Zeus to live apart, as the Arcadians have been by the Spar-
tans. And if we are not well-behaved towards the gods, the fear is
that we may be split up once more and go around looking like the
people you see in profile on monuments, sawn in half along the line of
the nose, or like the half-dice used as tallies. For this reason we
should all promote reverence towards the gods in all things so as to
avoid the fate we do not want and obtain the one we do want, taking
Love as our guide and our leader. No one should oppose Love (and he
opposes him whoever is the enemy of the gods). For if we become
friends and make our peace with the god then we shall find and join our
own particular beloved, which happens rarely at the present time.

'I hope Eryximachus won't treat my speech as comedy and take it
that I am alluding to Pausanias and Agathon. It may be that those two
really do belong to this category and are both wholly male in origin, but
I am actually talking about men and women everywhere when I say that
if we were to achieve that perfect love in which each of us meets his own
beloved and so returns to his original state, then the human race
would be happy. If this would be the best outcome of all, it follows that in the
present circumstances what comes nearest to this ideal is best; that is, to
find a beloved who is after one's own heart. If we are to praise the god

\footnote{\textit{eran}.}
\footnote{It is usually thought that this simile refers anachronistically to the dispersal by the Spartans of
the people of Mantinea in Arcadia to their original villages. Since the dispersal took place in
385 BC and is the latest datable event mentioned in the \textit{Symposium}, it has been concluded by
most commentators that this is the earliest possible date for Plato's composition of the
dialogue. See Introduction footnote 3.}
\footnote{\textit{kómous}, see under \textit{kómos}.}
\footnote{See footnote 101.}
\footnote{The meaning of this obscure parenthesis is disputed.}
The Symposium ('The Drinking Party')

who brings this about then it is Love that by rights we should praise. It
is Love who in the present confers on us the greatest benefit by leading
us to that which is nearest to ourselves, and for the future gives us high
hopes that if we show reverence to the gods, he will restore us to our
original state, and heal us and make us blessed and happy.

'This is my speech about Love, Eryximachus', Aristophanes con-
cluded, 'and very different from yours. As I asked you, please do not
treat it as funny, but let us listen to what all the remaining speakers have
to say, or rather, the other two: only Agathon and Socrates are left'.
'I shall heed what you say', said Eryximachus (according to
Aristodemus). 'In fact I found your speech most enjoyable. If I were not
well aware that Socrates and Agathon are experts on the subject of love
I should be very worried in case they would find nothing to say in view
of the wide variety of things that have been said already. As it is,
though, I am quite confident'.

'That is because you have already made your own successful con-
tribution, Eryximachus', said Socrates. 'If you were where I am now, or
rather, where I shall be perhaps, when Agathon too has made a splendid
speech, you would be very worried indeed and in the state of panic I am
in now'.

'Your praise, Socrates, has a wicked purpose', said Agathon. 'You
want to make me lose my head at the thought of the audience having
high expectations of a great speech from me'.

'But I saw your assurance and confidence', Socrates replied, 'when
you went on to the platform with the actors and looked straight ahead at
that huge audience without being in the least perturbed, and just before
your own plays were to be performed too. I should have to be extremely
forgetful to think you would lose your head now at the thought of a few
people like us'.

'What do you mean, Socrates?' said Agathon. 'Surely you don't think
me so obsessed by the theatre as not to realise that, to anyone with any
sense, a small but thoughtful audience is far more terrifying than a large
and thoughtless one?'

'Of course not, Agathon', he said. 'In your case I couldn't possibly
think anything so crass. I know very well that if you were faced with
people you considered intelligent' you would take more notice of

113 sophos.