

Myth and Science around Gender and Sexuality: Eros and the Three Sexes in Plato's *Symposium*

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Even the lover of myth [philomythos] is in a sense a lover of wisdom [philosophos],
For myth is composed of wonders.
Aristotle¹

Plato's *Symposium* contains some myths treating matters of gender and erotics, among them Aristophanes' tale of the three primordial sexes of mankind. The following text² interprets the role of this myth both within the context of the *Symposium* and in modern science and expounds how the concepts of the third sex and androgyny have been re-actualized by sexology and psychoanalysis since the 19th century. The similarities with the ancient positions demonstrate the pertinence and power of the myths' overall propositions. The differences seem to imply the effective presence of other myths of Judaeo-Christian origin. In any case, the ancient tensions between an Aristophanic and a Socratic attitude are still active. Along these lines, the conceptual relations of androgyny or the third sex with erotic preferences are clarified.

Plato's *Symposium*

Plato's *Symposium*³ contains seven *encomia*, i.e. speeches of praise. Six are on Eros,⁴ one is on Socrates, and all contain mythological references, if not complete tales that may be considered myths in themselves. Symposia being men's drinking parties, Plato's *Symposium* depicts Athenian life at a very light-hearted moment in 416 BC. The worldly Agathon, a tragedian in his thirties, had invited some of the foremost Athenian citizens to his house in order to celebrate his first competition victory, gained the previous day. The guests have heavy heads from the public party on the eve, so they decide to drink moderately, send the flute-girl away, and deliver eulogies on Eros, a god neglected by poets and sophists (177a5–e5).

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Plato wrote the *Symposium* after 385 BC, more than 30 years after Agathon's victory. In order to better appreciate the speeches that Plato puts into the mouths of the protagonists, it is important to know something of what had happened after 416. In 415, Alcibiades had ruined himself and Athens by initiating and leading an excursion to conquer Sicily, which ended in disaster. Athens, still weakened by the Sicilian catastrophe, surrendered to Sparta in 405, after long years of war. In 399, at the age of 70, Socrates was condemned to death and executed upon charges of blasphemy and the corruption of young men. The decision was reached by democratic vote. In his *Clouds* (423), Aristophanes had drawn a picture of Socrates as a sophist that corresponded well to the charges. Socrates' intense relationship with Alcibiades strengthened the impression that a promising youth had been misguided by a philosopher worshipping the wrong gods. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates states that there are lies about him dating from long ago. Among those responsible for broadcasting them he names only one: Aristophanes.⁵ In 387, Plato founded his school at the Academy, a park with a gymnasium near Athens. At the entry of the gymnasium, a statue of Eros welcomed the visitors. The *Symposium* is written in the years of the foundation of the Academy. It may be considered a programmatic text.⁶

The first two speakers are known to be pupils of the sophist Protagoras. Young Phaidros praises Eros as the oldest of the gods and the motivator of virtuous deeds. The nobleman Pausanias, declared lover of Agathon and known to reject women, corrects him by distinguishing two kinds of *eros*, a common and a heavenly one, to whom correspond two Aphrodites (180d1ff.). 'Common' Aphrodite is a daughter of Zeus and Dione and thus participates in both sexes. Those touched by her are subject to common desire and will fall for whatever 'happens to come their way' (181b1–c1). 'Heavenly' Aphrodite, born of Uranus alone, has no female element in her make-up, and those who are inspired by her are exclusively attracted to the male sex. After this re-interpretation of the myths, Pausanias reports different people's ways of treating *paiiderastia*, the love of post-pubertal boys. Between the extremes of complete prohibition and encouragement of the young to indulge themselves, he praises the Athenian middle way as the ideal, for it espouses the noble approach to the practice.

The third speaker is the physician Eryximachos. He extends the distinction of the two kinds of *eros* – the Uranian creating order, the other excess – to the human body and to the universe. Then it is Aristophanes' turn, who presents a myth, with reference to the gods, to the genesis of present humankind and even to Homer (190b9), but leaving no doubt about its being some kind of parody. In the beginning, there were three sexes (*tria genè*, 189d8), all three of them being round like the celestial bodies they were born of. The original male (*arren*) sex was born of the sun, the female (*thèly*; 189e1) of the earth and the third, combining qualities of both the others and called androgynous (*androgynos*), was born of the moon. Androgyny is clearly understood as combining both male and female features, not as lacking them. Aristophanes also states that these bisexual⁷ beings do not exist any more, and that the word *androgynos* only serves as invective.

The original sphere-shaped humans had four arms and legs, two faces and two sets of genitals. They were very powerful, quick and self-confident, aspiring to the heavens and threatening the gods. The Olympians did not want to destroy them like

the Titans, however, because they liked receiving their sacrifices. Zeus had the ingenious idea of cutting them in two, thus doubling their number while diminishing their power. Apollo assisted by turning their heads around such that they should be confronted with their shameful state (190e2–5). As a result, though, the halves desperately longed for their other halves and, embracing one another, taking no thought for food or drink, died. To avoid this fate for all of them, Zeus had their genitals turned forward too, and thus contrived for them to find pleasure when they embraced and by this means draw enough sustenance to continue living. In addition, if a man and a woman met, they were made to beget children; hitherto, procreation had been achieved by laying eggs in the ground. This is how the present state of affairs came into being: the separate *androgynes* became the men who love women and the women who love men; the parts of the original females became the women who love women; and the parts of the original males became those men who love other men, among them the best of men, as being the most masculine. Only these men would, as adults, be naturally capable of governing others.

Now what is the goal of erotic desire? Although unable to say what they desire most, ‘no one would suppose this to be sexual intercourse [tôn aphrodisiôn synousial]’ (192c5). It is rather ‘to be together with each other . . . so that from being two you become one’ (192d5–e2). The best for everyone is thus to find your individual other half, ‘returning to our original nature’ (193c5). In case this is impossible, the next best thing is to find someone congenial (193d1). Aristophanes jokingly points out that this not only holds for people like Pausanias and Agathon, but for everyone, of no matter what sex or erotic preference. Warning that the present state is not necessarily the end of the story, he adds another practical conclusion: we should rather be pious and properly worship the gods, for Zeus has threatened otherwise to cut us in two again, and we will have to hop around on one leg.

The next one to talk is the beautiful Agathon who delivers a speech full of rhetorical splendour. He praises Eros as the happiest god, the most beautiful and virtuous of all, and receives a storm of applause. Now it is Socrates’ turn, but Socrates is pretending to have problems saying anything after a eulogy so rich in beautiful words that it even reminded him of Gorgias – a sophist known for his splendid style. He adds that he naively believed the task would be to say something *true*. After this ironic mockery, he finally accepts to speak and first engages in a short dialogue with Agathon, forcing him to admit that Eros cannot possess beauty, for he desires it and what one desires one does not yet possess. The same holds true for goodness. And being neither beautiful nor good, Eros cannot be a god either. After these clarifications, Socrates reports his encounter with Diotima, a wise Mantineian woman who told him *the truth* about Eros. For once it is Socrates who is guided by the interlocutor. He has to admit that Eros is not a god, but a *daimon*, a mediator between men and gods. Then Diotima tells the myth of the generation of Eros, son of Penia – the Greek noun ‘*penia*’ means poverty – and Poros, signifying the passage, transition or path in order to get somewhere, or the means to get out of a difficult situation. The name can be translated as *pathfinder*.⁸ Eros is always poor like his mother, with bare feet and without housing, ‘with lack as his constant companion’ (203d3). From his father’s side, however, he has inherited wit and courage. He is a ‘clever hunter’, always scheming ‘after the beautiful and good’, ‘passionate for wisdom and resourceful in

looking for it, philosophizing through all his life, a clever magician, sorcerer, and sophist' (203d4–7). Ever dying and flourishing again, Eros 'is in the middle between wisdom and ignorance' (203e5). Eros is then said to be necessarily a philosopher. He is not beautiful, because he is not the beloved but the lover (204b1–c5).

This mythological account illustrates what has already been stated by argument: Eros is not beautiful and not a god, but a mediator, a *daimon*. A thought, established by reason, is transferred to the imagination by a myth. The role of a Platonic myth is exemplified here. As if to ensure that the superiority of this kind of enlightened myth over the Aristophanic one is well understood, Diotima explicitly refutes the latter's central proposition:

There's a story that's told, according to which it's those who seek the other half of themselves who are in love; but my story declares that love is neither about a half nor of a whole, unless, my friend, it turns out actually to be a *good* thing, since people are even willing to have their own feet and hands cut off, if their own state seems to them to be a bad one. (205d10–e5)

For the rest of their encounter, Diotima teaches Socrates that *eros* aspires to permanently possess the good (206a11). The way to achieve this is by generation and birth in the beautiful (206e5). Procreation, be it bodily or in the soul, by teaching others or leaving name and fame in the world like the poets or legislators, is the way for mortals to be immortal. Finally, she tells the metaphor of the ascension to beholding beauty itself (210–12).

When Socrates ends his account of the true nature of Eros, Aristophanes wants to say something, for his own speech has been addressed. But he is cut off by the arrival of a loud Dionysian party led by the drunken Alcibiades. Of the silenced Aristophanes not a further word is reported in the *Symposium*. Instead, Alcibiades tells how he tried in vain to seduce Socrates, thus rectifying the mortal picture of Socrates seducing and badly influencing the promising young Alcibiades. To point the moral: Alcibiades did not ruin Athens because of having listened to Socrates, but despite it. He could not have been taught better.

Why does Plato introduce Diotima at the crucial point of the discussion of Eros?⁹ Rarely in Plato's works does Socrates' authority not suffice. If he needed some priest or seer, why not introduce Tiresias, the only mortal who has lived as a woman and a man? Tiresias is able to compare male and female pleasure and desire. However, procreation is something else. It seems that Plato wanted a 'real' woman at this intellectual climax of an all-male event, for who else would have more authority on procreation? It seems obvious that the introduction of Diotima constitutes an appropriation of the female procreative power by male subjectivity.¹⁰ Procreation is indeed converted into male conception and pregnancy, which leads to giving birth in the mind and soul. This kind of procreation is explicitly said to be superior.

Although this reading is supposedly adequate, the appropriation of procreative power may not be the goal of the manoeuvre, but only a side-effect. As David Halperin has argued, Plato succeeds in transforming the concept of male sexuality: it 'is not hierarchical but reciprocal; it is not acquisitive but creative'.¹¹ In Aristophanes' account, too, the desire to re-unite is first reciprocal. But, finally, he

adheres to an asymmetric notion of male-to-male relations between the younger beloved and the older lover (191e6–192b5). Diotima goes further by introducing reciprocity in pleasure and affection that was assumed only in erotic relations with women. Both partners become active participants; the experiencing and the arousing of desire are no longer distinguishable between the lover and the beloved, but are inherent in both. Secondly, whereas Aristophanes depicts the highest fulfilment between two lovers as staying together forever, Diotima proposes something further: the end is not a fusion, but something that is created by mutual love, something good and beautiful.

To sum up, while showing what a good myth should be like, Plato plainly rejects the content of the myth that is told by his Aristophanes. The thesis that desire strives for lost completeness is shown to be illusory. Instead of this retrospective and pious understanding that proposes an aetiological explanation of desire by prenatal physical and god-given states, the prospective and creative ‘pathfinder’ stance is favoured. Asking what to make of one’s desire is more important than to know where it comes from. What is more, it would be an error to think that we could answer the first question by knowing the answer to the latter, as Aristophanes’ myth pretends. This tale gained a life of its own, however.¹²

The modern reception of the myths

Sexology

K. H. Ulrichs is one of the first to introduce the concept of a third sex into modern science. This happened in the second half of the 19th century.¹³ I will present his ideas at some length, for they are fundamental to and recurrent within actual science. Ulrichs started writing at a time when a name was sought for the formerly unnameable, and when the concept of ‘homosexuality’¹⁴ was not yet established. A different word was proposed by Ulrichs who, inspired by Pausanias’ speech in the *Symposium*, coined the term ‘Uranism’. Pausanias’ misogynist distinction of pansexuals and men-lovers that treats desire for women as base, matches with ancient classifications rather than with that of the 19th century. Ulrichs nonetheless chose to classify as Uranians and Dionians those who nowadays would be called homo- and heterosexual persons respectively.¹⁵ In addition to (*dionian*) men and women, the Uranians constitute his third sex.¹⁶ Many Uranians would subsequently apply this term to themselves. Ulrichs attacked discrimination against them and tried to de-criminalize same-sex activities by proving with scientific means that this kind of desire is congenital (*Inclusa*, 1864). In order to achieve this, he refers to hermaphrodites, stating that nature develops in them traits of both sexes, which proves that nature makes exceptions to the rule that if the one is developed, the other is suppressed. He adds the fact that there are residues of the other sex in each human, and that there are the ‘germs’ of both sexes within each embryo (§7). Apart from the germs for somatic development, there are also those for later erotic desire (§9). Now the development of the germs may be non-concordant in different ways. Initially, in his *Inclusa* of 1864, he assumes that the development of the female germ of desire in an otherwise

male body constitutes the somatic substrate of male Uranism, which he takes to express a female desire. The character and *habitus* of a male *urning* would evolve to be completely female (§12). Only one year later (*Formatrix*, 1865), he improves his theory by conceding that erotic orientation, a person's proper *habitus* and, in addition, the preference for being active or passive, may all be combined in varying ways. The assumed embryonic germs for the development of character and soul are now multiplied (§89). To conclude, Ulrichs coined the concept of a female soul in a male body. *Anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa* is the subtitle of his *Memnon* (1868). At the same time, he also conceived of 'a thousand degrees' between man and woman.¹⁷

Where Ulrichs had laid out the fundamental ideas, Hirschfeld,¹⁸ guided by them, did an enormous amount of highly differentiated research, both of an empirical and an historical nature, pursuing the same project of scientific enlightenment and de-criminalization of homosexuality. He developed a rich taxonomy of the empirical phenomena of sexual differentiation and sexuality, e.g. distinguishing hermaphrodites and androgynes by referring to the primary and secondary sexual features respectively. This distinction is useful and has been retained in the scientific literature.¹⁹

Hirschfeld also uses the term of a third sex,²⁰ with explicit reference to Plato's Aristophanes. He identifies the third sex with his 'sexuelle Zwischenstufen' that in English would be called 'intersexes'.²¹ Among these he distinguishes four groups: hermaphrodites, androgynes, homosexuals and transvestites. He criticizes the fact that they were formerly mixed up, but continues to do this himself by subsuming them under one category: the third sex. This attitude is explicable only by the belief in a common somatic cause along the lines sketched by Ulrichs.

When we compare these theories to Aristophanes' myth of the three sexes, some similarities and differences are evident. What is strikingly similar is the attempt to explain erotic behaviour by temporally prior properties of sexual differentiation: by tracing it back either to one of three primordial sexes or to discordant male and female germ developments. Erotic appetite is thus explained by gendered somatic traits. Secondly, in both cases the erotic preference is determined before birth. It is thus out of reach of the concerned person's choice or responsibility. The explanation serves to claim acceptance of homosexuality in the 19th and 20th century and of passive male-to-male intercourse in the 5th century BC.²² Finally, hermaphroditism plays a central explanatory role for Ulrichs and Hirschfeld as well as for Plato's Aristophanes. However, the term is primarily used to claim acceptance for erotic practices – not for hermaphroditic persons.²³

The differences are also remarkable: Ulrichs and Hirschfeld use androgyny to explain homosexual, not heterosexual desire as Aristophanes does in the myth. Most importantly, however, a certain strong assumption in the modern account is completely lacking in the ancient one: desire is always implicitly conceived as directed towards the other sex. According to Ulrichs there must be something female in the male who desires another male: desiring a man is female desire. Aristophanes explicitly states the opposite. A man desiring a man is even more masculine, because he is a descendent of an originally complete male (192a1–b5). In addition, the desire-is-for-the-other-sex assumption matches neither Pausanias' distinction of common

pansexual desire versus noble desire for the male, nor Diotima's striving for the good and procreation. Something is added here, if not reversed. It may be conjectured that this is due to a different paradigm completely absent from the *Symposium*. It may be related to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, in particular to the myth of Adam and Eve.²⁴ This line of thought will be pursued in a moment.

A last difference has yet to be stated: the desire-is-for-lost-completeness story as told by Aristophanes in the *Symposium* is a parody of natural history, and it is clearly rejected by Plato. In modern science, the assumption that a person's erotic preference is determined before birth and rooted in a sexed physical constitution is an earnest one. Plato had parodied what nowadays is taken seriously and has become a scientific dogma.

Psychoanalysis

Freud refers to Aristophanes' story in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* of 1905.²⁵ The opening passage at the beginning of the first essay on sexual deviations is remarkable:

(1) Deviations concerning the sexual object

The popular theory of the sexual drive is matched most beautifully by the poetic legend [Fabel] of splitting the human [Mensch] in two halves – man and woman – who then, in love, strive to reunite. It therefore appears to be a big surprise to hear that there are men to whom the sexual object is not the woman, but the man, and women to whom this is not the man, but the woman. (p. 34; trans. MG)

Freud considers only one couple out of three, and indeed not Aristophanes' favoured one. It is stunning how the fact of same-sex desire that is supposed to be explained by the story gets even more surprising in the Freudian version. It has been conjectured that this oblivion is due to a 'socio-cultural background marked by a certain Judaeo-Christian representation of the primordial couple',²⁶ along with a marginalization of homosexuality which Freud had internalized.²⁷ The myth of Adam and Eve clearly affirms male superiority. If the biblical myth is structuring Freud's thinking in such a way that of the 'legend full of poetry'²⁸ he retains only the male–female couple, this could also explain his phallocentrism. Penis-envy and the fear of castration would thus appear as a sexualized version of the biblical myth.

What Freud retained of the Aristophanic myth, he held to be a popular view, characterized as poetic and beautiful. He did not consider it true. Since Freud, psychoanalysis has always stressed a certain asymmetry, technically introduced by chair and couch, and backed by a theoretical critique of the symmetry expressed by the Aristophanic myth – or its androgyne part: for there, the woman is attracted by the man as is the man by the woman. The two halves are nostalgically harking back to a primordial state of wholeness. In 1973, Paris psychoanalyst and philosopher Pierre Fédida calls this the 'nostalgia of desire'.²⁹ Like Freud, Fédida mentions the 'complementary' couple only and he continues by cautioning against the 'bisexual [i.e. androgynous] illusion with which Aristophanes' myth has inflated itself'. Then,

he praises the disillusioning power of Socrates' *logos* that makes us realize and accept the loss of the supposed primordial complementary completeness. This is a valuable interpretation of the *Symposium*, although it depends on an unnecessarily heterosexist reading of it. The nostalgia that is evident in the myth is not one for some 'bisexual', in the sense of androgynous, complementation. Aristophanes rather uses the example of two men, lover and beloved, for whom being fused and melded together would be the highest goal (192c–e). Only at the end of his speech he generalizes this as being the longing of all, whether male or female (193c1–c5).³⁰ The asymmetry that is so important to psychoanalysis is bound up with the male–female couple and the thought of castration – in the psychoanalytic sense of a missing penis. For example, Fédida instantly interprets *the loss* as castration, i.e. as something genital.³¹ This does not match at all with the tales of the *Symposium* where desire is never for complementation. Aristophanes' myth presents mutual desire between lovers of no matter what sex. Diotima's tale goes even further, as has been shown above. In psychoanalysis, the priority of the penis over its 'lack' sexualizes the priority of Adam.

Another dominant feature of psychoanalysis is its definite anti-somatic and anti-prenatal stance. Although Freud clearly accepts the thesis of a somatic bisexuality which was current around 1900, and although he is profoundly impressed by Fliess' hypothesis of the constitutional bisexuality of everyone,³² he did not accept it as an explanation of erotic preference. He harshly attacks Hirschfeld and Ulrichs, misrepresenting the theory of the latter as the rawest form of the theory of bisexuality ('Bisexualitätslehre in ihrer rohesten Form') that would suppose a female *brain* in a male body (42). He equally disqualified sexologist Krafft-Ebbing's assumption of female and male brain-centres. Freud's position concerning the constitutional androgyny of the human soul will remain ambiguous, but he clearly states that homosexuals are not a separate class of people – there is no third sex – and that 'every person is capable of same-sex choice and has in fact exercised it unconsciously'. He does not believe in prenatal factors: sexual object choice is, rather, fixed in early childhood, in a long process of psycho-social interaction, primarily with the parents. Most strikingly, however, the confirmed heterosexual and heterosexist Freud did not, as do the Uranians Ulrichs and Hirschfeld, presuppose desire to be necessarily directed to the other sex. For Freud, 'the exclusive sexual interest of the man in the woman is also a problem worth to be explained and is not a self-evidence founded in something like a chemical attraction'.³³

Freud thus questioned the presupposition that desire is for the other sex, prevalent in the 19th and early 20th century. In this respect at least, he is nearer to the Aristophanic myth than Ulrichs and Hirschfeld. What is more, he completely omits the reduction of erotic preference to biological sexual differentiation. In this respect, he is close to Plato's position, pronounced by Diotima, where the sex of the desired one is not an important criterion any more. One difference remains, though. Freud strongly devalues same-sex choice as regressive and associates it with neurosis,³⁴ instead of seeing, in whatever erotic relationship, a quest for the good and the beautiful.

Outlook

The lines that have been drawn from Plato to the 20th century can be prolonged into the 21st. I will mention just a few important developments. Inspired by psychoanalysis, studies of sexuation introduced the notions of *gender* and *gender identity*. The latter is something fixed in the ‘mind’ or psyche of a person. It is a psychological property, experienced by the person. The *sex* of a person, presupposed in everyday life and administration, is not defined somatically or socially, but by this gender identity.³⁵ Inter- and transsexuality have played a major role in these studies, which also led to a clear distinction of sexuality and sexuation. At the same time, historical and ethnological research has pointed out the cultural factor in some of our concepts, like sexuality. This has to be taken into account by ‘hard’ science when it is looking for prenatal causes of something culturally formed – if only partially – like ‘heterosexuality’ or ‘gender identity’. It would be odd to find a gene, or prenatal brain dispositions, for something that is interactively produced after birth and hence culturally and historically relative.

Since the 1980s, science shows a tendency to return to the Aristophanic perspective (or rather to the form Ulrichs has outlined), striving to explain erotics by gender traits,³⁶ and both by something somatic and prenatal.³⁷ These reductive attempts coexist with prospective positions that try to shed some light on how individuals can deal with their desire or their genderedness.³⁸ The same coexistence may be observed in therapeutic practice, in particular in the treatment of intersexed and transsexual persons. The relation between doctor, psychiatrist or therapist and the ‘gender disordered’ person is shifting from an asymmetric or hierarchical relation to one that is dialogical, helping the concerned person to become clear about herself, instead of telling her what she is from an authoritarian position of alleged knowledge.

The prospective, creative and dialogical attitude that Plato contrasts, from the very foundation years of the Academy, with the retrospective, reductive and pious attempts at categorizing thought expressed in Aristophanes’ myth, has lost nothing of its pertinence in theory and in practice.

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Notes

1. *Metaphysics*, 982b18–19, trans. W.D.Ross.
2. I want to thank Alexandrine Schniewind for the inspiration without which the paper would probably not exist.
3. See Dover (1980). The passages in the English translation are taken from Rowe (1998).
4. The word ‘Eros’ denotes the god; ‘eros’ denotes what he stands for.
5. Cf. Plato, *Apol.* 18b–d, 19b–c, 23c–d.
6. Schmidt-Berger (1985: 155–9). The place is described in: Aristophanes, *Clouds*, V 1005–9; Sophocles, *Oedipus on Colonos*, V 668–93.
7. In this sense, ‘bisexuality’ does not denote erotic orientation (as commonly understood at present),

- but, like 'androgyny', the presence of traits of both sexes. It has been used like this since the 19th century.
8. Cf. Schmidt-Berger's German translation 'Wegfinder'. Compare *a-poros* for 'no way out'. Eros' mother Penia is qualified as such (204b7). 'Aporie' is a word in French and German bearing this meaning ('ausweglos', 'sans issue'); also 'aporia' in English. Dover (1980: 141), translates 'Poros' as 'Resource' and Rowe follows him.
 9. For a discussion of the different hypotheses, see Halperin (1990: 113 ff). The invention of Diotima may have been inspired by the courtesan Aspasia, mistress of Perikles and an important person in Socrates' life (121–4).
 10. Halperin (1990: 127–9, 144). He also indicates (145–51) that this is less an appropriation of real femininity than of what is construed, by a male-dominated culture, to be feminine.
 11. Halperin (1990: 130).
 12. For a serious analysis of the myth and its reception by Freud, Brisson (1973) may be recommended. A paradigmatic use of the myth for the construction of an intersex identity is presented in the movie *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, 2001; the angry inch refers to the rudimentary genital of Hedwig who, after male-to-female sex surgery, conceives of herself as an intersexed person.
 13. Ulrichs (1825–95), lawyer, publisher and writer, was no scientist himself, but founded his anti-discriminatory claims on scientific results (biological, sociological and psychological) of his time. He called his work 'Inclusa' anthropological studies.
 14. This word dates back to the Austrian Hungarian merchant, translator and writer Karl Maria Benkert alias K. M. Kertbeny (1824–82).
 15. Structurally, Pausanias' position corresponds better to the attitudes that celebrate one's own preference as superior while downgrading the others. Cf. the admirers of virility like B. Friedländer, Hans Blüher or Adolf Brand and his circle of 'Die Eigenen', striving for a heroization of masculinity and purely male communities.
 16. *Vindex*, 1864, §10: 'Wir Urninge bilden eine *zwitterähnliche* besondere geschlechtliche Menschenklasse, ein eigenes Geschlecht, dem Geschlecht der Männer und dem der Weiber als *drittes Geschlecht* coordinirt'. ('We Uranians constitute a particular sexual class of humans, *similar to hermaphrodites*, a sex of its own, co-ordinate to men and women as a *third sex*'; trans. by M.G.; emphasis added by Ulrichs). All quoted texts of Ulrichs are included in Ulrichs (1994).
 17. *Formatrix* §99, also in *Critische Pfeile*, 1880.
 18. Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) studied both medicine and psychiatry. He practised in Berlin as a specialist in 'nervous and psychological sufferings'.
 19. The term *hermaphrodite* is not used in the *Symposium*. Hermaphroditus figures in a mythological story told by Ovid. Originally the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, he was melded with the nymph Salmacis who desired to be united with him forever. Since then, the new Hermaphroditus was really *hermaphroditic*, both man and woman, and neither of them (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.288).
 20. Hirschfeld (1991). The cover page of the first issue of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee's journal (founded by Hirschfeld), edited in 1901, was entitled 'What people need to know about the third sex!' ('Was muss das Volk vom dritten Geschlecht wissen!').
 21. Hirschfeld (2001: 30). His famous *Zwischenstufentheorie* is to be found in chapter 19.
 22. Foucault (1984 : 255).
 23. Hirschfeld is an exception in this respect, although he fought also primarily for the acceptance of homosexuality.
 24. 'God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve!' is a slogan of the New Christian Right in the USA.
 25. Another reference in 'Abriss der Psychoanalyse' and an explicit quotation in 'Jenseits des Lustprinzips' (end of ch. VI) are situated within discussions of the death instinct ('Todestrieb'). Most pertinent with regard to androgyny is the quoted passage. It is generally considered to refer to Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium*, see Brisson (1973: 33, notes 2–4).
 26. Brisson (1973: 63). He refers to Genesis, 21–24.
 27. He considered homosexuals to be deficient in that they had not passed a certain state of psychological development (First Essay, ch. 4; cf. also his essays on Leonardo da Vinci and President Schreber).

28. Brisson (1973: 63).
29. Fédida (1973 : 240).
30. Cf. also Foucault (1984: 254f). Foucault speaks of 'nostalgia' in a wider sense, associating it with the longing of the soul for its lost homeland in Plato's *Phaidros*. There, too, the ideal is not androgynous completeness.
31. Fédida (1973 : 241).
32. Freud, First Essay, note on p.43 (with the additions of 1910 and 1924). See also Fédida (1973 : 242–9) on the drama of the authorship of the bisexuality-thesis between Fliess and Freud.
33. Freud, First Essay, 44, amendment of 1915 in Fn 1; trans. MG.
34. He declares it to be a necessary part of each neurosis, without exception (65, see also Fn 2).
35. For a detailed discussion see Groneberg (2003).
36. One of the more refined theories is called EBE for *Exotic Becomes Erotic*. Genes are supposed to be responsible, via hormonal interference in the embryo, for individual childhood behavior that is gender-relevant, such as aggressiveness or a preference for friends of the other sex. For a boy who prefers being with girls, meeting someone from a rough boy group becomes exciting. The respective arousal by the 'exotic' other later gets transformed into erotic attraction. Gender-relevant attributes of a child would thus be at the basis of its later sexual orientation (see Bem, 1996).
37. On the so-called 'gay gene' see Hamer and Copeland (1994). In order to explain transsexualism, some suppose that gender identity is determined by the prenatal brain: 'How do the feelings of being of the opposite sex develop? The simple answer is: In the brain. Transsexuals have the mind-set of a person of the opposite sex' (Milton Diamond in 'Dean Kotula, A Conversation with Milton Diamond, PhD', in Kotula [2002: 36–7]).
38. Gender studies are characterized by this turn that led away from role theories. In masculinity studies, the protagonist of this change since the 1980s is Robert Connell. His works have since become paradigmatic (see, for example, Connell, 2005).

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