

Philosophical Synthesis of Plato's *Symposium*; and Romesen & Verden-Zoller's *The Biology of Love* from the Ridiculous, the Sublime to Human Development

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Abstract

*Every genuine action and every great development in human history stem from the biology of human love. Indeed, the world and everything in it revolves around and upon the hinges and instrumentalities of "Love." This is brought to the fore by the demands of standard moral conduct, by leading social and philosophical ideologies. More than that, Christianity and all the major religions of the world build upon "love." For example, in the Holy Bible, Matthew 19: 19 and Mark 12: 31 both pronounce on this fundamental concept, which St. Thomas Aquinas describes as "appetible object . . . a passion . . . in the concupiscible faculty" of man. The primary demand of love is – "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In Christianity, this mandate is so basic and touches upon every other thing, why in Matthew 5: 44, Jesus Christ added that, "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This can only be because "Love" lies at the foundation of all great development in human history – everything we do, the good, the bad, the ugly and the insane, the wicked, evil and the beautiful. It shows up also whether in a "system of natural law which was built by the human mind," or as willed by placed by faith and religion. I will collapse the requirements of the hermeneutics theory onto an analysis of this topic, describe, ascribe and allude to love's characteristics as the core factor in human progression, and prove that Plato's *Symposium* is one such book that demonstrates this from the ridiculous to the sublime. We will end by affirming that love's an "Uncanny goodness that cannot be heaved into the mouth, (that) can grant calm and sobriety even in the midst of sheer insanity" having the singular amplitude to cover multitudes of sins, and to reach and conquer all men at every end of the spectrum of life.*

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I) Introduction

Humberto Maturana Romesen, & Gerda Verden-Zoller, in their book, *The Origin of Humanness In The Biology Of Love*, 1993 and 2008, did declare:

Love is the grounding of our basic emotioning in our systemic identity as human beings We do not say that love is the only emotion under which we human beings live. Of course not. Certainly, we human beings flow or can flow in our emotioning through all the emotional dimensions that we can live. But we claim that it can be argued biologically that we are the kind of beings that we are because love has been the emotion that has grounded the course of the evolutionary history that gave origin to us. We human beings become ill at any age if we have to live a life centered in mistrust, instrumentalization, and manipulation of relations. Our children need to grow in trust, mutual care, body acceptance and cooperation, to become well-integrated individuals and social beings as they learn their bodies and the bodies of others in the generation of a social space (Romesen & Verden-Zoller, 1993, 2008).

My understanding of the idea cited being conveyed by the above quote is to the effect that every genuine action and every great development in human history stem from the biology of human love. If we draw on the idea being promoted above, it is obvious that Plato's conception of "love" in the "Symposium, and the biblical conception of agape love have joined together like tributaries to form a mighty and deep river from which the Western world has drawn its primary conceptions of love," (David Naugle. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium"). Romesen, et al., goes on to explain that "love" is natural to humanity, and that love is our "biological fundament and the only basis for the conservation of our human existence . . ." (Romesin and Verden-Zöller 2008). Thus, the question as to whether every genuine action and every great development in human history stem from the biology of love as espoused in Plato's Symposium, demonstrable with the ridiculous and also with the sublime and deserves in my reasoned view a certain peculiar way of handling it, as such I intend to introduce this work with the definition of terms among which we have added love, biology, development, ridiculous and the sublime. We will thus choose to commence by defining the term "love". However, before I proceed beyond this stage, I will take time to explicate and explain some of the concepts involved in this work.

According to the *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1991 at page 707, love is defined as (1) a strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties; (2) attraction based on sexual desire; affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests; (3) Warm attachment, enthusiasm or devotion; (4) unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another; (6) aged or personification of love; etc.

In the book of 1 Corinthians 13: 4 – 8 (NLT Version), St Paul took time to define what "love" is. According to him, he said, "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud. Or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable and keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice through every circumstances. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful and endures through ever circumstance. . . . Love never fails." Taken differently, Amplified Version of the Holy Bible adds distinctly that, "Love" is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful, or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. (5) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not readily provoked (or overly sensitive, and easily angered); it does not take into account a wrong endured." (NLT Online) Love, is able to act in furtherance of human development and growth because it isn't arrogant and inflated with pride; it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act becomingly. Love therefore is the perfection of God's love in humanity. It is this feature of love that makes it able to draw men together, to form associations and communities of other men, and to make good progress. Romesen & Verden-Zoller, 2008 puts it succinctly as follows: "We are saying that we think the fundament of human living is love, and that cooperation in humans arises through the pleasure of doing things together in mutual trust, not through the manipulation of relations. We do not say that love is the only emotion under which we human beings live. Of course not. Certainly, we human beings flow or can flow in our emotioning through all the emotional dimensions that we can live. But we claim that it can be argued biologically that we are the kind of beings that we are because love has been the emotion that has grounded the course of the evolutionary history that gave origin to us" (Romesin and Verden-Zöller 2008).

In his own definition, Professor S. I. Udoidem talks of "love" admonishes that, "It must be pointed that the general Greek word for love is *Philia* which applies indifferently to the feelings of friends, family members and lovers (Udoidem, 2011: 26). Udoidem (2011) goes further to explain that "love" is referred to in Greek as "*Eros*", the intense, irresistible attachment or desire generally, or the passionate love and desire usually sexual between persons. He further explained that both *Eros and Philia* coexists in the same place, at the same time, and they are the principal themes exploited in the *Symposium*. The

symposium was published by Plato and its main feature is that it opens to man, “the presuppose the possibility of a kind of metaphysical-aesthetic oneness and wholeness that humans should strive for, but it also implies a belief in a reality – albeit here a supra-sensible one.” (Bert Oliver 2007: 13). This we can deduct from the particular instance when in *Symposium* 179C, Phaedrus reports that Alcestis was willing to die for her husband because of her love (*Eros*) as opposed to her love (*Philia*) for her family.

Further, let me carry this discourse to the point at which we are accosted with the submissions of Sira Dambe who declared that in her work that, “Love is defined by a three-fold designation: the love of the contemplative person is called *Divine*, the love of the active one, human; and the love of a voluptuous person, animal.” In St Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*, Question 28, Article 1, he declares, “Now love being twofold, viz. love of concupiscence and love of friendship; each of these arises from a kind of apprehension of the oneness of the thing loved with the lover. For when we love a thing, by desiring it, we apprehend it as belonging to our well-being. In like manner when a man loves another with the love of friendship, he wills good to him, just as he wills good to himself: wherefore he apprehends him as his other self, in so far, to wit, as he wills good to him as to himself. Hence a friend is called a man's "other self" (Ethic. ix, 4), and Augustine says (Confess. iv, 6), "Well did one say to his friend: Thou half of my soul" (Thomas Aquinas, QUESTION 28, Article 1.)

Biology on the other hand is defined at page 152 of the *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1991 as (1) a branch of knowledge that deals with living organisms and vital processes; (2) the plant and animal life of the region; and (3) the life processes of an organism or group or ecology. The emphasis here is laid upon the definition that touches on the life processes of an organism because both man and the society are living organisms in one way or another. It is, “The process of systemic realization of a manner of living or ontogenic phenotype is called in biology epigenesis, and we call the relational dynamics of its realization, ontogenic structural drift. At the same time, we call the systemic reproductive conservation of a manner of living and or of its variations, phylogenic structural drift, and we claim that that which we (Romesín and Verden-Zöller 2008). They go on to explain that for biology, one of its most basic “claim is that the history of living systems is one in which both living and variations in the manner of living have been conserved through the systemic reproduction of both the condition and manner of living as lineages of different kinds of living systems.” Plato’s *Symposium* shows in a way that “the intrinsic biological-cultural nature of humanness” is demonstrable in the “biological-cultural matrix of human existence.”

Development on the other hand is defined at page 347 of the *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1991 as: (1) the act, process or result of developing; (2) the state of being developed; (3) a developed tract of land, especially one that has houses built thereon. In the same order also, to develop on the other hand is defined as – i) to set forth or make clear by degrees or in detail; ii) to make visible or manifest; iii) to treat as in dyeing with an agent to cause appearance of color; iv) to elaborate a musical idea by the working out of rhythmic and harmonic changes in the theme; v) to make active, to work out the possibilities of; vi) to make available or usable; vii) to cause to unfold gradually; viii) to expand by process of growth; ix) to cause to grow and differentiate along lines natural to its kind; x) to go through the process of natural growth, differentiation, or evolution by successive changes or become gradually manifest, or become manifest or become apparent.

By development, I adopt Oghuvbu, (2021), who understood “development” as an index which emphasise, “systemic reforms as a major component of growth”, that development refers to “the conditions for realizing the human personality.” Oghuvbu says further that development describes “the sustained elevation of a community and social structure toward a ‘higher’ or ‘more civilized’ existence”

particularly as it effects the increased in the use of the nation's available resources, both quantitatively and/or qualitatively. In his work, we find a ready link to the argument that the idea of development blends with the notion of "Love" and evolution credited to Romesin and Verden-Zöller's (2008). Oghuvbu also extrapolates that by evolution, he does not mean to tie development to a singular point of view on economic, political, or social progress. He advocates for a "catch-all term for a range of ways to transforming current socioeconomic and environmental conditions into ideal ones." Oghuvbu cited the works of Rodney on the other hand, Almond & Powell (1966) contend that 'development or growth is conceivable when the political system can articulate and aggregate public interests, allocate resources, and maintain law and order only through well-functioning structures.' According to Almond and Powell, democratic society is built through the implementation of democratic institutions and modes of action that facilitate the attainment of quality economic and social development goals. (Oghuvbu 2021: 254).

Oghuvbu also argues that development involves an "increased capability and ability, more autonomy, innovation, increased self-discipline, accountability, and enhanced material well-being." He lists at least three fundamental principles that underpin development in a state and which includes: the ability of the people to satisfy their fundamental needs such as clothing, housing, and food; the principle of self – esteem, which collapses onto the provision of the Section 34 of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended). It also includes the citizens' ability to value themselves as human persons and independence, freedom free will and freedom from servitude and to choose independent of any external influence. (Oghuvbu. 2021: p. 234).

Ridiculous on the other hand is defined at page 1014 of the *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1991 simply as laughable, arousing or deserving ridicule as an object of laughter, absurd, preposterous and mockery. It also means anything that is ludicrous, silly, shameful, bizarre, outlandish and unreasonable.

Sublime. Sublime on the other hand is similarly defined at page 1174 of the *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1991 as to cause to pass directly from the solid to the vapour state and to condense back to solid state; to elevate or exalt especially in dignity or honour; to render finer (as in purity or excellence). It is also defined to mean lofty, grand or exalted in thought, expression or manner; of outstanding spiritual, intellectual or moral worth; tending to inspire awe usually because of elevated quality (as of beauty, nobility or grandeur) or transcendent excellence and as being high in place, lofty of mien, supreme and splendid.

II) The Biology of Love as Espoused in the Symposium

.....nothing imparts this guidance as wells as love. Without these nothing fine or great can be accomplished, in public life or in public (Symposium, 178C- 178D).

In discussing, therefore "whether every genuine action and great development in human history stem from the biology of love", as declared by Romesen & Verden-Zoller, 2008. I want to start by pointing out the uniqueness of Plato's *Symposium* as a distinct class of literature. Leading us in this is David Naugle, who advanced that three ideas spring up in our discuss of Plato's *Symposium*. The first is that in it, Plato focused on "Love", a sentimental and likely very "frivolous topic for serious philosophical reflection", instead of his usual concern for justice, knowledge or reality or arguments about human knowledge. To capture our attention, Plato in the *Symposium*, he constructs a philosophical link to connect love and philosophy, and in doing so proved that "eros" is the handmaiden of his philosophy.

Secondly, we observe that in the Symposium, Plato abandoned the centrality of Socrates' midwifery delivery of knowledge through his "dialectics." In fact, "The Symposium depicts a situation in which encomium rather than analysis or exposition is to be the aim of the discourse." Thirdly, in the *Symposium*, the voice of a woman, a stranger, a prophetess, Diotima, is central, and Plato uses her to instruct and teach Socrates about the greater mysteries of "Love." "The deployment of a woman for this task, a woman who in one place is labeled a perfect Sophist (208c) is highly unusual" by the Platonic standard of dialogue. (David Naugle. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium").

This is why Romesen & Verden-Zoller, 2008, says, as touching the hood and the ugly Relations of love generate freedom and invite collaboration, even when due to their uni-directionality they are lonely. As a result love generates the conditions for love through the wellbeing that it generates, and when love is reciprocated companionship may result" (Romesen & Verden-Zoller, 2008). Thus, it gets established that love guides all the undertakings and developmental aspirations of human beings, and that it reaches out to all human persons. It is also true that love is needed to further the growth and development of all societies beginning from the primitive to the developed economies of the world with all its sophistication. The hallowed truth that lurks within this claim or declaration is that within the confines of love, "life itself is not truly affirmed until (the) painful side is acknowledged and affirmed as well" (Joseph P. Lawrence, 2014; p. 8). It is in keeping with the above principle that love midwives and tutors both the ugly and the beautiful and at the same time love is evidenced both in the ridiculous and in the sublime. In this regard, we may wish to rely on the citation referenced below:

A genuinely inspired imagination gives birth to fully determinate forms; in the inexhaustibility of its productivity, it is, however, related in the highly positive manner to the indeterminate. Morally, this corresponds to the possibility of pacifying the demonic and indeed, exploiting its power through the agency of love and affirmation. (Joseph P. Lawrence, 2014, p. 10).

If therefore follows, drawing on the comments of Lawrence (2014) above, that it is only by being able to work through the agency or medium of love that both the positive side of life, which ultimately evolves into the sublime, and the painful side, which progresses in its advanced state to the ugly and the ridiculous can be acknowledged and affirmed, and it is only on that plane where the power of love operates that a genuine inspiration can take form to give birth to fully determinate and authentic forms, and which will function as Plato observes in the *Symposium*, on man's desire for immortality, ascend or rise over and above the determinate forms to the indeterminate forms, which when given birth to will terminate in immortality, as captured by Udoidem (2011; p. 99) that "this permanent change by succession guarantees immortality for mortals."

From Plato's *Symposium*, we are confronted with the ridiculous aspects of the powers of love in its expressions in homosexuality and hearsay. It is howbeit the power of love baring her fangs and displaying some bizarre and sometimes violent human passions, and it goes without arguments that the courtship ritual at this stage masks a crude quest for physical survival and merely hands out a glimmer of erotic attraction, without necessary justifying the presence or lack of attraction rationally, but blinded by its impulsive nature. It is interesting to note, as we shall further demonstrate below, that the faculty of judgment which traditionally ought to mediate between the realm of the sensible and the supersensible realm of freedom as put forward by Kant is missing, or non-existent (Kant, Sections 2 and 3). These are people who are described by (Udoidem, 2011: 2) as "most proponents of homosexuality read symposium to justify or derive satisfaction that their sexual preference (for homosexuality) has ancient roots". This, however is merely among the "somewhat mundane reasons" for reading the symposium. Based on this, Udoidem goes on to declare that:

Plato states the case for these kinds of sexual preferences (lesbianism and homosexuality) and then goes ahead to reject these practices as being counter-productive both to the gods and to humans. (Udoidem, 2011: 3).

The power inherent in the biology of love is further amply demonstrated in the relationship between a man and a woman, “as mortals way of participating in immortality, which by nature is a divine attribute” (Udoidem, *ibid*). This is substantiated by St. Aquinas wherein he argued that for any of our acts to move towards the sublime, tem the object of one’s love should and ought to be the good. He stated thus, “Love belongs to the appetitive power which is a passive faculty. Wherefore its object stands in relation to it as the cause of its movement or act. Therefore, the cause of love must needs be love's object. Now the proper object of love is the good; because, as stated above (Question 26, Articles 1,2), love implies a certain connaturalness or complacency of the lover for the thing beloved, and to everything, that thing is a good, which is akin and proportionate to it. It follows, therefore, that good is the proper cause of love” (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Question 27, Article 2). The import of St Aquinas stand in this is that all movement towards the sublime therefore must be based on a “connaturalness” or “complacency of the lover towards the thing loved, but which must be “the good.”

The inherent difficulty in this happens to be that this basic natural principle of a move towards the sublime is often thwarted, breached and violated by the establishment of unnatural sexual relations between persons of the same sex either as lesbians or as homosexuals in the name of love. It is the most ridiculous, and mostly because this practice is laughable, arousing or deserving ridicule as an object of laughter, absurd, preposterous and prone to mockery, which is why those who are engaged in it do not do it in the open without the sense of revulsion of the public, even if it is presented as an attribute of love. (*Symposium* 185D – E). Within Plato’s *Symposium*, the corpus of what passes as the ridiculous are the speeches of Phaedrus, Pausanias and Aristophanes particularly on homosexuality is an epitome of ugliness in which the soul becomes voluptuous like an animals, and ineluctably gets sunk and deeply enmeshed in matter qua matter. (Dambe, 2009; 35). When we juxtapose St. Aquinas theory on the ugly, perfect and the sublime, we hear him arguing: “There is no other passion of the soul that does not presuppose love of some kind. The reason is that every other passion of the soul implies either movement towards something, or rest in something. Now every movement towards something, or rest in something, arises from some kinship or aptness to that thing; and in this does love consist. Therefore, it is not possible for any other passion of the soul to be universally the cause of every love. But it may happen that some other passion is the cause of some particular love: just as one good is the cause of another.” (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, QUESTION 27, OF THE CAUSES OF LOVE, Article 4.). The love shown by a man to a man, and by a woman to a woman is a lesson in total aberration. Human show of love, “moves man to desire and seek the presence of the beloved, as of something suitable and belonging to him. The second union is caused "formally" by love; because love itself is this union or bond. In this sense Augustine says (De Trin. viii, 10) that "love is a vital principle uniting, or seeking to unite two together, the lover, to wit, and the beloved." For in describing, it as "uniting" he refers to the union of affection, without which there is no love: and in saying that "it seeks to unite," he refers to real union.” (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, QUESTION 28, OF THE EFFECTS OF LOVE, Article 1). This uniting love on the altar of affection, reverberates the sublime and the creative ability of love.

It is this being voluptuous and deeply enmeshed in the matter that is debasing, abhorred or condemned, because taking after the Platonic ideas of the Allegory of the Cave and the Theory of the Divided Lines and Plato’s World of Forms, Dambe, quoting from Plotinus’ *Enneads* where he says-

When he sees the beauty in the bodies, he must not run after them; we must know that they are images, traces, shadows and hurry away to that which they image....(Dambe, 2009; 36)

In the speech of Phaedrus, of which part conveys the ugly and the ridiculous, he asserted that “What greater good there is for a young boy than a gentle lover, or for a lover than a boy to love.” This brings us to St Thomas Aquinas’ position, who in quoting “Ps. 10:6: "He that loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul": else, every love would be good. Therefore, good is not the only cause of love” (Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Article 1, QUESTION 27 OF THE CAUSES OF LOVE, Article 2.) Aquinas also lists evil as a cause of love, "the beautiful is beloved by all" that quoting St. Augustine in (De Trin. viii, 3), that “good alone is the cause of love” and knowledge Augustine proves (De Trin. x, 1,2) that "none can love what he does not know." This demonstrates the futility and emptiness of the man – boy relationship, morality at its lowest ebb, the very heart of the ugly and the ludicrous. But it is also an indicator of how every acts and events of man is regularised by the overwhelming power of “Love.”

Udoidem is unrelenting in his efforts to establish the fact that as human beings, we desperately need guidance from others and form our experience in all we do, as long as we live, and that nothing imparts this guidance than love (Udoidem, 2011, p. 30). The set up in ancient Athens approved the practice whereby older men under the guise of mentoring and guiding young men also lured them into the ludicrous and debasing acts of homosexuality. This formed the crux of Udoidem’s assertion that “The beloved was expected not to enjoy the sexual act; on the contrary, enjoyment was a sign of a depraved nature” (Udoidem 2011: 31). This is the anticlimax of the show of the ridiculous. It again demonstrates progression downgrade to the decrepit depths of the ridiculous and the ugly.

The above stated, Phaedrus recoils and is seen to reject the Athenian practice of homosexuality and lesbianism, and finally conveyed to readers and listeners that what is proper and meant by love, is neither erotic, sensual love nor physical attraction, but the acquisition of the knowledge that arises out of or issues from the guidance of mentors that would instead infuse into the youths “a sense of shame at acting shamefully and a sense of pride in acting well” (*Symposium* 178D), which in the words of Udoidem “each person needs mentoring for the sense of shame for his whole life, if he is to live well.” (Udoidem 2011:32).

Though Phaedrus speech contemplated the ugly or ridiculous in the beginning of his speech, but as Udoidem pointed out, the actual intent of his speech was to follow after the Socratic tradition to reject the ridiculous dimension of his speech and then state the ultimate position, which is that the lovers life must be the same in secret and in public because “the gods honour virtue most highly when it belongs to love”, thus restating the ever present power and signature of love at play and permeating these acts of persons in and out of marriage.

The speech of Pausanis which followed that of Phaedrus, according to (Udoidem, 2011) was indeed a “Treaties on Homosexuality”. Pausanias in his contribution to the discourse on “love” made a case for both homosexuality and lesbianism on the one hand and for heterosexuality, or as he aptly stated, for the heavenly and the common love respectively. He did contend that “none of these is better than any other; how it comes out depends on how it is performed” (*Symposium* 181 A). By holding thus, Pausanias introduced relativity into the experience or definition of love and limited same to individual preferences, sentiments and experience. Pausanias advances a tactical criticism of heterosexual acts, referring to as debasing, but gives himself away that his preferred choice may not be the ultimate when he declared that “whether they (homosexuals) do it honourably or not is of no concern” (*Symposium* 1813); thus compromising his earlier position that there could indeed be something honourable in heterosexual act, and dishonourable in homosexuality and he tends to assent also that it would be preferable and respectable to be attached to the soul than to the body.

Pausanias in advancing his arguments in support of homosexuality pretended to base his reasons on an ancient Greek Anthology that the desire of the homosexualist is borne out of the innate desire to be reunited with the person's half that was separated at the moment of originating (Udoidem, 2011: 38). But before this sink in Pausanias admits the obvious, that homosexuality is debasing, ugly and ridiculous when he declared. He in this wise said:

He certainly does not aim to deceive him – to take advantage of him while he is still young and inexperienced, and then after exposing him to ridicule (symposium 181 E).

Pausanias from then on shows his strong aversion to homosexuality in general, either when practiced with young boys or older men because he concedes that it is vulgar, that certain practices give homosexuality a bad name, it particularly exposes its practitioners to ridicule. And the eventual truth he equally accedes to is that “taking any man as a lower is in itself disgraceful” (Udoidem, 2011:39), which disapproval Pausanias was apt to describe as a “righteous disapproval” (Symposium 182 A). This more than Pausanias' sermonite informs one of the general disapproval of the Athenian society for homosexual behaviour. This Pausanias further makes palpable when he declared that:

When you recall how mercilessly a boy's own friends tease him if they catch him at it (homosexuality), and how strongly elders approval and encourage such making when you take all this into account, you're bound to come to the conclusion that one Athenians consider such behaviour the most shameful thing in the world. (Symposium 183C-D).

It is therefore obvious that though promoted and engendered by love or that all our actions and developmental actions are steeped within the biology of love, homosexuality and lesbianism are considered in the Athenian society much as it is also considered in our present day as the most ridiculous and shameful thing in the world. It is therefore sustained by an “unnatural pleasure and capable of deliberately wiping out the human race” (Udoidem, 2011:41). This can be explained by the simple fact that assuming every other human being flutter around and prefer marrying a person of the same sex, then no one would procreate and with time, those who could procreate would die out, and soon, human procreative abilities would die, and man would also die out, and pass out of existence. Homosexuality therefore sole suffices for the desecration of human life, a dead end, an existence that can only promote the ridiculous, ugly and the disdainful. This, if not abandoned would definitely be a short cut to desecrate the sublime, which is what Plato figure out in the *Symposium*.

More so, Aristophanes who spoke next seemed to be aware of the ugly and ridiculous nature of homosexuality and its wholesale rejection by the Athenian society, hence the hiccups he developed tend to be a way of making fun Pausanias' presentation, or of showing gross disapproval of the arguments he was advancing, which was why Pausanias quickly admits that his contribution was merely made up as a “hasty improvisation” (Symposium, 185c).

The speech of Eryximachus which follows that of Pausanias did not introduce the ridiculous as he moved away from the submissions of both Phaedrus and Pausanias, and we will examine it as a prelude to the gradual ascent of the soul to the sublime; meanwhile, we will choose to consider the submissions of Aristophanes, who deviates from the abstraction of Eryximachus.

The imagery depicted in Aristophanes' speech hover within the perimetric vestiges of the ludicrous and ugly. He equally based his proposal on the ancient Greek myth as well, hence proposes that human beings were at creation either male, female and she-male or female – male, with twice as many organs and limbs as human beings have now. The she-male or female – male was, he explained is why we have

the word androgynous in our dictionary, a testimony to its actual existence in the past. Aristophanes further stated that man was spherical like the moon, sun or earth with such great power and ambitions that they attempted an attack on the gods. This resulted in the acts of the Zeus, the chief of the gods cutting all man into two halves, to walk upright on two legs, with two eyes, ears, hands and legs instead of four, which act reduced their strength while the goes benefited. This, Aristophanes argues implied that the other half of the natural form longed for and searched everywhere for its half, and the was responsible for homosexuality if the male – male or female – female was the one cut in two, wherein the male will seek for the other male half and same applying for the females. This was love wagging its magic wand and talking as is declared that, “Love is born into every human being, it calls back the halves of our original nature together, it tries to make one out of two and heal the wound of human nature.” (Symposium, 191 D).

It is contended here that the myth bordering on Zeus splitting into halves the she-male or female – male was, possessive of such great power and ambitions, to forestall launching any form of attack on the gods, is to move humanity from retrogression, force us to operate without the perimetric vestiges of the ludicrous and ugly supports the onerous claims by Aristophanes in the *Symposium*. Udoidem thus points out that every human being who rides upon the crests of the gods’ prejudiced splitting of the original creation into halves and joining them back, so that the later matching of their various halves, made women split from women pay no attention to women, and men split from men are male oriented to the ridiculous and unnatural. Udoidem tries to fix this when he opined, such acts of Zeus departed from the original stand of God that “the reunion of male and female which results in reproduction and continuity of the human race”, one that guarantees giant strides towards human growth and development. (Udoidem, 2011:56).

Here again, Aristophanes like those before him backs away from his first position and agrees that “not because they have no shame that such boys do that” (Symposium, 192 A), but because far and above the ridiculous and the ugly, the sole purpose of the meeting of the two halves is not merely re-uniting for love, but that there must be something else that is the object of the desire or love than the sexual reunion” (Udoidem, 2011:58). This, it is obvious, is a demonstration that there lurks in every soul that loves a move from the sexual satisfaction of man and woman to a wanting to be free to explore something above and beyond love and the union as a step to knowing the sublime.

To put the nail in the coffin he was building for the ugly and ridiculous exemplified in homosexual and lesbian practices, Aristophanes goes all out to condemn same when he quips “if that is the ideal” (*Symposium*, 193 C7), an uncontested element of doubt and conditionality that need not arise if he did not intend to state another position, hence propping up his position that he does not believe it to be the ideal. He proceeds to argue that:

Since the gods were responsible for the loving relationship, the gods have to be pleased so that they can guarantee a long lasting relationship (Udoidem, 2011:60).

He contended that all humans owe praise to the gods and also owe love due praise by being engaged in practicing heterosexual love for absolute satisfaction that true love will offer us eventually. This is only true for those who practice heterosexual relationships. This stage of the ridiculous continues into the stage of ignorance because “no one who is ignorant will love wisdom or desire to be wise” (Udoidem 2011: 90). This forms the basis of it being referred to as “ignorance as stupidity” (Udoidem, *ibid*), it being the primal level where one does not know and is content with his not knowing and makes no effort to know either. This level of stupidity therefore is also part of the bulk of what we can safely term the ridiculous.

It is a calculated attempt to dissuade men from taking cognisance of the ancient Greek myth about Zeus cutting she-male and he-female into two and to redirect humanity back to the sublime, and onto paths and byways of genuine human development that David Naugle in his work, "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium" added that the consensus voice of the characters in Plato's *Symposium* sought to redirect man towards acknowledging the "love' that is the abode of the gods. In his words, he declared, *Let wise men see and gods admire! Treasure to lovers, envy to others, father of elegance, luxury, delicacy, grace, yearning, desire. Love fills us with togetherness and drains all of our divisiveness away. Love calls gatherings like these together. In feasts, in dances, and in ceremonies, he gives the lead. Love moves us to mildness, removes us. Love cares well for good men, cares not for bad ones. In pain, in fear, in desire, or speech, Love is our best guide and guard; he is our comrade and our savior. Ornament of all gods and men, most beautiful leader and the best! Every man should follow Love, sing beautifully his hymns, and join him in the song he sings that charms the mind of god or man (197c-e).*¹⁷ (David Naugle. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium").

Closely following this behind is the second stage of ignorance, where "ignorance as the first stage of knowledge" (Udoidem, *ibid*) and because the person knows that he has no knowledge or wisdom, he goes in search of knowledge.

The next phase of this "enterprise consist of ignorance as the first stage of knowledge" because it acts as a buffer zone and it is this the second stage or middle course of the knowing process that is met by or supplanted or replaced by the state of hearsay, which is the middle course. In the words of Udoidem, hearsay is the brother to ignorance. In his words, narration is the prelude to the commencement of and ignorance is the first state of knowing. In assent, Udoidem declares, "Ever way it is taken, the context of pregnancy and giving birth is in the narration. Knowledge and wisdom with which the soul is pregnant with is giving birth to through narration" (Udoidem 2011: 97)

The above states, the next stage of love touches on the beautiful, the good as stages which lone must travel to reach the state of the sublime. In the words of Dambe, (2009), Plato had described, in the symposium, a lover's amorous agitation for his beloved, the carnal impulse that, with the ascent of the soul becomes the driving force of an intellectual process. (Dambe, 2009:36). To this David replies, arguing that, "It is desire, yearning, need all of which prompts human beings to soothe their painful sense of isolation, to overcome their desperate loneliness by uniting in love with another human being in order to be whole once again. Love is not sundered into the good. . . (David Naugle. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium"). In that paragraphs that follow the above comments by David, he declares that, "To say that he is one of the oldest gods is to say that Love is virtually eternal, that there has never really been a time when Love was not, and did not preside over the affairs of humankind and the world. His eternal presence makes Love venerable, and imparts a kind of cosmic comfort to all of life and existence" (David Naugle. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium").

It evident that this erotic union being founded on love is possible among friends and lovers but does not correspond conceptually to the relationship of friendship which in itself is a model of personal relationship mutuality, reciprocity and equality but to an aspiration for spiritual passion. This friendship when contracted in agreement with the intendment and praise of the gods forms the preparatory stage or precursor to the ultimate and sublime union of person and idea. In making reference to Eryximachus (186b), David surmises the points he made out that "Love is the source of the greatest gifts, and stands at the heart of every noble deed and every act of generosity. Love is a deity of the greatest importance: he directs everything that occurs, not only in the human domain, but also in that of the gods" (David Naugle. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium"). In essence, this dabbles ecstatically into the

position for which Romesen & Verden-Zoller, (2008) have made remarkable imprints in the biology of love. They unequivocally argue that “When the elements . . . hot and cold, wet and dry are animated by the proper species of Love, they are in harmony with one another: their mixture is temperate, and so is the climate. Harvests are plentiful; men and all other living things are in good health; no harm can come to them. But when the sort of Love that is crude and impulsive controls the seasons, he brings death and destruction” (David Naugle. “The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium”). Thus we hear the duo of Romesen & Verden-Zoller (2008) saying, “The main aspects of living in loving humanness, in the systemic dynamics that makes and conserves that manner of living through our living, are love and play in the intimacy of the mother/child relation . . . Through this process the child develops self and social awareness in self-respect and respect for the other, in self-acceptance and acceptance of the other. At the same time through this process, he or she creates the world that he or she lives, and will live, as an expansion of his or her body through his or her relational dynamics. When this primary mother/child relation is not basically disturbed, the condition of loving humanness is directly conserved as a manner of living into adult life” Romesen & Verden-Zoller (2008).

Then we enter the middle stage, which also serves as the preparatory stage and is where we find Phaedrus, Pausanias and Aristophanes landing after their ascent from the ugly shameful and ridiculous exemplified in the love of a man for a man and of a female for a female or homosexuality and lesbianism. To put a mark on the above, Phaedrus later conceded that it would be morally binding to be guided by sense of shame at acting shameful and by the sense of pride of acting well, which ought to be lived the same in public and in private enough to provide guidance, ordering and courage to act rightly. It is only a relationship of a man to a woman and vice – versa that would guarantee this, it being marked by mutability and incompleteness, or simply the world of becoming, and the man – woman relationship is the sensible, apprehended by the sense and functions as incompleteness, hence aspires to wards the idea of the Good. In the words of Sira Dambe,

In the Symposium, Eros, through its revelation of beauty of a particular connection between the two worlds. Love of the beauty of a particular human being initiates a sequential and gradual uplifting of the soul towards love of physical beauty in general, then of moral beauty of intellectual beauty then of the firm of or idea of Beauty itself. (Dambe, 2009: 33).

This is the idea that runs through the speeches that were delivered by Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus and Aristophanes a recall to the effect that it is the beauty of the natural world steeped in love that first intimates to the soul the possibility of apprehending the idea of Beauty ingoing it onto an ascent enfolded in rapturous ecstasy, in contrast to ascetic elevation towards the contemplative state. Thus, the main plank of their submissions in the symposium is that the ethical after been “baptized” in the sea of love indulges in intellectual activity with passion that both overwhelms and subdues the physical so that he can penetrate and perceive the spiritual aspects of love and beauty and fall in love with the spirit t the disdain of the body. It becomes plausible that once the physical display of love has been actualized in a man – woman relationship, love becomes “a kind of ascending dialectic, a climb through a series of stages, each of which subsumes and unifies the multiplicity inherent in the previous one” (Dambe, 2009 : 36). Therefore, David Naugle admonishes that Love ought to be praised, because if “Love” is eulogised and revered, it is only then that “Love” will restore to humanity, man’s original nature as a man, and will also extend its healing wrongs to cover them, and make them happy and blessed (David Naugle. “The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium”). This is the only pathway towards the sublime, and towards the genuine development and improvement of humanity through its generations and general affairs.

This steady progression was amply demonstrated in the speech of Agathon, especially in his admittance that both men and gods have souls in which dwell love and that “love is the centre of everything” (Udoidem, 2011: 68), and perpetually at war with ugliness. This was further brought to the fore by the speech delivered by Diotima as she pictures love as “always living in need” (Udoidem, 2011:87), hence always aspiring to the ultimate knowledge the sublime. This is what Udoidem captures in the following passage.

But by counting wisdom among the beautiful things, Socrates’ Diotima has turned the lover from being the supplier of Wisdom into a pursuer of wisdom the philosopher would then become the lover of wisdom who desires wisdom unendingly; love would become the irresistible Eros that its search for knowledge is not only irresistible, but maddening. Wisdom itself would become the most beautiful object to be desired. Philosophy, the pursuit of wisdom, is motivated by love; if in fact lover’s highest expression. (Udoidem 2011: 16).

In seeking or pursuance of wisdom, love does not pursue aimlessly anything that it stumbles upon, it must be something that is good. Diotima says about this “But according to my story, a lover does not seek the half or the whole unless, my friend it turns out to be the good as well” (Symposium 205 E).

This statement serves two purposes – one is to fault the position adopted by Aristophanes that each half as separated by Zeus, as the god’s punishment of man for rebellion to topple them, sought its realization in Diotima, a sophist, rejected and vituperated by Plato, but now used and relied upon to divests attention from Plato’s dialectical argument forms, which has Socrates sitting atop of its empire. The deployment of a woman for this task, David Naugle suggests, is not only highly unusual, but amplifies the anomaly of Diotima’s position in this talk. It deflects from Socrates’ investment with the crown of wisdom by the Oracle, and enthrones Diotima, perhaps because she was married and would do more justice to the topic under discuss than Socrates. (David Naugle. “The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium”). Therefore for Diotima to assume the responsibility of one chosen to raise the stakes for the search and attainment of the sublime in “Love”, suggests that it is not just the universal seeking of the lost half, but first because it reflects the type of the other half that should be sought for in the opposite sex, and also, it is indeed the case of a lover desiring something because it is good, and the “continual possession of good things” (Udoidem, 2011:95). To make this come back to life, we should hear Romesin & Verden-Zoller, who stated:

Many, perhaps most, of the dimensions of our relational existence as human beings are beyond our awareness, and are, therefore, unconscious. Furthermore, the whole relational domain in which a living being exists arises in the relations that it lives through the interplay of its dynamic structure and the dynamic structure of the medium in which it happens to live. Through such interplay the living being contributes to the systemic dynamics that creates the medium in which it exists, in a process that happens simply through its living. We call the relational domain in which a living being exists its relational psychic space. (Romesin & Verden-Zoller (2008).

It is pertinent to point out that by the above declaration, Diotima lays the foundation for love as it relates to sexual desire and from there proceeds to the outcome of the meeting of a man and woman as participants and partners in the business of creation. This is further stated as follows:

That is because when a man and woman come together in order to give birth, this is a godly affair, pregnancy, reproduction - this is an immortal thing for a mortal animal to do, and it cannot occur in anything that is out of harmony but ugliness is out of harmony with all that is godly. Beauty, however is in harmony with the Divine...it as because reproduction goes on

forever; it is what mortals have in place of immortality. (Symposium 201 E, 204D3 and 206 A9).

Humanity is described to be pregnant in body and soul, as a hint to the creative capacities in a man, every man is clothed in a virtue and immortality, hence every man ought to be mind that he's wired to give birth, and not deliberately frustrate this noble act. It is indeed the final and highest mystery about love (Udoidem, 2011: 97). Romesin and Verden-Zoller in their own words in support said, "Even more, our psychic identity, our conscious and unconscious manner of relating in the psychic space, is systemic and is systemically conserved in our living as our living participates both in the modulation of our bodyhoods and in the arising of the medium in which we live . . . (we) systemically conserving the configuration of emotioning that defines our psychic identity as we co-create with other beings the human community in which that particular psychic identity takes place as the natural manner of being" (Romesin & Verden-Zoller (2008). This anchors the recurring fact that love is the creating material for all great civilisations and developments in history. With this, Diotima has thus rejected and abandoned the idea of homosexuality and lesbianism in all its forms by holding that the desire for pregnancy is the cause and only reason for sexual intercourse and not the other way round. In the same way, "Knowledge and wisdom with which the soul is pregnant with is given birth to through narration. The narration itself also provides occasion for pregnancy" (Udoidem, Ibid).

Therefore, as explained by Udoidem, narration enables man to look for congruency in the laws. Postema, (2004) observes, "Congruence is not merely a condition of the existence of law. It is also an aspiration of law. Addressing norms to rational self-directing agents is not merely something law as such seeks to do, but it is also something we demand as a condition of respect for those individuals and as a condition of their liberty." Explaining further, David Naugle added that "The love expressed in this kind of homosexual relationship provides guidance (a sense of shame at acting shamefully, and a sense of pride in acting well-178d), for neither the lover nor the beloved would want to be caught doing something wrong or shameful by the other. Furthermore, if a city or an army could be composed of men and boys so related, theirs would be the best possible system of society, for they would hold back from all that is shameful, and seek honor in each other's eyes." (David Naugle. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium").

Udoidem (2011) continues to advance his ideas by asserting that the important thing about love's power to cause advancement and development in this case is that we have to "cast the veil of ignorance from his face, and draw closer to knowledge in a show akin to yearning for or to eternity or immortality, in the same way that "sexual love is a desire for immortality" (Udoidem 2011:98). It is ultimately the process by which mortal man can assuredly leave behind him a new young person in place the old fleeting past so that "even as things are permanent, they are changing" we will continue to reap from the innovations of the changes to advance the past (Udoidem, 2011 : 99). This same idea of sameness and difference, is what Diotima applied to human knowledge, so that while we are basking in what we know that has come to pass and elude us, we will jump at the imminent branch of knowledge that has come to be, and then will definitely pass away, coupled with the very art of the type of "studying (that) puts back a fresh memory in place of what went away" (symposium, 208 A).

The next level of the development and inherent progression is a movement towards the realm of the sublime, but within the context of delivering of knowledge or reproduction which is comprised of "physical off spring, glory, good deeds or anything that springs from the individual but stays behind after the individual's "(Udoidem 2011:101). It is within this that we entertain Apollodorus' remarks in the Symposium, as it serves to further strengthen the political implications of the discourses on love,

and even suggests that there is the possibility of social rebirth in the philosophical state, if and when “Love” is properly assimilated. (David Naugle. “The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium”). Thus, after accepting and approving of only heterogeneous love affair that produces children as its offspring as the only good, the next level of goods consists of anything that is capable of remaining after the man had and gone. Adding his voice, St. Thomas Aquinas said, “Now the proper object of love is the good; because, as stated above (Question 26, Articles 1,2), love implies a certain connaturalness or complacency of the lover for the thing beloved, and to everything, that thing is a good, which is akin and proportionate to it. It follows, therefore, that good is the proper cause of love.” (Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, QUESTION 27 OF THE CAUSES OF LOVE, Article 2). This leads the way towards the sublime, and that road is thickly laden with man progression towards the good and the morally upright. Diotima has this to say to back up this, “Look, if you will, at how human beings seek honour you’d be amazed at their nationality”, and proceeded to say that a man would be ready to take risks unimaginable and to brave all sorts of danger just to become famous and “to lay up glory immortal forever” over and above taking care of their offspring. But we must agree that bringing up off-springs and taking care of off-springs are not the same thing. Jean Jacques Rousseau, we learn had five children, but removed his children and entrusted them to the care of a Paris Orphanage or what he called, “Foundling Home” (“Jean Jacques Rousseau” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Sep 27th, 2010) accessed from the website on 9th February, 2025 by 6.30pm.

At this point, it is profitable for us to fall back onto our definition of love as given by SiraDambe (2009) at the beginning of this essay. Udoidem agrees that lovers who are only pregnant “in their body” are attracted to women “(Udoidem, 2011:105) are those who produce human children like the love of the active one as defined above, but cautions drawing inspiration from Diotima’s speech that “no such honours have been a credited to any human being on account of human offspring he has begotten” (Udoidem 2011:105), but giving birth to ideas which one has been carrying inside him for ages once the person is in contact with a beautiful person “seems to be the most virtuous and most honourable and guarantees the best form of immortality (Udoidem, 2011:105).

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This sort of reproduction or giving birth to new ideas is like a well, if never dries up, has an unlimited ending, the offsprings can be shared like sharing the ideas in a book and continues to have a multiplier effect. This is only applicable to natural knowledge, wisdom, virtuous acts and intellectual virtue or ideas. This is further captured by Dambe who said.

From Gods’ goodness emanates perfect beauty, whose rays penetrate the spiritual and material world, inspiring love. The lover of beauty, therefore proceeds from the beauty perceived by the material senses to the contemplation and love of God, (Dambe 2009:34)

And it is also considered that the words of Dambe (2009), that:

The one, conveyed in Phaedo and Republic, embodies the soul’s impulse towards asceticism and disengagement from the inferior world, and conveys its realization that attaining a return to pure form requires strenuous efforts and self-discipline. The other, articulated in Diotima’s speech in the symposium, draws the soul towards aesthetic enjoyment of the lover world, whose beauty and goodness reflect those of the world of forms. (Dambe, 2009:33)

The above is a slight mismatch, because as Udoidem: 2011 states and based on Diotima’s speech in the *Symposium*, the source of all beauty is God, and the source of all love is also God as pictured in the World of Forms of ideas in the Republic and Phaedo. Therefore, a lover’s amorous agitation for his beloved, the carnal impulse that with the ascent of the soul, becomes the driving force of the intellectual process are rather serving as stepping stones to the attainment of the final and the highest mystery of

love (Symposium 201A), the lasting virtue and best form of immortality. As Dambe hints us, the sort of love between a husband and wife contracted to reproduce young ones is rather a type of ascending dialectic, a climb through a series of stages, each of which subsumes and unifies the multiplicity inherent in the precious one much like permanence in the midst of changes. According to Dambe, relying on Ficino's *Commentary On The Symposium*,

This is the image of celestial love by which man arises from one perfection to another, till his soul (wholly united to the intellect) is made an angel. Pined from material dress, and transformed into spiritual flame by this divine power, he mounts up to the intelligible heaven, and happily rests in his Father's bosom.

(Dambe 2009 : 36 – 37)

This is what task Diotima set herself as the midwife to deliver Socrates of knowledge about the beautiful and notions of love were germane and revolutionary. Such a lover, Diotima says must begin in his youthful age to devote himself to beautiful bodies and through the love of one body will beget beautiful ideas, after which he will come to despise it because it restricts the growth of the person. This lover in his progression he contemplates the beauty of peoples' souls and rates this more birth to ideas that will improve young men. This will translate to the examination and interest in the beauty of activities and laws in which the examination of customs takes place preceded by that of the various kinds of knowledge. It is after gazing at the various kinds of knowledge that the lover will be, "Turned to the great sea of beauty, and gazing upon this, the gives birth to many gloriously beautiful ideas and theories, in unstinting love of wisdom (Symposium 210 C).

The lover's progress or ascent from acknowledgement of physical features in a particular beloved beauty sparks off his giving birth to ideas that will make. Young men better, and as he becomes committed to or "gazing upon" this, he concentrates upon the beauty of activities and laws, which are beautiful and immortal in themselves. As the lover again turns his attention to beautiful activities and laws, he discovers that he is enmeshed in the "contemplation of infinite divine beauty" (Dambe, 2009:39) which in the words of Diotima is, "The great sea of beauty, and gazing upon this, he gives birth to many gloriously beautiful ideas and theories in unstinting love of wisdom (philosophia)" (Symposium, 210 C). This is the terminal point of love, the sublimation of the soul, and the ultimate process in the progression of the soul from the ridiculous, the hearsay knowledge mostly derived from narratives to knowledge and then ideas, "transmuted into an ontological ascent from the hypostasis of human soul to the summit" (Dambe 2009 : 44); and this is where man comes to contemplate the main sea of pure heavenly beauty, having resolved and integrated the tension between the impulses of earthly desire and the souls yearning for sublimation, free at last to perceive the essences of the good, ideas in the world of Forms. This is further corroborated by Bert Oliver (2007), in holding that, "Not only does this presuppose the possibility of a kind of metaphysical-aesthetic oneness and wholeness that humans should strive for, but it also implies a belief in a reality – albeit here a supra-sensible one (the Forms 'exist' outside of time and space) – which is conceived of as whole....This presupposition of a reality characterized by wholeness is no longer believable, and with it collapses the possibility of an aesthetic of the beautiful. (Bert Oliver. "Beauty, ugliness, the sublime, and truth in art" in SAJAH, Volume 22, Number 3, 2007: 1–16, ISSN 0258-3542. Of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, P. 13)

This beauty finally arrived at, Diotima says neither comes to be, no pass away, nor waxes nor wares, ever and permanently beautiful I not attached to persons or places. It is the result of

What of is to go right, or be led by another, into the mystery of love; one gets always upwards for the sake of this beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them as rising stairs. (Symposium 212 A).

The end result of association with beautiful things, Diotima chirps, is “so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful” (Symposium 212 B). This one beauty, is the highest the one beautiful sun that is the source of all light in the Allegory of the cave in Plato’s cognoology (Udoidem 2011: 110).

Hence, as state somewhere above in contention to the position stated by Dambe, the attainment of knowledge of pure form in the Phaedo, the Republic or /and the symposium in all cases does not simply transit based on certain index like love, it definitely requires strenuous efforts and self-discipline. This is what Diotima says when she declares-

The love of the gods belongs to anyone who has given to true virtue and nourished it, and if any human being could become immortal, it would be he (Symposium 212 A – B).

It definitely translates to discipline, sacrifice and commitment to arrive at the level of contemplation of beauty in the world of forms and ideas, though driven on the wings of love.

In summary, therefore, I unequivocally hold that every genuine action and every great development, be it in science, art and technology in human listing stem from the biology of love as espoused by Plato’s symposium. It could be the ridiculous such as the idea attributable to love expressed in homosexuality and lesbianism, or that gotten through hear-say and narrativity as the first levels of our knowing process, or that expressed in the erotic relationship between husband and wife, the first step in the production of viable replacements of man in his quest for immortality. It is again expressed in man’s love for knowledge, customs, ideas and contemplation, like bathing in an ocean of Beauty and ideas. This accords with the following position adopted by Bett Olivier, (200&), that “The lover’s arduous journey towards the ultimately worthy object of his or her love culminates in an ecstatic mystical union when he or she beholds the immutable form or Beauty” (Olivier 2007: 13).

This is the ultimate demonstration of the biology of love as espoused in Plato’s symposium in the attainment of the sublime, that if we are to move from the bestial and basal sexual pursuit to that of achieving the highest level of philosophic vision of supreme beauty in of self. This implies that though passionate desire and the passion of reason were amply emphasized and desire was equally identified with the erotic, yet Plato’s real intent was to divest the passion for human reasoning from the vestiges of sexual appeal and romantic casuistry.

Conclusion

In this work we have meandered through and related to Plato’s *Symposium* (1965: 93-94), as a remarkable and arduous journey of a lover, through the innumerable obstacles to his self-realization, towards the ultimately object considered to be worthy of his or her loving. It indeed culminates in an ecstatic and mystical union, between man and the immutable form of beauty. The purpose of this, relying on Bett Oliver, is to deliver to humanity, what she refers to as a “kind of metaphysical-aesthetic oneness and wholeness’ and a discrete belief in a supra-sensible reality or according to Plato, “Forms” which exist outside of time and space. It is a systematic collapsing of the potentials that inhere in the “aesthetic” onto the beautiful (Bert Oliver. 2007: 13).

We have proceeded to demonstrate the Platonic idea of “Love” as he portrayed it in his *Symposium*, to mimic a showing where A is interested in B's well-being for B's sake, and B is similarly interested in A's for A's sake; and so A has reason to be interested in A's own well-being not only for its own sake but also for B's; and B likewise. The interest here doesn't come to rest solely on that the welfare of the person being loved, nor on the welfare of the person showing the love, but that the relationship of interest (will, choice, action, affection) is, and is directed towards, a truly common good of everyone. The intriguing aspect of this agape love is that, “the movement of love has a twofold tendency: towards the good which a man wishes to someone (to himself or to another) and towards that to which he wishes some good.” This is erected as it were on the Augustinian notion of “Love”, as a “vital principle uniting, or seeking to unite two together, the lover, to wit, and the beloved.” It is this “vital principle uniting” that provides lavishly for the quantum leap in progress and development which is brought about by “love”, moving it closer to the “sublime” and farther removed from ridiculous and disdainful. Every union is directed at and focused on development and the common good of the other, and it is by this that we earn progress and development. This invariably amounts to the acquisition and realization of a new vision, a new understanding of the role that “eros” plays in actualizing the Platonic paradigm in relationships.

We terminate with a review of how Diotima's dialectics shows us that of a truth, every iota of human activities is energized by agape “Love.” Diotima makes us realise that this type of “Love” pervades the entire cosmos, that is all of humanity, living beings, spirits and the gods. In fact, it is “Love” that literally makes the world go round. Diotima, it is truly fascinating, proceeds to explain that that if any man fails or neglects to acknowledge “what is truly good,” they end up wasting and squandering their lives on the “lesser goods which may provide some good, but certainly not the greatest good.” David Naugle says of this, “The greatest good is obtained only by embracing the object of supreme good and beauty. Love carries people about like a weight motivating them to pursue a kind of immortality, a form of self-perpetuation, through the offspring of their minds or bodies, through cultural contributions or children” (David Naugle. “The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium”).

Conclusively, if we fail or neglect to position love in our lives and affairs, then we will be actively acting on the obverse, the rest assured, we should know that “If we instead find our humanity not in our brains, but in our hearts, perhaps we will come to recognize that caring, compassion, kindness, and love are ultimately what make us human and what make life worth living. Perhaps by taking away some of the tedium of life, AI can help us to fulfill this vision of a more humane world.” We will be making room for machine learning techniques, artificial intelligence and robots to take over our affairs, robots don't relate to ethical standards. This will be making good progress, development and swinging acceleration but, without the heart of compassion, love, kindness, and strict moral observance of the progress we make, which will make for the common good.

I remember my starting point quite right and would terminate this beautiful piece by reflecting on the words of Romesin & Verden-Zoller (2008). In their work, *The Origin Of Humanness In The Biology Of Love*, they made the following terse remark:

(We) created goddesses and gods as aspects of their psychic existence who operated both as evocative concretizations of the human participation in the natural flow of the cosmic coherences of daily life, and as mystical instruments for the conservation of the awareness of that participation.... by being deluded and enchanted with the power of local linear thinking because of its the expansion of our capabilities for technological design and the promise of control of human relations that it seems to offer, we create around our children a psychic space that continuously negates them in the negation of the biology of love. So, our children choose

to search for their own presence in the present moment through drugs, gangs, or despair. . . . Only if we prefer trust to mistrust, responsibility to hypocrisy, collaboration, sharing, and participation to greediness, power and obedience as we create the worlds that we create as we live as sapiens-amans human beings, only then will Homo sapiens-amans be conserved in our human biological and spiritual evolution (Romesín & Verden-Zoller 2008: 68).

And I cannot but agree with them in its entirety. The biology of love is the machine house for all genuine action and every great development in human history. The world and everything in it revolve around and upon the hinges and instrumentalities of “Love”, and this could be contingent upon the beautiful, the ugly, or the good or the bad, or as Plato captured it in his *Symposium*, upon the ridiculous or the sublime.

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