

“Phaedrus: The Soul Discovering Truth”

By Alexander Otto



A Senior Essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts.

Mike Riley, Advisor

Saint Mary's College of California

March 17, 2016

The *Phaedrus* follows a development of the soul through myth. To understand the account Plato makes of the soul requires one to follow one's own consciousness. The *Phaedrus* requires one to explore from one's own consciousness. The soul is the source of discovering truth; this essay focuses on myth as a guide to spiritual fulfillment that applies to the whole of humanity.

The story of the *Phaedrus* by Plato begins with the character Socrates running into Phaedrus on the streets of Athens. Socrates stops Phaedrus by questioning him. Phaedrus replies to Socrates and informs him that he has recently been with Lysias, a very well-known speaker and writer, discussing his speeches. Phaedrus has spent the entire morning with Lysias and by now wants to leave the city and walk along the country roads reflecting on the speech of Lysias. Socrates prods Phaedrus a little more asking him further if Lysias is still in the city. Phaedrus replies to Socrates and tells him that he is indeed still in the city. Socrates grows ever more curious on what it was exactly Phaedrus and Lysias were discussing. Phaedrus then invites Socrates to come along with him if he would like to hear what he and Lysias were discussing. They then exit the city and talk along the way. While journeying along the country road, Phaedrus tells Socrates how the speech is, in fact, perfect for Socrates to hear, for it is about love.

Phaedrus elaborates how the speech, "is aimed at seducing a beautiful boy, but the speaker is not in love with him – this is actually what is so clever and elegant about it: Lysias argues that it is better to give your favors to someone who does not love you than to someone who does" (Plato227c-d). Socrates is thrilled at hearing the argument proposed by Lysias and wishes he would write his speeches for the poor or elderly. That way the speeches would be greatly sophisticated. Socrates is now more than ever eager to hear such a speech. Phaedrus, however, is not as eager, telling Socrates he is not fit to recite such a speech worthy of Lysias,

whom he considers "The best of our writers" (Plato228a). Socrates upon hearing such a remark reminds his dear friend Phaedrus that Lysias must have recited the speech more than once for Phaedrus to retain it. Phaedrus agrees to do his best to recite Lysias' speech on his account giving a careful summarization of the lovers and non-lovers in a correct arrangement.

Before Phaedrus can even get the chance to start, Socrates first insists he has Phaedrus reveal to him what is beneath his cloak. Socrates has his suspicions that Phaedrus is in possession of the speech. Socrates will never allow Phaedrus, as long as Lysias is present, to practice his speech-making on him. Phaedrus comes clean and indeed tells Socrates that he is in possession of the speech by Lysias. All this time the two of them have been walking out of the city to the country. Phaedrus asks Socrates where he would like to sit and read the speech of Lysias. Socrates suggests they leave the path and walk along the Ilisus until a good spot is found. With this suggestion, Phaedrus takes an interest, for there is a legend of Boreas carrying off a girl named Orithuia nearby. Phaedrus then asks Socrates another question, if the legend is indeed true? Socrates says to Phaedrus that he would reject the legend as so many intellectuals do, but Socrates instead tells the story of how the north wind blew Orithuia off the rocks; once killed, Boreas carried her off. Socrates is beginning to put together the enticing point that legends have a connection to reality. Socrates goes on about Phaedrus' inquiry of how legends are true by saying that he is not meant for such a job, for such a man would have to spend time giving "a rational account of the forms of... Monsters, in large number and absurd forms that would overwhelm him" (Plato 230a). These forms require a great amount of time, and Socrates saying just how long it would take implies how any man would struggle to know any and all forms, or have a rational account of them. This is the case of Socrates, for Socrates says "I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to me ridiculous to look

into other things before I have understood that" (Plato 230a). Instead of embarking on such a challenge, Phaedrus and Socrates make it to their place of rest from their journey in the countryside. This place where they end their walking journey is a serene location where Socrates and Phaedrus read the written speech by Lysias.

The place where these two arrive is a beautiful place with a plane tree and beneath this plane tree, a spring runs with cool water. The ancient Greek word associated with this spring is *πηγή*, which translates to the origin, or source. This spot is where both Socrates and Phaedrus sit to begin their discussion. Once Phaedrus finishes the speech by Lysias, he is interested in how the speech struck Socrates. Socrates goes to tell Phaedrus that the speech filled him with ecstasy. Phaedrus takes this response as comedic, telling Socrates this is no joking matter, but Socrates is by no means joking. Phaedrus does not take Socrates seriously and asks him, "but now tell me the truth, in the name of Zeus, god of friendship: Do you think that any other Greek could say anything more impressive or more complete on the same subject" (Plato 234 d-e). Once Phaedrus says this Socrates admits that he was only paying attention to the speech's style. Socrates even states that the author Lysias himself would in no way be satisfied by what he wrote. Socrates says, "For it seemed to me Phaedrus – unless, of course, you disagree – that he said the same things two or even three times" (Plato 235 a-b). From the response that Socrates gives it is obvious to him that Lysias did not have anything interesting to say. Lysias rather showed how he was capable of saying the same thing two different ways and by saying it credibly both times. Phaedrus strongly disagrees with what Socrates is saying and tells him that Lysias has explained everything worthy of the subject so much so that nobody would be able to add anything of worth to complete what has already been said. This is where Socrates stops Phaedrus and tells him, "You go too far: I can't agree with you about that. If, as a favor to you, I accept your view, I will

stand refuted by all the wise men and women of old who have spoken or written about this subject” (Plato 235 b-c). These wise men and women are well-known in ancient Greek society as some of the best writers of prose and poetry. Phaedrus is rather baffled by Socrates’ remark and wonders who on earth these people could be and how could it be that any of them possesses such skills better than Lysias’. Socrates explains to Phaedrus that no matter what he may consider in a speech to be good, there are various ways to interpret speeches.

Plato is not just illustrating the elements of a speech, but allows readers to observe the process, of Socrates at his best. Socrates has mentioned prior that he is indeed not a man willing to take the time to explain everything he knows for he does not fully know himself. However, when we are introduced to these two individuals in the dialogue, one being Socrates and the other Phaedrus, there is a sense of hierarchy brought about between both of them. This sense mentioned has to do with the stature of the characters up to this point. When these two first meet each other, Socrates immediately becomes interested in Phaedrus and his whereabouts. This interest drives Phaedrus to share with Socrates a speech that he heard from Lysias. Socrates, who is very aware of Lysias and his works, is quite eager to understand what it was Lysias told Phaedrus. Socrates knows Phaedrus quite well, for he might not know himself completely, but he does know Phaedrus cannot develop a strong interpretation of the speech from memory without going over it a couple times. This is all before Phaedrus reveals that he does indeed have the speeches beneath his cloak.

Socrates is a very crafty man in Athens with quite a reputation. Phaedrus is learned and needs time to come to understand more of himself just as Socrates does. These two are at different degrees of understanding within themselves. What allows them to come together is a purpose, one that Phaedrus thrusts upon Socrates to leave the very walls of the city life and

expose oneself to the country. This journey in the country brings them to the river Ilissus where Phaedrus mentions a legend of a young girl being carried off by Boreas. Boreas is the personified form of the northern winds, but Phaedrus question is whether this legend is true. Socrates comes through with a solid answer, “I look not into them but into my own self: Am I a beast more complicated and savage than Typhon, or am I a tamer, simpler animal with a share in a divine and gentle nature” (230 a-b)? This question leads us to the beginning, or in the case of my understanding the origin of a continuous flow known as the *πηγή*, *pegē*, fount or source.

This stream of thought begins with the argument presented by Lysias. Socrates having voiced his opinion has prepared himself for a new speech, “The fact, my dear friend, that my breast is full and I feel I can make a different speech, even better than Lysias” (Plato 235 c-d). Now Socrates takes apart the very speech Lysias had given on the subject of love and starts by proposing what is love, “Love is some kind of desire; but we also know that even men who are not in love have a desire for what is beautiful” (Plato 237 d-e). Coming from what Socrates knows we are given two cases on how one treats love and see that even those not in love have a desire of the beautiful. This distinction drives the conversation forward to a point where Socrates comes to a definite principle,

“we must realize that each of us is ruled by two principles which we follow wherever they lead: one is our inborn desire for pleasures the other is our acquired judgement that pursues what is best. Sometimes these two are in agreement; but there are times when they quarrel inside us” (Plato 237 d-e).

Socrates’ behavior does not seem all too familiar when speaking in such a manner, and in fact Phaedrus openly tells him, “this is certainly an unusual flow of words for you Socrates” (Plato

238 c-d). Socrates is even convinced that the location in which they have arrived has some θεῖος, *theios*, divine, involvement with his thoughts.

Socrates sets the argument up nicely for his further grasp of the divine. He plunges his thoughts into the nature of the soul both human and divine. The hope of what I am about to express is that my readers will come to have a more intimate connection between self-understanding and myths. These myths by Plato give a direction to the individual whether to the soul, or any other unfathomable conception of self that humans can be conscious of.

For Plato, the body is driven; each perpetual moment is taken up in motion. This motion comes as a means for us to comprehend our sensible perspective and what can be interpreted of it. Before any conception of self was understood, was there any motion prior? The body is a form that has many parts that make sense of reality; these visible parts are utilities to make knowledgeable conceptions of what is observed. The thought of some prior motion that drives the form is difficult to describe. How can a beginning be understood when no sensation can come from it? Anything that exists must have an origin or a beginning. This origin and what comes after it follows a progression. The form then, as body, cannot be this origin. The body will always decay, and this decaying is the sign of our forms' existence as purely mortal. Our vessel will eventually die, and what's left is what? Plato proposes quite beautifully in the *Phaedrus* a means for understanding the origin of motion by seeking what first is immortal and purely divine. “Ψυχή πασα ἀθάνατος” *psyche pasa athanatos* (Plato 245C 5-6). Plato claims that immortality starts with the soul that ‘all souls are immortal’.

Plato uses immortality to create a distinction between the body and the soul. The continuous motion of the soul greatly differs from that of what is not immortal, i.e. the body. The distinction now is between that which is always in motion and that which is not. The form is the

physical conception that began with physical creation, and this creation was only possible in part with all that is immortal giving to the material form that which is immortal. The body then in part takes up what the immortal possesses, this motion. “In fact, this self-mover is also the source and spring (πηγή) of motion in everything else that moves; and a source has no beginning” (Plato 245 C 8-10). This spring of motion gives the form motion, and when the form is given motion the motion of the form interacts with other forms and gives them motion. The spring is not just a propellant allowing us to proceed further, but a motion that is always present within us, and that is taken up in the real world. The souls’ motion while in the body interacts with the world, and it is because of these interactions that the soul while occupying bodily form is not entirely perfect, for the soul is immortal and the body mortal. The *Phaedrus* follows how the soul of man and human form act upon each other through life’s contraries. The *Phaedrus* leads to a harmony that man must recognize today as a greater truth.

Rather than laying out the system as a logical progression, Plato explains all of this process to Phaedrus in myth. He first describes these myths as something divine, “Let us liken the soul to a natural union of a team of winged horses and their charioteer” (Plato 246a 5-6). Plato explains in the myth that the gods are in control of completely good winged horses, while everyone else has some mixture. This mixture as he puts it has to do with what the soul is made up of. Since we are both in part mortal and in part immortal beings, our job as the chariot driver is difficult. Plato states the differing factors and how the soul operates differently at certain times by saying, “At some point in time the soul is winged and flies high, but a soul which instead shed its wings wanders until it lights on something solid” (Plato 246c 4-6). The two, soul and body put together, is called a living thing and is given the term ‘mortal’. So together the body and soul cannot be immortal.

Plato goes into the whole description of the gods and their chariots compared to the description of other chariots. The journey of the gods and their chariots comes as a simple challenge to them, and the gods easily make it to a place known as the rim of heaven. The gods' chariots are well controlled and stable, while the other chariots crash into each other, damage their wings, and are unable to rise up. Instead of the other human charioteers seeing that hopeful reality which the gods have reached, humans depend on what they think is 'nourishment' which are their own opinions. Plato also discusses how a soul finds its way into the human form, "the soul is not born into a wild animal in its first incarnation; but a soul that has seen the most will be planted into the seed of a man who will become a lover of wisdom" (Plato 248d 1-3). This seeing has to do in part with the myth and the circuit the soul follows. Keeping up with the gods requires the soul to see everything as truth. Once the soul starts to see otherwise, everything becomes untrue and the soul falls to earth; however, the soul might still become a lover of wisdom. Plato also lays out other human forms the soul might occupy once it has fallen away from the circuit of the gods. Each body the soul occupies differs, but their outcome Plato says remains the same, "Of all these, any who have led their lives with justice will change to a better fate, and any who have led their lives with injustice, to a worse one" (Plato 248e 6-7). From here the soul dives into memory, the memory of truth in the heavens, for a soul can only take on the form of human if it has witnessed the truth. This truth Plato mentions leads to madness "which someone shows when he sees the beauty we have down here and is reminded of true beauty" (Plato 249d 4-5). Beauty is radiant, and it is this beauty that takes the soul back to the glorious chorus of the gods.

The soul as human can recollect all that is beautiful and radiant, but how can the body understand such beauty that comes as an experience for the soul that takes the soul back to the

chorus of gods? Plato describes in a myth how the soul is divided into a charioteer and his horses. With these horses, Plato describes the duality of the soul and how our interactions, if they remain just, will take us back to the truth that we so hope for and desire. One of the horses Plato states is a good horse, “He is upright in frame and well jointed, with a high neck and a regal nose, his coat is white, his eyes are black; and he is a lover of honor with modesty and self-control; companion to true glory, he needs no whip, and is guided by verbal commands alone” (Plato 253d-1). The goodness of the good horse is immediately contrasted with that of the bad horse. The bad horse as Plato puts it, “is a crooked great jumble of limbs with a short bull-neck, a pug nose, black skin, and bloodshot white eyes; companion to wild boasts and indecency, he is shaggy around the ears - deaf as a post - and just barely yields to horse whip and goad combined” (Plato 253e1-5). Plato uses this myth to illustrate just how the horses interact when something as grand as beauty confronts our human perspective.

The perspective of the chariot driver is our means of viewing said beautiful thing. The case for beauty in the *Phaedrus* is a young boy. When the young boy is present, Plato says, “The charioteer’s soul looks upon the beauty of the boy and takes in the stream of particles flowing into it from his beauty (that is why this is called ‘desire’)” (Plato 251c5-6). This desire Plato describes comes from the charioteer witnessing love and the soul of the charioteer being filled with desire. When the disobedient black horse sees beauty, his pleasure overtakes that of his yokemate and charioteer. Once close enough to the boy, the soul of the charioteer sees the young boy and instantly his memory is taken back to the truth of beauty. What comes of this is the black horse’s obedience to the charioteer. The more and more the bit of the black horse is pulled and his mouth bloodied, the more the horse knows to fall in line. Plato says this of the black horse, “now it is humble enough to follow the charioteer’s warnings... with the result that now at

last the lovers' soul follows its boy in reverence and awe" (Plato 254e 7-10). What comes from this experience of the soul is a progression of soul interacting with things that jogs its memory of the beautiful.

Plato progresses through this description of the chariot to the lover and how the lover and the boy have managed to enslave the part of their souls which caused trouble. A lover's friendship is ultimately what Plato moves into. This love that Plato describes is what moves the dialogue into the art of speech making and rhetoric. Then this love works its way into an art, and from an art this art is taken up in the way people go about their own crafts. Love moves the soul towards what is excellent. This excellence through the series of oppositions takes Socrates and Phaedrus back to the source, the soul, the beginning and all that was said and done. They describe such a person at this source to be a philosopher, the lover of wisdom.

How strong is the argument for the soul's immortality in the *Phaedrus* exactly? In the *Phaedrus* do the words of Plato have us convinced that the soul is indeed immortal? The reading clearly illustrates differences with regards to the soul. One obscurity here is whether the soul is a collective soul or an individual soul. Even more still, the notion that bodily things do not have anything to do with the soul causes some difficulty. What we have viewed as rational in our own minds may not relate to the rationality of the soul. It is appropriate to consider the soul not as a collective essence or single, but rather a soul in all kinds of forms. So now the difficulty at hand is understanding how the soul is indeed rational. The soul differs from the body in the way that it does not cease. The body constructed of many faculties has two that govern our bodily actions, which are the brain and heart. These are entirely part of the human physiology and not the only element of the soul. As people, we can rationalize and feel much of what the external world offers us. The problem now is how our reasoning relates to the soul. How different the body and

soul of man are, Plato illustrates nicely, “Now we must first understand the truth about the nature of the soul, divine or human” (Plato 245C 2-4). In order for this description to have any potency other descriptions of the soul must be rid of; “the so-called World Soul as proposed by Posidonius cannot be referred to at all here, nor can it also be the soul of flies as proposed by Harpocration. The soul then in this case most similarly resembles the soul that is noetic, as Hermias saw it. A soul common to both gods and men” (Robinson). The soul’s immortality seemed to be a product of eternal motion as in the *πηγή*. This is the source to which Socrates and Phaedrus return, and it metaphorically expresses why the soul is eternal.

There are different motions of the soul when it has become human which metaphorically come from the white and dark horse. Both parts of the soul, good and bad, create an opposition that is felt by the driver of the chariot, who metaphorically is intellect and reason. While the horses pull the chariot, one obeys and the other disobeys, so the motion of the soul seems to be eternal in the sense that these two oppositions cause the soul to progress. Instead Robinson found, “The soul's progression in some manuscripts is called (*ἀεκίνητος*) *aeikinetos* the perpetual motion of the soul, but it was not until a discovery in Oxyrhynchus, rather than reading (*ἀεκίνητος*) *aeikinetos* reads (*αὐτοκίνητος*) *autokinetos*; this word means ‘self-moving’ rather than eternally moving” (Robinson). Why this case is so important has to do in part with the white and black horses. The Nehamas and Woodruff translation gives the description of both horses, but it includes a very peculiar part to them--the eyes of the horses. These eyes differ for each horse; the wild and bad horse has white eyes, while the white horse has black eyes. This description represents the first case that the human soul is eternal due to the progressive opposition of the two horses, and also the second, that it is self-moving because of what the soul is composed of. Whether or not Nehamas and Woodruff intentionally put this here to propose a

thought on the matter remains a mystery, but it does give an expression of why the human soul is perpetually self-moving.

That the soul has both parts eternal and self-moving generates the eternal and human condition. The soul is bridging with human form. The form of man is born, and the faculties of our body take hold of the physical world. As mentioned, both divine and human soul are alike in that they both involve intellect. This is evident in Plato's expression of how the soul reacts to seeing something beautiful. The body is free to a degree similar to the soul, which is entirely self-moving. Soul's very divine essence is also man's essence. The horses move the chariot, and the mind drives the body like a chariot. Both reason and intellect sit guiding our lives, one in the divine sense and the other in the bodily. Plato's purpose in showing the similarities between body and soul is not to equate the two in any way, but to provide a distinct motion to the body that affects the soul.

How do mortal things necessarily contain the immortal when they are themselves not immortal? Clearly the immortal and mortal cannot be equated. Plato says though, "All souls look after all that lacks a soul, and patrols all of heaven, taking different shapes at different times" (Plato 246b 6-7). The myth then has the divine soul lose its wings. When the divine soul loses its wings, it descends until it lands on something solid. Once it makes contact, the soul settles and takes the form of an earthly body. The noetic soul moves from a formless to a formed existence by way of becoming mortal. The noetic soul is the intellectual soul and is taken up by both the divine and human soul. The combination is what Plato calls a living thing. Plato also mentions, "that the body owing to the power of the soul, seems to move itself" (Plato 246c 4-5). The body like the human soul is self-moving. The form of the body is now a mortal, and this mortal form is susceptible to all that takes place in the mortal world.

Human existence is earthly. Through trials and experiences a person begins to put this intellect bestowed upon them to use. Since the human form does not have an entirely perfect and pure nature, the human form needs reason to improve itself, and thus the body follows reason and calls upon the soul and aspires to do anything the soul's self-moving form desires. People can put the time in to do what they please in this form by nourishing their mind and soul with politics, mathematics, sciences, and art. This however is no mere task done in a moment. The body takes time to spend deliberating: an eternal discourse. As Plato says,

“Would a sensible farmer, who cared about his seeds and wanted them to yield fruit, plant them in all seriousness in gardens of Adonis in the middle of the summer and enjoy watching them bear fruit within seven days? Or would he do this as an amusement and in honor of the holiday, if he did it at all? Wouldn't he use his knowledge of farming to plant the seeds he cared for when it was appropriate and be content if they bore fruit seven months later” (Plato 276b 1-8).

Socrates tells this to Phaedrus, so he can find satisfaction in doing what is appropriate for any craft. By doing things in a manner that is careful, the individual in the case of the farmer does a sensible act. He is sensible in that he is aware of what the earth will yield to him, maybe not right away, but when the right time comes he will be content. This care is the same for those who know what is just, noble, and good. They care about what they craft, so people will spend the appropriate time to produce what they can in a practical manner. If the time spent is not sensible, then the craft does not do any good. This craftsmanship ties back into the noetic soul both human and divine. The dark horse disobeys the whip and the command of the charioteer and his partner and dashes fast to whatever it might come across in its self-moving journey. The dual nature of the soul adds the practical sense for how we come to understand the world around us. Without

the dark horse, we would be something entirely different, but our divisive nature makes the human soul unique. The soul becomes human in form, but because of this repugnant part within us we stray from that sensible path and let sensation fill us whenever we approach an incident. This is of not a fault of the soul, but a part that is apparent in all of us. We are not beings of perfection nor do we always do the right thing. That is just part of what makes us human.

Part of our soul is contrary in nature, but both human and divine souls are similar in that they both are noetic. How does the human soul come to uncover truth, and what does truth do to the noetic soul of man? As mentioned earlier, the dark horse is a wild and untamed mess. When the charioteer witnesses something, he captures the scenario in two ways. He uses the human faculty of sense and then uses the human soul. To frame this case calls for an example, first the body coming into contact with love and secondly the human soul. Plato illustrates this in the *Phaedrus* by describing how the human soul takes up love, “Now when the charioteer looks in the eyes of love, his entire soul is suffused with a sense of warmth and starts to fill with tingles and the goading of desire” (Plato 253e 5-6). This sensation is in the body. Not in any way equal, the soul also reacts because it has been taken up in the body of man once it has fallen to the earth after losing its wings. When man comes into contact with something that presents an opportunity for love, what is the sensible approach? Responding bodily to the situation will propel his ambitious thought to the next moment, but what about the soul of man? Plato frames it this way. The dark horse... “leaps violently forward and does everything to aggravate the yokemate and its charioteer, trying to make them go up to the young boy and suggest to him the pleasures of sex” (Plato 254a 5-6). The dark horse does not have anything sensible in mind. Even in the context of man this would be an insensible act, for in fact it would do great harm to the individual and the boy. The dark horse lashes out with such fury toward the young boy that he drags the charioteer,

which we regard as the intellect of the human soul, and so the souls' sensible opposite side, to the young boy.

Once the dark horse has gotten incredibly close to the young boy, the charioteer witnesses the boy's face and is struck and he suddenly recollects. From what Plato is describing here, this recollection sounds like the first glimpse of truth. This instance seems rather brief because the charioteer is knocked back. Plato says that, "his memory is carried back to the real nature of Beauty, and he sees it again where it stands on the sacred pedestal next to self-control" (Plato 254 b-c). The soul of man's intellect and reason is grounded, but what this moment illustrates for the soul of man and for man is beyond anything sensible. Distinguishing the sensible from the insensible was a point mentioned earlier, and this case appears to be just that. The reasonable and good part of the chariot is dragged by the insensible, the desire. Once close enough the chariot and other part witnesses beauty, that sacred beauty that stands on a pedestal next to self-control, and after recollecting both horses fall back. To frame the moment in the human sense, a man approaching a young boy suddenly witnesses his innocence and beauty. The man will feel a sensation build in him like nothing ever felt before and question- 'why is it that I feel this way'. That feeling of wanting and yearning to know why is reciprocated back to the soul of man that reels at the sight and collapses, but for a brief moment the feeling of something greater has taken hold of man's senses.

How the soul of the man reaches something so pure as a true glimpse into beauty has to do with the noetic soul and how it comprehends beauty both divine and human. The soul of man is only as great as it can be because it has lost the capability to fly amongst the other divine souls. Moments that transfix the mind's insensible decisions can result in a flood of wonder and fill the heart with that yearning to know why. The divine souls that reside in the heavens and race

around have the pure truth before them, but it is the intellect that remains with the soul divine and human that is so important. Even though the wings have fallen off the chariot of the divine horses, they still are in part divine. With intellect present within both divine and human souls, the ability for man to feel the sensation of truth becomes possible. This also enables man to grasp higher thought in life. How can all that lies in front of us be true, unless what drives us is still the greatest truth we are hoping to discover? People have to seek in order to appreciate this sensation as a synthesis of the sensible and metaphysical wonders. The enjoyable part about the bridge of the divine to human soul and the human soul to body is the endless thought of what the unknown is and what other kinds of truth we can grasp about it.

With the oppositions of the soul, we are able to see just how the chariot is a part of our lives in each instance, not only in the relation to sensible to nonsensible also, but to the right and wrong, just and unjust, beautiful and ugly. What they all have guiding them is the intellect that resides in both divine and human souls. With this direct line tapping into the heavens, it is no wonder man has come so far in the world today in evolving and expanding thought. With every moment that approaches us, we press for a sensation from our external lives to throw more wonder into our minds so we can return to that divine chariot race in the heavens.

Now that the sense of the chariot image is clear, how does a man choose to pursue this life of mastering the chariot and returning to the divine? People accept what truth they have been given, but rather than simply accept what seems true, let us analyze what makes it true. After deliberating for quite some time, both Phaedrus and Socrates return to the source of their discussion. Having gone over the written works of Lysias, Socrates mentions how the dialogue was possible because it was done by approaching the knowledge of truth. The whole chariot myth that took place illustrated the knowledge of truth within the human and divine soul. We are

capable of comprehending the knowledge of the truth because we have part of what defines truth within all of us. That connection drives all our thought, wonder, and knowledge. There will be instances in life when we are left with an imprint of what the truth is from the world around us. In these instances, experiencing these thoughts and feelings can open the possibility of uncovering more of this truth that we all seek. The soul will always reside in the divine circuit, cherishing the truth that blesses it. Other souls will crash, and when they lose sight of that divine truth, their wings will eventually shed, leaving the soul to occupy a body. The bridge that connects the body back to that divine place is the intellect. This intellect as a bridge drives man to seek the knowledge of truth, and once he has a glimpse of its power, the love for more is insatiable. What then could define a man who seeks out truth? Plato says, "To call him wise, Phaedrus, seems to me too much, and proper only for a god. To call him wisdom's lover- a philosopher- or something similar would fit him better and be more seemly" (Plato 278d 5-6). These are the men who strive for the truth of all that is and ever will be.

The *Phaedrus* follows how the soul of man and human form act upon each other through life's contraries, and this activity leads to a harmony that man must recognize today as a greater truth. This greater truth is revealed as an appreciation and love for the knowledge of truth. What more could man want in life than to journey on this path until kingdom come. When man has lost the way of truth, man seeks not what is possible from within his own self. He has allowed for the miserable repugnant mess of a dark horse to journey too far into sensations. Because of the allowance of these sensational desires, our world today has become more of a deformation of the truth that Plato described. Truth does not come from momentary existence, as all those say who have lived to give an account of its potency. When you think you have nourished yourself with enough truth, a second helping presents itself to you, ready for the individual to dig into.

Socrates explains the myth to Phaedrus and gives a very memorable account of the chariot. After sometime the bad horse as described in the myth begins to obey intellect and his yokemate. Socrates goes on to say, “now if victory goes to the better elements in both their minds, which lead them to follow the assigned regimen of philosophy, their life below is one of bliss and shared understanding” (Plato 256 a-b). Socrates suggests that anyone over time can succumb to desires taken up in the soul and then later realize that only the better elements result in understanding. These better elements will result in any individual leading a moderate lifestyle. Moderation is the way and truth that the myth illustrates. There is some trouble with this statement. For how could anyone go about living a moderate life fully in control of oneself when there are those who would rather live an ambitious life? Socrates gives these individuals the means of facing this problem as described in the myth. After a good number of desirable acts come about in a person’s life, they might lead a life associated to desire and they will venture further and further to satisfy themselves, but Socrates says this life of desire is incomplete. They eventually come to commit an act that is the instant described from the argument prior, the moment of the intellects’ interaction with beauty. And because they find this instant so striking that it is the most purposeful, they will continue to seek that impression for the rest of their lives. Socrates does say they have carnal lapses, “but sparingly, since they have not approved of what they are doing with their whole minds” (Plato 256 c-d). This awareness is the point of great distinction between the lovers of wisdom and the lovers of desire.

As one ventures through the mortal sphere either one simply succumbs to desire or lives by striving for self-control in moderation. What better life would there be to live than the life of moderation? Phaedrus having listened to such words has a great impression from everything said by Socrates and even goes to say about Lysias that his ego keeps him from writing speeches that

focus on his audience. This case was brought up prior in the first part of the thesis when Phaedrus first runs into Socrates on the streets of Athens. The difference in the scenario now is that Phaedrus responds to the notion of Lysias's speech differently from when he was in such favor of Lysias. Now he refers to Lysias as a writer solely for writings' sake and that illustrates a greater understanding from Phaedrus. However, Socrates hears this response as quite foolish and tells Phaedrus that such writing cannot be bullied so easily. This opens the dialogue to the power of speech writing, for Socrates says about writers of speech that, "most ambitious politicians love speech writing and long for their writing to survive" (Plato 257 e). All speech writers write for the sake of gaining admirers. Socrates then breaks into discussion of how to distinguish good from bad writing Phaedrus responds by asking how else would one choose to live life if not for the pleasures of written works. Socrates tells Phaedrus that they can discuss good and bad speeches. Socrates gives Phaedrus cases from a brief explanation about the cicadas that are overhead. The first case has both Socrates and Phaedrus avoiding conversation, as many people do, and dozing off around the spring. The second case has them conversing and directing their conversation around the song of the cicadas. He says the cicadas would be pleased by the second case and bestow a gift to them. Phaedrus wonders what sort of gift this is, which prompts Socrates to share another myth about the cicadas.

The cicadas were once human. Once song was born from the Muses, they were the people who were so overwhelmed by the singing they forgot to eat and drink, so much so that they would die without ever realizing it. Socrates then illustrates how the cicadas refer back to the Muses and their divine source who rules over all things even human and divine. These cicadas have this connection that originates in the divine just as the souls do. Those who honor their music live a philosophical life, a reversion to that source of truth. This myth has to do with

speech writing. It can benefit anyone to talk and discuss what is well written rather than sleep amongst the cicadas. The myth itself is establishing this method of reversion. It is well written. Socrates then breaks into a brief dialogue about a rhetorician convincing his audience to do something bad instead of good, when Socrates suddenly warns against a claim which the art of speaking may itself reply, “what bizarre nonsense! Look, I am not forcing anyone to learn how to make speeches without knowing the truth; on the contrary, my advice, for what it is worth, is to take up only after mastering the truth” (Plato 260 d-e). Phaedrus is unsure, so he asks Socrates if that is in any way a fair response. Socrates tells him, it is indeed a fair reply, asking rhetoric to testify that it is indeed an art. Phaedrus now demands that Socrates produce such arguments in order to understand the points made about speech. This is where Socrates calls upon “noble creatures” to help Phaedrus produce his own conception. Socrates says, “that unless he pursues philosophy properly he will never be able to make a proper speech on any subject either” (Plato 261 a-b). Socrates then states to Phaedrus that the art of rhetoric in its entirety directs the soul by the use of speech.

As the discussion continues, Socrates comes to question this art of rhetoric and how rhetoric must be one art that governs all speaking. The two then reexamine Lysias’ speech and determine that the speech is artless. So then how would one go about obtaining this art of rhetoric? To do so, Socrates says, “make a systematic discussion and grasp the particular character of each of these two kinds of thing, both the kind where most people wander in different directions and the kind where they do not” (Plato 263 b-c). This character Socrates is talking about for the art of rhetoric has to do with people digressing from the path of agreeing to the path of disagreeing with words, in this case with the words “just” and “good”. These words cause us to go in different directions. We have to make a systematic division and grasp that

character of each opinion and find where people wander and where they do not. Now Socrates says what about in the case for the word love? Does it fall under a similar class where people can differ, or where they do not? The two look back at Lysias' speech to see if at the very beginning of his love-speech he completes it by arranging everything in relation to love. Socrates points out how Lysias did no such thing and instead started the speech backwards. Here Socrates makes a very important statement, "Every speech must be put together like a living creature, with a body of its own, it must be neither without head nor without legs; and it must have a middle and extremities that are fitting both to one another and to the whole work" (Plato 264 c-d).

Everything about a speech must be put together like a living thing that is whole. This mentioning of the body of speeches applies to the very notion of how love can be defined, for it has to have some structure. You cannot define love without first understanding love's beginning and how from this beginning love then proceeds to further build itself with extremities fitting to each other and the entire work.

Socrates urges Phaedrus to form his thoughts on the topic of love and ultimately come to the truth it bestows. After having Phaedrus diligently go through this dialogue starting from the speech of Lysias to his own on love and the myth of the soul and our chariot striving for truth and moderation, Socrates breaks it all down for him by saying,

"You know Phaedrus, writing shares a strange feature with painting, The offsprings of painting stand there as if they are alive, but if anyone asks them anything, they remain solemnly silent. The same is true of written words. You'd think they were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever" (Plato 275 d-e).

Here the issues of Lysias' speech and its purpose for the beginning of the journey unfolds. Socrates describes a farmer planting his seeds not out of amusement, but at the appropriate time, for this appropriate time has him destined for his fulfillment, and he will be content having the fruit later. Socrates then says how that sense of purpose corresponds to a man's who knows words and who instead of using words for amusement uses words that will teach the truth to his listeners, Socrates says, "that's just how it is Phaedrus. But it is much nobler to be serious about these matters and use the art of dialectic" (Plato 276e). This art of the dialectic Socrates offers to Phaedrus for pursuing the truth of anything one chooses to speak and write about. This truth involves having clear and full knowledge of its lasting importance. Any person who believes he writes well enough to establish such a claim of full knowledge deserves reproach, for one would have to be fully aware of the good and bad, the just and unjust. Rather Socrates listens to those who take written work as a great amusement and consider that, "what is truly written in the soul concerning what is just, noble, and good can be clear, perfect, and worth serious attention: such discourses should be called his own legitimate children" (Plato 278 a-b). Here ends Socrates' discourse with Phaedrus. Socrates now tells Phaedrus to go to Lysias and tell him they came to the spring sacred to nymphs and heard words, which charged them to deliver a message to Lysias and all speech writers, writers of poetry both written and sung, and politicians who write documents called laws. If any one of these people can say that they have composed these with a knowledge of truth, then what name can these people be given? He is not wise says Socrates, but rather a lover of wisdom, a philosopher.

The purpose of this essay is to establish a sequential analysis. This analysis covers a lengthy dialogue with the focus on the myth of the charioteer. This myth illustrates our very human essence, the soul and its journey from divine to the human life. Our human life has the

soul taken up in the turbulent nature of desire and discipline with intellect as the charioteer. As we are drawn to desires, humans must learn to strive to understand why this is so. That impact and revelation to the divine should not lead us down only the path of amusement, but of a fulfillment not for the moment, but for the length of our mortal life. This determination of the human spirit is the grasping for truth. This power to grasp is the source of our very selves, and if we start from the source and continue to direct our lives to the fulfillment, which is truth, then we find balance within ourselves and the world around us. This source, the intellect, may be the origin of our mortal understanding, but the immortal soul leads an immortal life. Humanity will reach for truth, but no matter what fulfillment is achieved in the mortal realm, it is never enough to feel wholly divine. This divinity of the immortal soul is out of our comprehension, but we are a living mortal form with soul flowing until our mortal form ceases, and we continue to flow awaiting our new beginning.

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