University of Oxford

Erōs and *Logos*:
Psychic Intercourse and Reproduction in Plato's *Phaedrus*

Madeleine Parkinson

Candidate Number: 1058236

Masters in Ancient Philosophy

Thesis

Word count: 14998

Abstract

What is the relation between ἔρως and λόγος in the *Phaedrus*? I explore the metaphor of psychic reproduction—often discussed in reference to other dialogues, such as the *Symposium* and *Theaetetus*—in the *Phaedrus*, extending it to include psychic intercourse and show how erotic love propels the lover toward, and induces recollection of, Beauty itself. This recollection of Beauty allows the lover to beget veridical philosophical discourse. In the erotic process, the lover first meets the beloved and, overcome by a memory of true Beauty that he cannot comprehend, experiences both wonder and ἀπορία. After courting the beloved and thereby repeatedly recollecting, the beloved becomes intimate with and comes to understand the abstract realm. Finally, having achieved a complete vision of the abstract realm, the lover develops a capacity for philosophic discourse and is able to beget speeches that track Truth itself. Ἔρως, therefore, is the necessary precursor to philosophic discourse because it both provides the propulsive desire that draws one toward the beautiful beloved and facilitates recollection of true Beauty, which, in turn, brings to light the innate knowledge possessed by the lover. Erotic recollection is, I argue, distincitve as a form of recollection because it does not require an intentional and systematic search for knowledge but comes all at once when the lover is "struck" by the beauty of the beloved (254b). The analysis brings into focus Plato's take on the value of erotic desire in the philosophical life as both the driving force toward, and the visionary insight of, Beauty itself. Finally, I argue that Plato is advancing the view that direct acquaintance or intimacy with truth is the necessary foundation to a philosopher's discursive understanding.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

The river Illisus is famous in Greek mythology for being the location where the god of the north wind, Boreas, maddened by love, carried off and married the princess Orithuia.[1] Just up the river from this fateful occurrence, Socrates and Phaedrus rest in the noon sun and exchange speeches on the madness and divinity of love. Beyond the city limits—with only the gods, nymphs, and cicadas as their audience—Socrates argues that ἔρως can reunite man with the supra-celestial. The mythic style and numerous allusions to mythic tradition render the *Phaedrus* one of the most unique and beautiful of Plato's dialogues. Then, without any warning, the mytho-poetic language of the first half of the dialogue is abandoned, and the discussion ends with an analytic evaluation of the art of dialectic. The striking difference in style and topic of the two halves of the dialogue raises the question: Why did Plato want us to consider ἔρως and dialectic in tandem? What is the relationship between transcendent erotic love and λόγος, or philosophical discourse?

Socrates repeatedly refers to the various speeches within the dialogue, and speeches generally, as the natural "offspring" (υἱός) of the speakers (275a, 275e, 278a).[2] This seemingly innocuous description is, I argue, the key to understanding the dialogue as a whole. If λόγοι are a kind of offspring—something that the speaker gives birth to—then what causes the speaker to become pregnant? In what follows, I argue that erotic love provides the propulsion and transcendent vision necessary for directly acquainting the philosopher with the intelligible realm, which in turn facilitates the production of λόγοι. Just as a mapmaker can only create maps after

[1] For ease of quotation, I will be relying on the translations found in Cooper's *Plato: Complete Works*—in particular I will be quoting from Nehamas and Woodruff's translation of the *Phaedrus*, unless otherwise stated.
[2] The *Phaedrus* is not the only dialogue in which Plato speaks of λόγοι as mental offspring; see also the *Symposium* (210a, 210c, 210d), *Theaetetus* (150b–c, 151b), and *Republic* (490a–b, 496a).

having surveyed the terrain, the philosopher can only perfect the art of dialectic once he has achieved recollection of reality itself.

In discussing λόγος as offspring, I am primarily referring to the speaker's discourse or capacity for dialectic generally. When Socrates refers to the speeches themselves as offspring, I take him to be singling out for analysis one example of the larger discursive capacity that erotic love engenders. Ideally, speeches are not static artifacts, but rather dynamic and vital, in that they improve and are built upon as one continues to practice erotic love and dialectic art. This leads to one final point in discussing how ἔρως begets dialectic; I am, for simplicity's sake, assuming a linear path from erotic love to the production of λόγος. In reality, throughout the course of the philosophic life, the erotic and dialectic stages are part of a cycle: the philosopher loves, recollects, engages in discourse, finds beauty in that discourse, loves this beauty, and recollects again. In the ideal life, ἔρως begets λόγος which in turn begets ἔρως.

If we are to exhibit the relation of ἔρως and λόγος within the *Phaedrus* we must first "agree upon a definition" of ἔρως and λόγος "which shows [their respective] nature and effect" (237c). Thus, I will begin by discussing the ontological, epistemological, and pedagogical senses of λόγος and clarifying which λόγος, namely λόγος as pedagogical discourse, will be at play in this essay. I do the same for ἔρως—clarifying the erotic relata, classifying the type of mental state ἔρως is, and finally exploring the relation of ἔρως to reason. Once we have defined ἔρως and λόγος, I will lay out the philosophical-lover's four-fold erotic process: (1) catching sight of the beloved and experiencing the first instance of recollection, (2) courting the beloved and, thereby, repeatedly recollecting, (3) consummating with Beauty itself and, finally, (4) giving birth to philosophical discourse. Unspurprisingly, not all lovers will successfully complete the erotic path and give birth to veridical λόγοι; in the subsequent section, I discuss the appetitive

and honor-loving individuals' various failures to achieve complete recollection. I conclude by showing how the dramatic structure of the dialogue tracks the erotic process and discussing various philosophical upshots of my analysis.

II. Defining *Logos*

Plato uses λόγος in a variety of ways—to refer to a specific faculty (i.e., reason), a mode of inquiry (i.e., discourse or argumentation), or the product of inquiry (i.e., definition or knowledge-of-x). Though each of these senses is employed in the *Phaedrus* (cf. 238a, 277e, 277b), the process of dialectic is a primary focus of the dialogue, and we will accordingly attend to λόγος as a mode of inquiry, specifically as discourse or philosophical argumentation. Socrates argues that λόγος, in the context of "the rhetorical arts," is the means by which the soul is led, directed, or persuaded (ψυχαγωγία) (261a). The soul requires guidance particularly when considering those concepts such as "love" and "justice," in which people are prone to "wander in different directions" (263b). This topographical analogy is illuminating: the art of dialectic is guiding the soul toward truth by constructing a conceptual map that accords with reality.

In considering λόγος as a kind of map, a further distinction between pedagogical, epistemological, and ontological λόγος will prove useful.[3] Pedagogically, λόγος is an "explanation" (LSJ sense III), "argument" (sense III.2) or "narrative" (sense V) that relates claims, facts, or stories into a single account.[4] Pedagogical λόγος relates claims in correspondence with one's epistemological λόγος—a complex interrelation connecting or contrasting internal ideas, thoughts, or reflections (refer to LSJ sense I and IV.1).[5] Just as pedagogical λόγος provides a map of arguments or narrative points, epistemological λόγος

[3] Each of the above-mentioned senses correspond to the three main senses of the LSJ entry for λόγος (i.e., sense I, II, and III). Further, each of the LSJ senses can be described as expressing three separate but related senses of the English noun "relation."
[4] For examples of pedagogical λόγος, see *Laws* 967e, *Phd.* 101d, *Stat.* 285e.
[5] For examples of epistemological λόγος, see *Tht.* 202b, Soph. 263a–b, and *Phd*. 94b.

provides a corresponding map of concepts. Finally the epistemological λόγος, ideally, will track ontological λόγος. Ontological λόγος refers to the "relation" and "correspondence" of real objects (refer to LSJ sense II). It is used to describe how objects are interrelated to create a complex landscape or topography of being.[6] As Nehamas writes, "The *logos* is a summary statement of the path within a network of objects which one will have to follow in order to locate a particular member of that network" (p. 250). A similar "logographic" map can be drawn for the world of the Forms, relating intelligible objects to one another. Thus, the pedagogical sense of λόγος piggybacks on the epistemological sense, which, in turn, piggybacks on the ontological sense, in the following way: a dialectician seeks to explain or offer an account of various arguments which track his internal relation of concepts and ideas. If the dialectician is well trained in philosophy, his epistemological account will track or correspond to the actual relations or state of affairs of existing objects.

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates argues it was our pre-existential vision of the intelligible realm that gave humans the capacity to "understand speech in terms of general forms [εἶδος], [by] proceeding to bring many perceptions together into a reasoned unity" (249c). Without having an understanding of ontological λόγος we would not be able to begin to unify perceptions under the umbrella of general concepts and kinds, and thereby give voice to our ideas. "That process," of mapping ideas in correspondence with the actual relations of Forms, "is the recollection of things our soul saw when it was traveling with god, when it disregarded the things we now call real and lifted up its head to what is truly real instead" (249c). In like manner, Plato makes a similar claim in the *Sophist*, writing, "For our power of discourse is derived from the interweaving [συμπλοκήν] of the classes or ideas [τῶν εἰδῶν] with one another" (259e, trans. Fowler). Given

[6] For an example of ontological λόγος, see *Sophist* 259a and 260a, where it is stated that the the "kinds" or "classes" (γένος) "blend" or "commingle" (συμμίγνυμι) with one another and that λόγος is one γένος of being (τά ὄντα).

our discussion of the three types of λόγος, we can draw a distinction between what we might call beneficial λόγος—i.e., λόγος that will lead the listener aright in virtue of being an account that relates arguments and definitions in correspondence to the *actual* relations of being—and harmful λόγος, i.e., an account that fails to correspond to ontological λόγος and, thus, leads others astray.

In her essay, "Knowledge and *Logos* in the *Theaetetus*," Gail Fine argues that the λόγος of a thing cannot simply be understood as the set of "names of elements of a thing" (*Tht.* 370) but must also locate these elements "within a systematic framework, interconnecting and interrelating them" (386). Without this tapestry of elements, in which a domain is mapped by a series of epistemic relations, she argues that λόγος would be insufficient to render true belief into knowledge.[7] Fine refers to this interpretation of λόγος as the "interrelation model" (369). Her conception of λόγος as an interrelation of concepts within a domain closely tracks what I am arguing is the focal point of Socrates' discussion in the second half of the *Phaedrus*. A convincing dialectician will not simply make compelling points but must relate these points within a complex system of other arguments and definitions. Thus, Socrates emphasizes the absolute necessity for dialecticians to use the method of collection and division, defined as "seeing together things that are scattered about everywhere and collecting them into one kind" and "cutting up each kind according to its species along its natural joints" (265d–e, cf. *Stat.* 284e–285c). By collecting and dividing things in accordance with their natural distinctions, the dialectician can construct a discursive map that tracks his epistemic relation of concepts which in turn tracks the relation of real beings. As will become evident through the course of this essay, if

[7] Nehamas (1984) approves of Fine's characterization of the function of λόγος but argues that such λόγος is not *added* to true belief to create knowledge; rather, only those true beliefs that inherently possess such a λόγος—namely, a λόγος that defines the essence of the definiendum relative to a domain—are eligible to become knowledge. Other true beliefs, such as beliefs concerning accidental properties, will not become knowledge regardless of the λόγος imposed on them.

the speaker does *not* have acquaintance with the ontological λόγος of the intelligible realm—which, I argue, is achieved by following the erotic process—then he can have no hope that his philosophic discourse will track reality. Like relying on a false map, those speakers who love opinion, tradition, or sophistry more than reality itself are liable to mislead themselves and others with their ungrounded λόγοι.

III. Defining *Erōs*

Now that we have defined λόγος based on its nature and effects, the same must be done for ἔρως. We will first consider the object of love, then the kind of mental state love is, and finally love's relation to reason. The defining characteristic of ἔρως is that it always takes as its object beauty (κάλλος), as love can "never be drawn to ugliness [αἴσχει]" (*Symp.* 197b, cf. *Charm*. 167e, *Rep.* 402d). Thus, if a lover (ἐραστής) loves some beloved (ἐρώμενος), x, he loves x for the beauty x instantiates. Though the object of love can appear to be any number of beautiful things—an individual, laws, mathematics—the actual object of love is, I will argue, not a particular instance of beauty but Beauty itself. To understand this distinction, it is useful to employ the concept of the *intended* object of love and the *actual* object of love.[8] The intended ἐρώμενος is the beautiful boy who catches the lover's attention, but the actual object of his love, that which causes the lover's wings to sprout, is Beauty itself.[9]

---

[8] Santas employs this distinction when he argues that the Prudential Paradox of the Meno—in which Plato states that one can never desire what is harmful, yet it is a matter of common experience that people do in fact desire what is harmful—can be resolved by distinguishing the real object of desire and the intended object of desire. When one desires what is *actually* harmful, one desires it *thinking* it is not harmful. Here I am using the distinction to elucidate the madness of love; the lover feels the intensity of erotic longing that is appropriate to Beauty itself, but by mistaking the beautiful boy for the cause of his love, he *thinks* the overwhelming nature of his love is disproportionate to the cause.

[9] If the lover *actually* loves Beauty and only *thinks* that he loves his beloved, then it seems that he does not have any kind of real love for his beloved after all. On discovering Beauty, the lover might be inclined to "despise" (*Symp.* 210b) or disregard the beloved as a purely fungible good. This is the "cardinal flaw" that Vlastos raises against Diotima's *scala amoris*: "It does not provide for love of whole persons," only love of person *qua* beauty (31). This tension seems to be lessened in the *Phaedrus*, where the philosophic-lover, "build[s] [his beloved] up and adorn[s] him as an image to honor and worship" (252e, cf. 253a–b). In what follows, I argue that the lover appreciates and yokes his philosophical success with that of the beloved. Whether or not this appreciative love is satisfactory, I

One might wonder how it can be that everyone *actually* loves the Form of Beauty if only a small handful of people believe in or understand the existence of Forms? One might think Socrates is saying that the lover's love derives from the degree to which his beloved participates in beauty; thus he loves Beauty itself insofar as "beautiful things are made beautiful by Beauty" (*Phd.* 100d). If this were the case, then we would expect the lover to experience similar tingles (γαργαλίζω) and itchings (κνῆσις) of recollection in response to other beautiful objects, though to a lesser degree (251c). This account would explain the beloved's beauty as a matter of quantity alone rather than quality—he is simply *more* beautiful than anything else the lover has witnessed. As it stands, Socrates doesn't mention any other similar experiences with beauty—whether with the beauty of nature, a friend, or art—and we are left to assume that the lover's first apprehension of the beloved is an utterly novel and shocking experience, something the lover has never before felt, even to a lesser degree.[10]

What is it about the beloved's beauty that alone causes the lover to recollect Beauty? Here, recourse to metaphor is useful: imagine smelling the distinct aroma of your favorite coffee shop. Certainly you have smelled many good things, and even many coffee-like things, but this scent has a particular quality that evokes the comfort that only *your* coffee shop offers. The desire that fills your body in response to this scent is not due to the odor alone—another person might not have anything like this response to the smell. Rather, the strong emotive response is due to the memory that the smell evokes. In like manner, Socrates is describing an encounter with a particular beauty, not simply greater in quantity, but unique in quality—a beauty that calls to mind Beauty itself.[11] The feeling of bliss and wonder that fills the soul is not properly a

simply flag the issue, which is very much alive in my interpretation, and I refer the interested reader to Vlastos (1973), Nussbaum (2001), and Whiting (1991).

[10] Cf. 251a where the lover's experience of the beloved is described as "strange" or "unexpected" (ἀήθης).

[11] If it's not the quantity alone but also the quality of beauty that induces recollection in a lover, then what is this mnestic quality? Why would a lover be reminded of true Beauty by one beloved and not by another? In describing the divine parade, Socrates notes that different souls saw not only varying degrees but varying aspects of reality,

response to the beauty of the beloved, but a response to the experience the beloved's beauty is redolent of—the experience of witnessing Beauty itself.

Such a reading has interesting upshots, which I will address in the course of this essay. First, erotic longing, or desire for Beauty, outstrips our cognitive ability to describe that which is desirable. To return to the olfactory analogy, on smelling the smell that recalls the coffee shop, one might feel a sense of comfort and craving for a coffee before one even recognizes what the aroma has evoked or before one forms the (mental) sentence, "that smell reminds me of my coffee shop." In like manner, the memory of true Beauty evokes the desiderative longing for, fear of, awe at, and pleasure in, Beauty itself, and does so before the person can recognize what memory has been evoked. This leads to the second point, namely, that Beauty has something like a mystical power to draw in *all* individuals, regardless of philosophic capacity, before they can even appreciate or recognize they are being drawn toward it.[12] This is what I call the propulsive capacity of erotic love, discussed further below, which attracts one to beauty regardless of one's intention or cognizant recognition of that attraction.

If *all* lovers feel the desiderative draw toward beauty—and this is the actual object of their love—why do so many lovers fail to fully recollect Beauty itself? This point will be considered in section VI hereof, but for now we can say that, though all individuals actually love Beauty, they may fail to recognize the true cause of their longing. Thus, an inferior

---

"ris[ing] at one time and fall[ing] at another," as they struggled to control their chariots (248a). With a unique perspective or glimpse of Beauty, the embodied soul of an individual is most likely to recollect true Beauty in response to a beloved that shares the aspect or quality of beauty that the soul glimpsed in the heavens. Thus, "[e]veryone chooses his love after his own fashion from among those who are beautiful," favoring those who have the beautiful qualities of one's patron god (253d–e). For example, Alcibiades, a famously beautiful statesman, argues that though Socrates is "crazy about beautiful boys," nonetheless, "how little he cares whether a person is beautiful" (*Symp.* 216d). These contradictory sentiments do not show that Socrates does not care for beauty, but that he does not care for the "remarkable good looks" of Alcibiades, who has the "merest appearance of beauty" and not the true, substantive beauty that compels Socrates (*Symp.* 218e).

[12] In like manner, all animals are drawn to reproduce in beauty and thereby possess the good forever, despite having no rational understanding of Beauty or Goodness (*Symp.* 207a–c).

lover—feeling the desire evoked by a memory of Beauty itself—might utterly misinterpret this feeling and take it to be indicative of sexual attraction. Because he *thinks* his love is for some earthly quality—e.g., the pleasure or sex-appeal of the beloved rather than Beauty itself—the inferior lover will act in a way that is contradictory to the true nature of his love.[13] The philosophical-lover, as we will soon see, also feels the confusion at what the actual object of his desire is, but his patient curiosity allows him to follow the course of erotic love and achieve complete recollection, which is the consummation of this love.

Keeping this distinction of the actual versus intended ἐρώμενος in mind, let us further analyze what love is and how it induces one to act toward the beloved. Love is "some kind of desire [ἐπιθυμία]," [14] specifically a desire for the beautiful (237d). As a desire, it is marked by its "forceful" or propulsive capacity; thus, Socrates argues in the *Phaedrus* that ἔρως derives from the term ῥώμη ("force") (238c).[15] More specifically, ἔρως is a drive to possess (κτάομαι) the object of love (*Meno* 77c–d, *Symp.* 200a, 204e, 204d, *Lys.* 221d–222a). The will-to-possess is not limited to the desire to own but can express itself in a desire to draw near to (προσπελάζω) have intercourse with (σύνειμι), imitate (μιμεῖσθαι), and unify with (συνάγω) the beloved (252a, 253b, 256c, cf. *Symp.* 212a).[16]

---

[13] Thus, Ferrari (1992) is right to argue that "while all *love* is praiseworthy," being always directed at the Beautiful, "not all *lovers* will be" (253).

[14] According to the LSJ, ἐπιθυμία can mean "*desire, yearning*, ... generally, *appetite*, ... esp. *sexual desire, lust*" Interestingly, Socrates argues that ἐπιθυμία was so named because it is "the power [δυνάμει] that goes into [ἐπι] the soul (θυμός)" (trans. Fowler) (*Crat.* 419e). The power or forceful capacity to draw one toward beauty is one of erotic love's most salient and important features.

[15] For an alternate etymology of ἔρως in which Socrates links erotic vision to a stream, see *Cratylus* (420a–420b, trans. Fowler): "And ἔρως is so called because it flows in (ἐσρεῖ) from without, and this flowing is not inherent in him who has it, but is introduced through the eyes. For this reason it was in ancient times called ἔσρος ['influx'], from ἐσρεῖν ['*stream in*to']." Note that this imagery of beauty "flowing" into the eyes appears multiple times in the *Phaedrus* (251b, 255c). Cf. *Laws* 732b (trans. Burnet): "[F]or where there is a constant efflux, there must also be a corresponding influx, and when wisdom flows away, the proper influx consists in recollection [ἀνάμνησις]." See below for a discussion of psychic vision as it relates to recollection in the erotic process.

[16] Later, the will-to-unify became a more prominent feature of Platonism; for instance, "Plotinus associates *erōs* with the notion of *homoiōsis,* 'becoming like'... He compares the erotic movement towards intellect and the One with 'the experience of lovers who wish to see their beloved, become like him, and become one with him'" (Sheffield 139).

As a desire, ἔρως is not a disposition of any single aspect of the soul. Rather, the whole soul is erotic, collectively being driven toward beauty. As Vlastos writes, "[W]hen the man first chances on the beautiful youth the 'erotic vision' provokes libidinous impulses in 'the whole' of his psyche" (38). Each part of the tripartite soul will be drawn to different qualities of the Beautiful (cf. *Rep.* 581c). The appetitive part will be drawn to the pleasure that Beauty affords it, while the honor-loving aspect will be drawn to the nobility or goodness of Beauty, and the reason-loving aspect will be drawn to the truth of Beauty, or Beauty as the ultimate good. Depending on which aspect of the soul is dominant, the individual will be drawn to that aspect's characteristic desire.

Finally, in the *Phaedrus*, ἔρως is described as a desire that is ἄνευ λόγου, or without reason, argumentation, or justification (238a). Ἔρως, being a force that propels the whole chariot rather than one part of the tripartite soul, will drive one to possess the beautiful regardless of the reasoning aspect's ascent or lack thereof; this is what earns ἔρως the charge of being a kind of madness (μανία) (249d, 249e, 256d), in that it is not the product of reason and may be directly contradictory to the will of reason.[17] Though Socrates condemns the arationality of ἔρως in his first speech—and shows considerable concern for its detrimental effects in other dialogues (cf. *Rep*. 403a–b, 573a, *Phd*. 81b)—he is impelled by his δαίμων to reconsider love's value. In his second speech, commonly referred to as the Palinode, Socrates argues that "there are two kinds of madness, one produced by human illness, the other by a divinely inspired release from normally accepted behavior" (265a). These two kinds of madness, and the two corresponding kinds of ἔρως, are therefore said to be ἄνευ λόγου in differing respects. Inferior love, as exhibited in Lysias' speech and Socrates' first speech, leads one to act against one's own

[17] Dover (1974) argues that the Greeks distinguished strong emotion from madness as a matter of quantity. Emotions are controllable by reason and common sense whereas madness is emotion that has become uncontrollable. Thus, "Prodikos … defined *erōs* as 'desire doubled' and '*erōs* doubled' as 'madness' (*maniā*)" (126–129).

"acquired judgment that pursues what is best" and against conventional standards of propriety as dictated by common opinion (237d). The inferior lover is described by Lysias as "more sick than sound in the head" (231d). Unable to "get himself under control" (231d), he is fickle (231a), a flatterer (231c), boastful (232a), shallow (232e), "easily annoyed" and jealous (232c). Socrates unifies Lysias' disparate and haphazardly presented points into a picture of a man who is sick with desire and, blinded by his need to alleviate lust pangs, acts against his own sophrosyne. Thus, the inferior lover is truly ἄνευ λόγου, relegating his reasoning aspect to the role of a mere passenger or slave.

On the other hand—to continue with Socrates' division of "right and left handed love"—there is a divine or superior ἔρως that is necessary for philosophical growth (266a). This kind of ἔρως is a special form of madness "given as a gift from the gods" (244a). Far from blinding the soul with desire, divine madness is visionary.[18] Socrates relates the divinely inspired lover to those prophetesses and poets who commit great deeds by the light of insight.[19] Filled with a divine vision—just as the poet is filled with the Muses' song—the lover is motivated to act in ways that lead the public to question his sanity. Thus, his drive is ἄνευ λόγου, not in the

[18] The metaphor of vision is often employed to describe the work of reason alone (cf. *Rep.* 518b, *Symp.* 212a, *Phd.* 83b). Yet in the *Phaedrus* it is erotic love that is said to be visionary (248c, 250c, 253c). Through love, the individual's perceptual sight of beauty is transformed into a transcendent sight of true Beauty. Since erotic apprehension is, I argue, the first stage in epistemic apprehension and the production of λόγος, it seems natural that Plato would extend the vision metaphor to erotic longing. Further, by considering ἔρως as a kind of capacity for divine sight, Socrates' fear of suffering Homer's and Stesichorus' punishment of blindness, takes on new significance (243a). By offending Ἔρως, Socrates risks losing the wondrous vision of the Forms that Ἔρως offers. Without erotic vision, Socrates jeopardize a fundamental capacity necessary for philosophy: "[Y]ou see," he tells Phaedrus, "I am a seer" (242c).

[19] As many commentators have noted, Socrates' praise of the inspiration of priestesses, poets, and diviners in the *Phaedrus* represents a pivotal shift from his disdain of such professions in the *Apology* (22c) and *Meno* (99c). Burnyeat (2012b), accounts for this shift by arguing that, though Plato has some respect for the poets and priestesses—whose inspiration comes from external forces—the highest form of inspiration, the inspiration displayed by philosophers, is inspired by self-knowledge alone. Inspiration by self-discovery will necessarily include understanding, whereas external inspiration will be a matter of mimesis or repetition rather than understanding. Though Burnyeat's reading concerning the necessity for self-knowledge seems right, I am inclined to think he is too quick to disregard the repeated reference to Socrates' influences—both mythical and historical—those individuals who, I argue, "co-parent" Socrates' discursive children. Thus, in my reading, inspiration is not a matter of self-knowledge alone or external revelation alone, but a marriage of both.

sense that he is acting *contrary* to the will of his reasoning aspect, but in the sense that he is acting in accordance with a supra-rational divine dispensation which the common man is not privy to nor capable of understanding. Guided by a transcendent law and disregarding the standards of men is "what gives people the impression that [philosophers] are altogether mad" (*Soph.* 216c–d).

There is yet another sense in which the superior lover, in the throes of the erotic vision, is without reason: namely, his vision of beauty—awe-inspiring as it is—cannot be discursively accounted for, at least not immediately. Witnessing beauty, the lover's "experience is beyond their comprehension because they cannot fully grasp what they are seeing" (250a). In this sense, the lover's actions are not antithetical to reason; however, the lover is unable to bring the structured comprehension of high-level λόγος to bear on his experience. Such a discursive comprehension, as I will argue, happens only later, when the lover communes with Beauty itself. The erotic vision might still be said to have perceptually discursive elements (e.g., "I am seeing a beautiful boy") and even motivationally discursive elements (e.g., "I want to be with that boy"), but it will not have the fully formed account associated with philosophical reasoning or argumentation. Thus, the divinely inspired lover, swept up in a vision beyond any he has ever witnessed before, is at a loss for words.

In summary, ἔρως is a love of Beauty itself. Though ἔρως is experienced as a love of a particular beautiful beloved, this is only the intended object of love. Second, ἔρως is a desire that compels one to possess, draw near to, and be with Beauty. Finally, ἔρως is a kind of madness in that it leads one to act against common decorum and arises without the aid of logical justification.

IV. The Function of Myth

Before discussing the erotic process and the birth of λόγος, some preliminary points concerning Plato's method should be made. It has been a source of confusion that Plato has Socrates present his final and most eschatologically rigorous speech in the form of a myth. Though it is beyond the scope of the present paper to offer a full defense of μῦθος as a legitimate form of philosophical discourse,[20] the argument of this paper rests on the assumption that the Palinode *does* represent a philosophical argument and can be so analyzed. In interpreting the Palinode, I am aligning myself with what Werner calls the "Yogic tradition," which positions myth as a method for expressing the inexpressible (12).[21] As will soon become clear, the awe-inspiring and divine nature of the erotic vision is something that transcends rational account. Myth, therefore, is employed as the bridge linking daily experience to this wondrous vision. As Aristotle writes, "[E]ven the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of Wisdom, for the myth is composed of wonders," and, as will soon become evident, wonder is the root of philosophy and the first stage of ἔρως (*Met*. 982b18).

Moreover, if we loosen our grip on what counts as "appropriate philosophical discourse," then we will glimpse a profound point in Socrates' story: Love is not merely an embodied experience but is linked to the eternal health of our soul. As Socrates tells us, ἔρως is love of beauty, and it is by being near beauty that our wings grow (246e). Wings, "[b]y their nature … have the power to lift up heavy things and raise them aloft where the gods all dwell" (246d). It is by the power of the wings that we achieve a vision of the Forms, which is the soul's highest

[20] I refer the interested reader to Ferrari (1987), Nussbaum (2001, 200–233), and Werner (2012) for arguments in defense of the claim that mythic accounts are legitimate modes of philosophic presentation. For the opposing view, see Rowe (1986).

[21] Alternatively, myth could be a mode of expressing philosophically profound topics in such a way that it renders the concepts accessible to novices. As, for example, when, in *Rep.* I–IV, Socrates employs the "shorter route"—as opposed to the "longer," more rigorous and theoretically complete route—to discuss the value and nature of justice in a manner that is accessible to his interlocutors (435c–d). This reading is further supported by Socrates' own description of his argument in the *Phaedrus* as a mere analogy, since "to describe what the soul actually is would require a very long account" (246a). I am indebted to my supervisor for this suggestion.

function. Thus, in this analogy, ἔρως is the drive that leads us to nourish our wings, which, in turn, facilitates the achievement of the soul's τέλος, philosophic apprehension. Ἔρως, therefore, is not simply a drive to possess beautiful things but is the drive to nourish our eternal souls so that we might commune with Truth itself.

In what follows, as I discuss how ἔρως facilitates recollection and engenders philosophical discourse, I will be focusing on the role of ἔρως in the embodied life of the philosopher. I by no means wish thereby to limit the power of ἔρως, which I take to be an eternal "workmate" to our souls (*Symp.* 212b). Moreover, the lover's erotic ascent corresponds to the beloved's erotic ascent and, in the ideal situation, both lover and beloved grow wings together. A discussion of the lover as student of ἔρως and educator of his own beloved is beyond the scope of this essay. Let it simply be noted, a more extensive analysis would account for both the lover and beloved's erotic process. Given our limited space, I will seek only to answer the question, how does the erotic process, if followed correctly, lead to the birth of truth-tracking discourse in the philosopher's embodied life?

V. Erotic Vision and Discursive Reproduction

The erotic process begins with the lover's[22] first glimpse of the beloved "sparkling through [his] clearest senses" (250d). Struck "as if by a bolt of lightning," the beauty of the beloved's face has a luminously mnestic quality, a sparkle that the lover cannot easily account for but nonetheless feels a kinship with (254b). This is the first instance of recollection where the "beauty we have down here [causes the lover to be] reminded of true beauty" (249d). A complete vision of the Forms isn't achieved at once, yet the lover nonetheless senses that a profound experience is occurring. Though Plato doesn't explicitly make this distinction, we can divide the

[22] In this section, when I refer to the "lover" I am referring to the philosophical-lover. A discussion of other types of lovers will occur in section VI.

lover's experience into its cognitive and desiderative aspects.[23] So doing will help elucidate the intense and complicated path Plato's lover must traverse to discover the true cause of his divine madness.

When the lover "looks in the eye of love" and his "memory is carried back to the real nature of Beauty" he is "awestruck" (σέβομαι), and "is overcome with shame [αἰσχύνης] and wonder [θάμβους]" (254b–c). This overwhelming state of wonder (θαῦμα) is central to both Plato and Aristotle as the seed of philosophy. Plato writes, "this feeling of wonder [θαυμάζειν] very much belongs to the philosopher, for there is no other beginning to philosophy than this" (*Tht*. 155d). Aristotle echoes this sentiment, arguing, "For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize" (*Met.* 982b11).[24] Why is wonder the first seed of philosophy? Without the initial state of wonder, marked by curiosity as much as amazement and awe, the philosopher would not be stirred from common opinion to a desire for deeper knowledge.[25] In the lover's case, he is not aroused by an experience of mere beauty, as one encounters it in the course of daily experience; rather, he is witnessing a Beauty whose divine aspect, shining through the particular beauty of the boy, causes his soul to begin to sprout wings. Being an utterly novel experience, the lover has no ability to account for the intensity or the true cause of the emotions the beloved has stirred up in him. It is the wondrous experience of a

[23] In reality, this distinction between cognitive and desiderative states is notional and not innately present in the lover's phenomenology. One will notice that in the early stages of erotic love many of the "cognitive" states are, more properly, desiderative states—as, for example, when I say the lover begins to "prize" the beloved above all else without knowing why. Because ἔρως is the precursor to philosophic understanding, these early stages are merely quasi-epistemic, building the foundation for what will later become an epistemic realization.

[24] In like manner, Plato argues that it was the glorious and profound order of the stars that led early thinkers to become "overcome with wonder" and eventually posit a metaphysics founded in divine reason (*Laws* 967b).

[25] Heidegger (1956) echoes the idea that wonder births philosophy, writing, "Only when the strangeness of what-is forces itself upon us does it awaken and invite our wonder. Only because of wonder … does 'why?' spring to our lips" (347–348).

beauty "at once wholly strange and somehow recognizably our own" that first implants curiosity in one, which is the seed of philosophy (McNeill 253).[26]

The sheer intensity of the lover's interaction with the beloved, along with a lack of understanding concerning the true object of his affection, leads the lover into a state of ἀπορία. The lover's wonder, with its corresponding psychosomatic symptoms—"shudder[ing]," "fear," "reverence," "joy," and "pain"—does not appear appropriate to the situation or cause. To others and to himself, the lover appears to have gone mad—by treating his beloved as more divine than human and behaving like a slave in his service. This mismatch between emotional intensity and the lover's rational understanding of the situation—meeting an attractive person is, after all, if not regular, at least a common experience—throws the lover into a state of confusion. As Socrates describes it, "they are startled when they see an image of what they saw up there. Then they are beside themselves, and their experience is beyond their comprehension because they cannot fully grasp what it is that they are seeing" (250a). Having witnessed images of beauty in the world of becoming, none of which were sufficiently strong enough to jog his memory, the lover loved them as mere placeholders for the true object of love. Now he sees Beauty itself, the πρῶτον φίλον,[27] and is overwhelmed with the deepest and most true love he has yet experienced. The lover's ἀπορία emerges because he continues to think the object of his affection is the boy himself and not true Beauty. The reverence and worship he bestows on the boy indicates the lover's recognition that his ἐρώμενος is other-worldly, but it doesn't yet show he has fully understood what his memory has revealed. If the lover is sufficiently curious and patient, he will

[26] McNeill argues that Plato "systematically excluded [wonder] from Socrates' account of the Good, the Sun, the Line, the Cave, and the philosophic education of the guardians" and takes this as evidence that the *Republic* posits a theory of immanence, in which discourse fails to relate the physical world to the intelligible world (260). See also n. 35 below.

[27] Whether the πρῶτον φίλον in *Lysis* should be identified as a gesture to Plato's ontology of the Forms or is simply a reference to any terminus of love is a matter of dispute in contemporary commentaries (*Lys.* 219d, cf. Glidden 56 and Mackenzie 36). I employ the term here as a marker for the actual as opposed to the intended object of love, but I do not mean to impose any strong reading on the *Lysis* here.

seek to uncover the source of his wonder and thereby relieve his ἀπορία with understanding. If the lover is impatient or overly sybaritic, he will misinterpret the cause of his wonder and will seek more base means of alleviation.

Before turning to the second stage of the ascent, let me briefly note how this account of recollection looks strikingly different from the other two accounts we find in the *Phaedo* and *Meno*. Recollection, in these dialogues, is brought on by patient questioning (*Men.* 85d) or repeated interaction with perceptibles, e.g., equal sticks and stones, that allow one to abstract general qualities. Though erotic recollection also requires repeated interaction to achieve full psychic plumage—a point we will discuss in what follows—the initial recognition is brought on all at once, without the lover's focus or even discursive understanding. The lover is not intentionally attempting to find the overarching principle of Beauty by exploring different characteristics of beauty or comparing many beautiful objects; rather, he is "struck" by κάλλος all at once (254b). What is it about Beauty that can induce in the philosopher such an immediate and unconscious recollection? Socrates singles out Beauty as a unique Form that "alone has this privilege, to be the most clearly visible and the most loved" (250e). This is because, in the soul's pre-embodied flight, "beauty, as I said, was radiant among the other objects" and so stuck in the lover's memory most clearly (250d).[28] Plato offers us no deeper reason for Beauty's particular luminance or attractive qualities, and we are left to speculate.[29] For our present purposes, if we take Socrates' Palinode at face value, Beauty has a profound power, one that the budding

[28] Unlike beauty, justice, wisdom, and self-control "do not shine out through their images down here" (250b). Though, if they were more visibly apparent in the embodied world, "it would awaken a terribly powerful love" (250d).

[29] Commentators have proposed a variety of creative solutions to account for Beauty's unique luminance. For example, de Vries argues that particular beauty, beauty found in the world of becoming, has a greater likeness to Beauty itself than, say, justice has to Justice itself (Ferrari 142). Ferrari takes issue with de Vries' reading, arguing instead that Beauty stands out because it "announces itself, as it were, as an object of concern; it is salient, and will not stay in the background," unlike justice or wisdom which require a lifetime to fully apprehend (146).

philosopher—he whose "memory always keeps [him] as close as possible to those realities"—would be amiss to overlook (249c).

Let us now turn to the courting phase of the erotic process. The lover, overwhelmed by the intensity of his emotions and his inability to grasp their true cause, is led to act in ways that "brings on him the charge that he has gone mad" (250e). Emotionally, the lover is filled with contradictory passions that lead him to draw near and fall back from the boy in a complex interplay of longing and fear (253e–255a). Cognitively, he begins to divide this experience of beauty from other experiences and, disregarding what he once placed value on, reallocates that value to the beloved alone (252a). This stage corresponds to the gestation of discourse, where the lover cannot yet account for the experience philosophically but begins to perform the necessary differentiations that will later produce λόγος.[30]

Now that the initial shock of the erotic vision has past, the lover seeks to court the boy and find relief from his painfully heightened state. Thus begins one of the most striking and beautiful accounts of falling in love. As "the stream of beauty that pours into him through his eyes" ignites his wonder and curiosity, probes at his memory, and encourages his desire, the lover's soul is submitted to a tormenting array of contradictory sensations (251b). The lover "first shudders and a fear comes over him"; the tremor of philosophy induces in him "chills … sweating and a high fever"; "the heat warms him and melts the places where the wings once grew"; "the whole soul seethes and throbs," "aching and itching," "swelling and tingling," "watered and warmed;" the soul "sucks in, for the moment, the sweetest of all pleasures" (251a–252b).[31] This complex series of emotional and somatic responses consists of the

[30] In the *Phaedrus*, as in the *Symposium*, impregnation and gestation occur before consummation. Burnyeat (2012) accounts for this discrepancy, writing, "In short, at either level pregnancy precedes intercourse, because birth and intercourse are imaginatively equated" (24). Cf. Sheffield (2001, 15-16).

[31] Notice the mirroring of Socrates' poetic language with Sappho 31, "at once a subtle fire has stolen beneath my flesh, I see nothing with my eyes, my ears hum, sweat pours from me, a trembling seizes me all over, I am greener than grass, and it seems to me that I am little short of dying."

symptoms of the wings' growth. In Lysias' and Socrates' polemic speeches the lover is "more sick than sound in the head," and this illness, which no sane man would envy, is the evidence of the lover's rational deterioration (231d). In his second speech, Socrates again describes the lover as sick, suffering from chills and a high fever; however, this illness is not indicative of deterioration but of growth. Just as none would think that an infant's teething pains are proof that the child is unhealthy (understanding the process to be the best and most natural course of maturation), Socrates recasts the lover's illness as the necessary precursor to a healthy and natural psychic development (251c).

These contradictory emotions lead the lover to seek nearness with the beloved—who alone relieves his growing pains—but the shock of recollection causes him to retreat. In this description of erotic clasping and sundering, the tripartite soul is presented as a nearly comic caricature. The bad horse, libidinous by nature and seeing no truer beauty or pleasure past the immediate instance, "[tries] to make them go up to the boy and suggest to him the pleasure of sex" (254a). But when the charioteer draws near to and "sees [the boy's] face, his memory is carried back to the real nature of Beauty … At the sight, he is frightened, falls over backwards awestruck, and, at the same time, has to pull the reins back so fiercely that both horses are set on their haunches" (254b–c). This happens many times over until the charioteer "bloodies [the bad horse's] foul-speaking tongue and jaws" and trains him to treat the boy with "reverence and awe" (254e). Socrates' vivid depiction of the courting process is not meant merely as a humorous internal account of the lover's strange behavior, but reveals an interesting aspect of recollection; to achieve full recollection—that to which the philosopher aspires—one must have repeated interactions with that which induces recollection. One does not get the lay of the land, so to speak, by walking the road once. This need for repeated recollection is also expressed in the

Meno when Socrates argues that if the slave boy "were repeatedly asked these same questions in various ways, you know that in the end his knowledge about these things would be as accurate as anyone's" (85c–d). Let us now turn to the cognitive aspect of the second stage.

Without understanding why, the lover senses that the beauty of the beloved is like no other beauty he has ever experienced before and begins to prize the beloved above all else. "Stand[ing] outside human concerns," the lover is willing to sacrifice those things that men value in order to draw near to the beloved (249d). The lover "forgets mother and brothers and friends entirely and doesn't care at all if it loses its wealth through neglect. And as for proper and decorous behavior, in which it used to take pride, the soul despises the whole business" (252a). Meanwhile he "gazes at [the beloved] with the reverence due a god," recognizing that "[n]o one is more important to [him] than the beautiful boy" (251a, 252a). The lover's antisocial[32] behavior is caused by an innate drive to be near that which "nourishes the soul's wings," namely, "beauty, wisdom, goodness, and everything of that sort" (246e). Though the lover can offer no justification for his behavior, his desires lead him to differentiate between the kinds of beauty that cause the wings to grow and the kinds that do not.

At last the lover achieves the fulfillment of his desires and the end for which he strove, to "secure a consummation [τελετή]"[33] with Beauty itself (253c). Having recollected repeatedly, the lover grows comfortable not only with the beloved but also with the vision the beloved induces. On the earthly level, this consummation is achieved when the lover and beloved "follow the assigned regimen of philosophy [and] their life here below is one of bliss [μακάριον] and shared understanding [ὁμονοητικόν]" (256b1). Together in mind (ὁμονοητικός), the lovers tend to and nourish their psychic plumage. If they are successfully able to grow their wings for the span of

[32] For the antisocial urges of both tyrannical and philosophical lovers in the *Republic,* see Scott (2007, 144).
[33] Τελετή can also mean "an initiation in the mysteries" (LSJ).

three lifetimes, then they are freed from reincarnation and will again follow the divine procession that circles the empyrean. On the spiritual level, the soul achieves a consummation and intimacy with Beauty itself. At last, the lover recognizes the actual object of love and finds relief from his ἀπορία.

Though Burnyeat (1977) argues that the metaphor of psychic intercourse and reproduction has such a "compelling naturalness" that it can be said to be a "matter of common experience and need no argument," it is nonetheless difficult to envision what psychic intercourse, particularly with the Forms, would entail (23). In brief, communion with the Forms is a kind of intimacy or familiarity with the Forms, in which the lover at last achieves an apprehension of the intelligible realm. Though we are not offered a rich description of the lover's embodied intercourse with Beauty, Socrates does describe the soul's pre-existential sight of beauty and the bliss and pleasure that the vision, though fleeting, produced. He says that those who "have seen beauty shining in brightness" will be "beholding apparitions innocent and simple and calm and happy as in a mystery; shining in pure light" (250). The overwhelming feeling of witnessing Beauty—not through the window of an earthly beauty but pure and unadulterated—is one of bliss, pleasure, replenishment, and peace.

Though the *Symposium*'s Diotima also ends her erotic ascent with the natural "consummation of love"—to behold (βλέπειν), contemplate (θεᾶσθαι) and commune with (συνεῖναι) Beauty itself (212a)—it is in the *Republi*c that Plato offers the most vivid account of the philosopher's highest recognition. It is worth quoting in full:

> ἆρ᾽ οὖν δὴ οὐ μετρίως ἀπολογησόμεθα ὅτι πρὸς τὸ ὂν πεφυκὼς εἴηἀμιλλᾶσθαι ὅ γε ὄντως φιλομαθής, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιμένοι ἐπὶ τοῖς δοξαζομένοις εἶναι πολλοῖς ἑκάστοις, ἀλλ᾽ ἴοι καὶοὐκ ἀμβλύνοιτο οὐδ᾽ ἀπολήγοι τοῦ ἔρωτος, πρὶν αὐτοῦ ὃ ἔστιν ἑκάστουτῆς φύσεως ἅψασθαι ᾧ προσήκει ψυχῆς ἐφάπτεσθαι τοῦ τοιούτου—προσήκει δὲ συγγενεῖ— ᾧ πλησιάσας καὶ μιγεὶς τῷ ὄντι ὄντως, γεννήσαςνοῦν καὶ ἀλήθειαν, γνοίη τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ζῴη καὶ τρέφοιτο καὶ οὕτω λήγοιὠδῖνος, πρὶν δ᾽ οὔ; (490a–b.)

> Therefore, is it not fitting that I should offer this defense: that by nature the true lover of learning strives toward being and does not linger with those many particulars that are believed to be, neither blunting nor abandoning his love until he touches the nature of each thing itself with that aspect of his soul that binds him to reality—that part which most belongs to and is familial with true being—and by having intercourse and unifying with genuine being, he gives birth to understanding and truth, attains to knowledge and truly lives and grows, thereby relieving his birthing pangs, but not before? (My translation.)

Notice the many similarities of this account to the erotic ascent we have been considering; the lover of knowledge follows his desire, not allowing it to rest on particular beauty[34] but seeking out the actual object of his love—that which has true Being. When he at last achieves full recollection, the lover seeks to touch, lay hold of, approach, and consort with Beauty. It is by achieving this intimacy with Beauty that he is brought to give birth to that which was gestating within him: true philosophical discourse.

Before turning to the final stage, parturition, let me briefly return to the λόγος-as-map metaphor. In the early stages, the lover was unable to justify or account for his overwhelming love because he could not understand what it was he was in love with. His experience with the beloved was like nothing he had ever encountered before. Now that he has tended his soul and achieved the consummation of love, he recognizes the actual object of his love is Beauty itself. Armed with his numerous erotic visions, the lover begins to achieve a full understanding of the intelligible realm. Recalling our previous division of λόγος, the lover's consummation corresponds to the early formation of an epistemic λόγος which in turn tracks the ontological λόγος of the Forms. The lover, having returned repeatedly through recollection, sees the lay of the intelligible land, glittering and bright (248b). Though he still cannot offer a pedagogical account to others, the understanding needed for such an account has reached its full gestation.

---

[34] Similarly, Diotima says the philosophical-lover "will see the beauty of wisdom and will not look only at the beauty of particular examples—like a slave who favors the beauty of a boy or a man or a single custom" (*Symp.* 210d, my translation).

Beyond metaphor, what does our account imply for Plato's conception of philosophy? It is certainly not a novel idea (though I have yet to hear it in relation to the erotic vision)that the salient feature of Plato's account of proper dialectic is that it must be founded in direct apprehension, intimacy, or acquaintance with truth. Socrates warns Phaedrus that "he who would be a master of the art [of speaking] must know the real nature of everything" (262b, trans. Jowett). "Everything" here does not imply knowledge of every object in the world of becoming but knowledge of the true reality, that which orders our perceptible reality. Without such knowledge, the speaker cannot trust that he is not misleading himself or others. Thus, ἔρως is the necessary propaedeutic to λόγος, because ἔρως offers both the propulsion toward, and the vision necessary for, a direct acquaintance with the intelligible realm.[35] It is through erotic love that we are first reminded of Beauty, impelled to seek after it, and finally, if patient, achieve the consummation of our work and the philosopher's insight.[36] Now that the lover is intimate with the intelligible realm, he can construct philosophical discourse, dividing and collecting things into their proper kinds, and assisting his beloved and others in a similar apprehension.

The final stage of the erotic process is the birth of λόγος. Here is perhaps where we find the strongest evidence that Plato took ἔρως to be the natural precursor to λόγος. On multiple occasions, the various speeches on display in the *Phaedrus* are referred to as the "offspring" of the speakers (275a, 275e, 278a).[37] The philosopher's speeches concerning the nature of "justice

---

[35] McNeil argues that in the *Republic* there is a "radical separation between the visible and intelligible world" and thus words do not pick out transcendent entities (253). In the *Phaedrus* this rift is closed and thus he writes, "I believe that the divine erōs of the *Phaedrus* corresponds to the hypothesis that human discursive activity is directly dependent on and revelatory of the divine and intelligible realm" (261).

[36] In like manner, Diotima argues that Erōs is not a god but a daimon who travels between earth and heaven, "conveying prayer and sacrifice from men to gods … Through [him] all divination passes" (202e–203a). Erōs is the facilitator or bridge that connects a soul in its anthropic form back to the heavens from whence it fell.

[37] Writing itself is said to be the child of the Egyptian god, Theuth (275a). The problem of writing, presented at the end of the *Phaedrus*, has received so much attention that I will not myself address the issue, but refer the interested reader to Rowe (116–120) and Swaine (1998). That said, it is interesting to note that one of Socrates' primary concerns is that a written work, like a weak child, must rely on "their parent" to protect them "for they cannot protect or defend themselves" (275, trans. Jowett).

and beauty and goodness" are of greatest value and "[s]uch discourses as these ought to be accounted a man's own legitimate children—a title to be applied primarily to such as originate within the man himself, and secondarily to such of their sons and brothers as have grown aright in the souls of other men" (278a).[38] Further, Phaedrus, as the beautiful ἐρώμενος,[39] is accused multiple times of being a propagator of speeches (242a–b, 261a, cf. *Symp.* 209b–e). Though Socrates himself benefits from Phaedrus' psychic insemination, he warns Phaedrus to "no longer play both sides"—i.e., parent discourses with worthy and unworthy partners—but to "simply devote his life to love through philosophical discussions" (257b). Only by loving Beauty, seeking his own erotic vision and, thereby, becoming a philosopher can Phaedrus hope to parent true discourse.

Returning to the erotic process, the lover who begets philosophical discourse can at last feel the relief from the "birthing pains" (ὠδίνω) which accompanied the growth of his wings (251e). Since he has achieved close acquaintance with the intelligible world, he can be assured that his discourse will have those qualities which Socrates praises in the second half of the dialogue. As Pender observes, "The nature of the parents determines the nature of the child that is created" (83). If the lover has achieved a high degree of rational insight and communed with Beauty itself, then his offspring will be "discourse accompanied by knowledge" (276e). The lover's discourse will be constructed "like a living creature, with a body of its own," with a natural organization of parts (264c). The lover will divide and collect ideas into their proper kinds and will seek to define those concepts in which people normally get lost (284e–285c,

[38] This family tree of discourse recalls Diotima's idea that the philosopher's "discursive sperm" will go on to reproduce in the form of ideas in others and thus will amass a whole lineage of thought (Nightingale 158).
[39] Nehamas (1999, 32) argues that Phaedrus, being in his mid forties, is too old to literally be an ἐρώμενος. Regardless of if this is in fact the case, there is no doubt that Phaedrus, at least poetically, represents the beloved to whom Lysias and Socrates devote their speeches (231a, 243e). Phaedrus, whose name literally means "sparkling," is the analogue of the young boy who's "radiant" beauty "sparkl[es] through the clearest of [the lover's] senses" and reminds him of true Beauty (250d, Nussbaum 200).

263b). With the complete erotic vision to guide him, his child will be a "living, breathing discourse"—tracking truth and virtue—rather than a misscariage or a "phantom" (276a, *Tht.* 150c). At the highest level, the philosopher's speech will itself become an object of love,[40] causing others to recollect the truth they hold innately within themselves, and to produce their own discourse in response. Thus the philosopher sows "discourse capable of helping itself as well as the man who planted it, which is not barren but produces a seed from which more discourse grows in the character of others. Such discourse makes the seed forever immortal and renders the man who has it as happy as any human being can be" (276e–277a).[41]

Before concluding our analysis of the erotic process, let me note a potential concern. Why would an individual who has become intimate with the Forms wish to reproduce discourse? This concern resembles those raised in response to the allegory of the cave, when the freed man must again return to help his fellow prisoners, despite the futility of convincing them and the threat of death (*Rep.* 517a). In the *Phaedrus*, what induces the lover to beget discourse when his soul has achieved intimacy with the Forms themselves? Though this issue requires more attention than can presently be offered, one response that seems clear, based on Socrates' own emphasis throughout the text, is that the lover and beloved's salvation are yoked together. As the facilitator to his recollection and co-parent of his λόγος, the lover "attributes his vision to the beloved, and loves him all the more for it" (253a). There is no mention of "disdain" or disregard for the beloved, as in the *Symposium*, but the lover "pours [inspiration] into the soul of the one they love in order to help him" and "do[es] everything to develop that talent [for philosophy]" (253a–b, 252e). Growing their wings in tandem, the ideal lovers pass multiple lives together in

[40] Thus, Socrates repeatedly describes himself as a φιλόλογος, being "sick for words" just as the lover is sick for his beloved (228b, 236e).

[41] Note the similarity with Diotima's account of the lovers being "full of speech about virtue and the nature and pursuits of a good man … [together they] tend that which they bring forth; and they are married by a far nearer tie and have a closer friendship than those who beget mortal children, for the children who are their common offspring are fairer and more immortal" (209c, trans. Jowett).

philosophic bliss. All this seems to indicate that though the beloved was only the intended object of love the lover nonetheless loves the beloved both as a facilitator of recollection and an individual with the capacity to recollect and love beauty. Though this point is more speculation than argument, it seems to me evident that, in the *Phaedrus* at least, the emphasis on loving Beauty is paired with an emphasis on appreciating the beloved who induced this love of Beauty.

VI. Unphilosophical *Erōs*

Our analysis of the four-step erotic process would not be complete without an account of why some lovers fail to achieve true consummation and, therefore, fail to beget veridical philosophic discourse. As in the *Republic*, Plato divides people into different types based on which aspect of their tripartite soul is dominant: there are appetitive, honor-loving, and reason-loving individuals. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates accounts for this distinction in people's character by their ability, or lack thereof, to control their psychic horses and thereby achieve a vision of the Forms in the pre-embodiment. Those who have failed to achieve a prolonged vision of the Forms will be drawn to injustice, pleasure-seeking, public praise, and other such pseudo-goods in their embodied lives.[42] I will briefly discuss the four-step erotic path and the appetitive and honor-loving individual's respective pitfalls along this route.

Every kind of lover begins the erotic process by witnissing the beautiful beloved. As has already been stated, all lovers—including the most base—actually love Beauty itself and feel the corresponding tingling and growth of the early formation of wings when they draw near to the beloved. This is by no means a commonly accepted claim,[43] but it seems that without this initial

---

[42] Plato's account of an individual's failure to become a philosopher as being due to his failure to control his horses in the divine parade, simply pushes back the problem. What quality allowed some to manage their horses well while everyone else was trampled and marred in the stampede? Plato says that some souls took on "the burden of forgetfulness or wrongdoing" which caused them to fall, but this is not a complete explanation. For a further discussion of contingency and choice in achieving a philosophic life, see Ferrari (1987, 133–139) and Nussbaum (2001, 200–234).

[43] One might object that, in the passage where Socrates describes the bursting of the wings (250d–252b), he distinguishes the individual who is "initiated long ago" and "surrenders to pleasure" from the "recent initiate" who

agitation, caused by the prodding of the charioteer's memory, inferior lovers would not have that experience we "humans call love," and would not be eligible to be called lovers in the first place (252b). Socrates is clear when he says that "the soul of every human being has seen reality" in the pre-existence (249e). Without this vision we would not have access to language and would therefore not be human. If every individual had this vision, no matter how brief, it seems all have the capacity to recall this vision, if they were to practice philosophy and were cautious in consummating their love.

Yet Socrates is equally clear that "a man who was initiated long ago or who has become defiled is not to be moved abruptly from here to a vision of beauty itself when he sees what we call beauty here" (250e). What causes a man who feels the itching of proto-recollection to fail to fully recollect? Here the contrast between the intended and the actual object of love is useful. All lovers are actually in love with Beauty—this is what explains the intensity of their erotic madness—but the intended object of love can be any number of things. An unwary lover risks misinterpreting the cause of his agitation and thereby acting in a way that, far from alleviating his desire, drives him away from true pleasure. Like the "lovers of sights and sounds" in the *Republic*—who love many beautiful things but are "unable to see and embrace the nature of the beautiful itself"—the inferior lover feels all the intensity of desire for true Beauty, but instead of identifying the cause correctly, assumes it to be a response to the particular beauty before him (*Rep.* 476b). It is this misinterpretation of love, rather than love itself, that is harmful—after all, "love is a god or something divine" and so "he can't be bad in any way" (243e).

---

grows wings, thereby implying that the former fails to grow wings at all; this is how Ferrari (1987, 146) interprets the passage. Though I agree that the "defiled" initiate fails to *fully* grow wings, I do not think the description bars him from feeling the sprouting or itching of initial growth. He is simply unable to interpret the erotic sensation correctly. For an argument against the claim that non-philosophers can experience even the beginnings of recollection, see Scott (1995).

The appetitive lover's intended object of love is the pleasure the beloved might offer him. Witnessing the beautiful beloved, the appetitive lover fails to heed his initial wonder and "so instead of gazing at the [beloved] reverently, he surrenders to pleasure and sets out in the manner of a four-footed beast, eager to make babies; and, wallowing in vice, he goes after unnatural pleasures too, without a trace of fear or shame" (250e–251a). The appetitive lover feels all the intensity of emotions and the pangs that the philosophical-lover experiences, but assumes these aches are caused by physical rather than psychic growth. He therefore acts toward the end of alleviating physical desire, neglecting his rational longing for true Beauty. The appetitive lover sets up, not the beauty of the beloved, but the pleasure of the beloved as the object of worship and "chases pleasure at the expense of the good" (239c). Because the appetitive lover does not heed the initial wonder of his first recollection, he doesn't experience the fear necessary to cause the charioteer to fall back during the courting process and put the appetitive horse on its haunches. Without this falling back, the lover allows his unhabituated horse to rush forward and consummate love physically.[44] The haste with which the lover acts on his desires deprives him of the occasions for repeated recollection which would facilitate a full apprehension of the Forms.

Socrates has nothing but condemnation for such inferior lovers, who treat their beloved as mere objects of desire satisfaction—"like food," the beloved is simply a means "to sate hunger" (241d). Not only does his behavior eventually repel the beloved (240c–d), but the lover seriously harms his own soul by allowing the foul horse to take charge and subjugate reason.[45] Having consummated his love physically, the appetitive lover is unlikely to give birth to any λόγος; if he

[44] As Sheffield notes, one of the primary distinctions between the philosophical and unphilosophical lovers in the *Symposium* is how promptly they attempt to seduce their lover. She writes, "the swiftness with which the unphilosophical lover pursues his objects points to the misdirected nature of his ἐρως" (7).
[45] Similarly, the foul lover, if he successfully captures the beloved, will seek to subjugate the boy (cf. Ferrari 107).

does produce discourse, it is in the form of excessive flattery or boasting about his exploits—nothing akin to the philosopher's truth-tracking offspring (232a).

What is tragically ironic about the appetitive lover's desire is that, by making pleasure his ultimate goal, he closes the door to experiencing true pleasure. As Socrates argues in *Republic* IX, pleasure is a kind of replenishment—and the object of pleasure that is more long-lasting and true will be more nourishing. "If being filled by that which is appropriate to one's nature is pleasure," he argues, "then that which is filled with more being and has itself more being, more genuinely and truly delights in and produces true pleasure. While that which partakes of inferior being and is inferior and less truly and stably filling, produces a more untrustworthy and inferior pleasure" (585d–e, my translation). The Forms are afforded the highest ontological status in Plato's metaphysics,[46] and thus they are the source of the greatest and most stable pleasure. Making explicit use of the pleasure-as-nourishment metaphor, Socrates notes that souls are eager "to see the plain where truth stands [because] this pasture has the grass that is the right food for the best part of the soul" (248b–c). The body, on the other hand, is mortal, and its pleasures, though momentarily satisfactory, are fleeting.[47] The appetitive lover, sated by physical consummation, will soon feel the pangs of desire again and will, as Lysias warns, chase after the next beautiful youth he encounters (231c).

Further, as Socrates exhibits in his first speech, the appetitive lover's blinding desire to possess the intended object of love, i.e., pleasure, leads the lover to act in contradiction to his own drives. The overpowering fear that he might lose the beloved leads him to lure the beloved away from "divine philosophy" which will "most improve his mind" (239b). Nor does the inferior lover stop there, but seeks to make the beloved poor, friendless, weak, pallid, and

[46] See Vlastos (58–76).
[47] Phaedrus refers to bodily pleasures as "the pleasure of slaves" (238e), and in the *Republic*, Socrates argues they are "neither entirely true nor pure but are like shadow paintings" (58b).

dumb—all in hopes that the lover is not snatched away or leave of his own volition (239a–e). In doing this, the lover stifles any beauty he had once admired in the boy, and so ruins his chance of recollecting true Beauty.

The honor-lover seems to be slightly better off, though he still lives "with ambition in place of philosophy" (256c). His desires for the beloved are tempered by a sense of social decorum and uprightness. He doesn't rush to consummate with the beloved but also doesn't withhold his desire as patiently as the philosophical-lover does. The honorable lover has a sense of shame and modesty throughout the courting process and seeks to build up and support the beloved, whom he wishes to see thrive. At some point, when he is "careless because they have been drinking or for some other reason," he might let down his guard and "commit the act which ordinary people take to be the happiest choice of all," namely, sexual intercourse (256c). "And when they have consummated it once, they go on doing this for the rest of their lives, but sparingly, since they have not approved of what they are doing with their whole minds" (256c). Nonetheless, Socrates remains optimistic about the fate of the honor-lover's soul, saying that he will live with his beloved "in mutual friendship (though weaker than the philosophical pair)" and, though they do not grow wings in this life, their "wings are bursting to sprout" in the afterlife (256d).

The primary risk that the honor-lover faces in his erotic path is that his concern for public opinion and traditional values might lead him to produce λόγος with only the appearance of truth rather than Truth itself. As many of Socrates' interlocutors show, the mere "appearance of wisdom" (δοξόσοφος) is an insidious thing. Thinking that he knows justice—because he is commonly considered just—and virtue—because he is commonly considered virtuous—the honor-lover will think he possesses true knowledge. But because he had failed to achieve a

prolonged vision of the Forms in the pre-existence and, in his embodied life, failed to consummate his love and achieve complete recollection, he "will depend on what [he] thinks is nourishment—[his] own opinions" (248b). If from this unenlightened state, the honor-lover makes speeches, they will fail to track reality and will lead only to further confusion. "Therefore, my friend, the art of a speaker who doesn't know the truth and chases opinions instead is likely to be a ridiculous thing" (262c).[48] The honor-lover must be wary of this pitfall and seek it out in the speeches of others, lest he also be misled by δοξόσοφοι and become a mere opiner himself.

VII. The Dramatic Structure of the *Phaedrus*

As one has come to expect from Plato—who is arguably as much a literary genius as a philosophical one—the dramatic structure of the dialogue itself mirrors the theme of the erotic path. On catching sight of the beautiful Phaedrus, leaving the city for a walk across the river Illissus,[49] Socrates eagerly tags along. When Phaedrus pretends not to have Lysias' speech memorized, Socrates reveals their shared intimacy, saying, "[I]f I don't know my Phaedrus I must be forgetting who I am myself" (228a). At times Socrates plays the role of ἐραστής and at time he becomes the coy ἐρώμενος; as, for example, when he teases Phaedrus that it is *he*, not Socrates, who "seeing him [i.e., Socrates]—just seeing him—was filled with delight: he had

[48] Likewise, in the *Republic*, Socrates warns against such misleading discursive offspring, saying "'Of what sort will probably be the offspring of such parents?' 'Will they not be bastard and base?' 'Inevitably' 'And so when men unfit for culture approach philosophy and consort with her unworthily, what sort of ideas and opinions shall we say they beget? Will they not produce what may in very deed be fairly called sophisms, and nothing that is genuine or that partakes of true intelligence?'" (496a, trans. Shorey).

[49] The notion of "crossing the river" (διαβαίνω τὸν ποταμὸν) appears multiple times in the *Phaedrus* (229c, 242a, 242b) but is only mentioned one other time throughout the Platonic corpus—namely at the end of *Republic* Book X (621c, trans. Shorey)—where Socrates states: "And it will save us if we believe it, and we shall safely cross the River of Lethe [τῆς Λήθης ποταμὸν], and keep our soul unspotted from the world." The foregoing passage refers to the myth of Er, in which, coming back from the dead, Er tells of being led, together with a group of many souls, to the Plain of Forgetfulness (τῆς Λήθης πεδίον), where all but Er were forced to drink from the River of Forgetfulness (τὸν Ἀμέλητα ποταμόν) causing them to "forget all" (πάντων ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι) (a requisite step to each's impending birth into a new body). Socrates' final sentiments at the close of the *Republic* are that we might safely cross back over the River of Lethe and thereby recollect what we previously beheld in the "world beyond"—namely, ἀληθής. Likewise, in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates and Phaedrus metaphorically cross back over the river and recall the nature of the soul and Beauty itself.

found a partner for his frenzied dance" (228b). Their gentle flirtation leads them up to the plane tree, where lying in ecstasy amidst the panic landscape,[50] Phaedrus recites Lysias' speech to Socrates.

Socrates' admiration of Phaedrus—and fear, lest Phaedrus should be seduced by a doxosophic man—leads Socrates to produce a corresponding speech on the same topic. Despite Socrates' insistence in the *Theaetetus* that he himself is "barren of wisdom" and that God has "forbidden [he] procreate," in the *Phaedrus* it is Socrates who gives birth to λόγοι—though he continues to insist Phaedrus, and Lysias, "was its father" (*Tht.* 150c, *Phdr.* 238d, 257b). His second speech, inspired by the warnings of his δαίμων and his fear of epistemic and perceptual blindness, is parented by a wider array of more divine and historically respectable individuals including Pan, the Nymphs (263d), and, of course, Phaedrus (238d). This speech, having been induced by more divine parents, takes on the quality of its fathers and is "the best and most beautiful palinode we could offer" (257a). When he finishes his speech, having passed through the pains of childbirth, Socrates is satiated and is tempted to "nod off," save for fear that the cicadas might report his slavish behavior to the Muses (259a).

Playing the proper midwife, Socrates cannot simply give birth to such speeches and leave them be, but must "distinguish the true from the false offspring" (*Tht.* 150b). Such distinctions constitute the second half of the dialogue in which Socrates, placing his two children alongside that of Lysias', compares the relative merits of the three. Finding Lysias' speech haphazardly thrown together and lacking any vital construction, Socrates declares Lysias' speech to be "utter foolishness" founded on "dangerous falsehoods" (243a).

---

[50] Borgeaud writes, "The panic landscape is a space where strange phenomena take place, irrespective of human will and power. The point is already in Plato … the scene unfolds on the bank of the Ilissos; we are at the very gates of Athens, but the landscape, characterized by water and shade, is sacred to Pan and the nymphs, and it is the hour of Pan (noon)" (59).

It is not immediately clear which kind of lover Lysias represents. His speech is praised by Phaedrus for its clarity of reasoning and completeness of arguments—which might lead one to assume Lysias is an honor-lover—but the speech hides a more insidious and sybaritic intention. The argument is not merely meant to analyze the various benefits of loving a non-lover, but to convince the young boy who is its audience to make an exchange of goods, namely sexual favors for the φιλία of a rational man. As Ferrari points out, the rituals of courtship upheld between lover and beloved served to demarcate their relationship and raise it above that of commercially procured erotic favors. Lysias, by arguing for the beloved choosing a non-lover, is effectively disregarding these rituals and reinstating a strict exchange of sex for friendship; in short, he is—in the guise of reason—arguing for glorified prostitution (92).[51] Thus, though Lysias goes to great lengths to present himself as coolly reasonable and highly honorable, his hedonistic and appetitive nature cannot help but shine through.[52] Lysias, therefore, represents one of the greatest threats to the young student/beloved; through the guise of a friend and wise mentor, he misleads the beloved with his doxosophism, uses the beloved as an object of pleasure, and together begets—if anything—false and utterly misguided discourse.

Socrates' own speeches are inspired by love for Phaedrus and this love leads Socrates to a "love of a memory" of the intelligible realm (250c). These speeches conveniently have all the properties of a viable offspring. Socrates defines his definienda and ensures agreement on terms where non-philosophers stray in various directions. His speech has a vital construction, beginning with the soul's pre-existential ascent and fall to earth, and ending with the soul's embodied ascent through the path of love. Further, his speeches will prove fertile, since we are

[51] The language of exchange is also prominent in Alcibiades' speech in the *Symposium*. Trying to seduce Socrates, Alcibiades thought that, "all I had to do was let him have his way with me, and he would teach me everything he knew" (217a). Socrates, far from being seduced, accuses Alcibiades of not making a "fair exchange" as Alcibiades' beauty is a mere appearance but Socrates' beauty is philosophically transformative (218e).

[52] Note, I am equating Lysias with the speaker in Lysias' speech. This would perhaps be an inappropriate assumption had not Socrates done the same when he refers to Lysias' speech as "Lysias himself" (228e).

assured that Phaedrus will carry them back to Lysias and to anyone who will listen, so that others will be impelled to create their own speeches in response (243e).[53]

Finally, Socrates displays a genuine concern for his beloved. He fears that Phaedrus' love of the appearance of wisdom—for the mere quantity rather than quality of arguments (234e)—will lead him to "give his favors to" men who claim to know the truth but are, in reality, lost (243e). Before leaving the river, Socrates offers a prayer to Pan that "[he] may be beautiful on the inside" and only second that "all [his] external possessions be in friendly harmony with what is within" (279b–c). Thus, he reiterates the necessity for internal and true beauty and wisdom, mere appearances being relegated to a secondary concern. Phaedrus concurs, saying, "Make it a prayer for me as well. Friends have everything in common" (279c).[54]

VIII. Recollection and Reproduction

Before concluding, let me draw out some of the philosophical upshots of my analysis and show how they bear on problems and debates in the contemporary literature on Plato. To begin, though there has been extensive discussion concerning the metaphor of psychic reproduction, I have yet to see an account of what induces such pregnancy. Indeed, Burnyeat (2012) notes this seeming discrepancy, writing, "Some readers may think it inappropriate to press such a point. But it does seem significant that Plato should return time and again to sexual imagery for mental creativity

---

[53] Lysias' speech cannot have been an absolute miscarriage, as it caused Socrates to produce his first speech. Does this imply Lysias' speech was inspired by true ἔρως? Though Lysias' speech contained seeds of truth—albeit hardly novel truths—the construction of the speech lacked the vital organization and the natural distinctions that Socrates argues dialectic requires. Reproducibility alone is not a marker of true inspiration.

[54] It is interesting that Plato ends the dialogue with a prayer to "beloved Pan" (279b) rather than to Erōs. Pan and Erōs share many important characteristics; both are affiliated with sexual passion and fertility (the phrase 'to honour Pan' or 'to pray to Pan' was often "used to refer to homosexual pracitices") (Lavilla De Lera 76). Further, just like Erōs, "Pan crosses the gap between earth and Olympus; he thus signifies a union as well as an opposition … his madness is very close to a certain kind of divination and prophecy" (Beauregard 20, cf. *Symp*. 202e–203a). The inclusion of Pan in this dialogue does not simply have mythological significance but is metaphorically significant as well. Half man and half satyr, Pan represents duality. Plato relates 'Pan-the-goat-herd' (the "double-natured son of Hermes") to "speech [λόγος] itself or the brother of speech" since both have a "true" part, which is "smooth and divine and dwells with the gods above" as well as a "false" or base or common part which "dwells below among the human masses, and is rough and goatish" (*Crat*. 408c). Thus, Pan represents both transcendent and base love as well as true and merely opined discourse.

without ever raising the question whether a conception does not need to be brought about by a metaphorical intercourse within the mind" (35). My account shows that Plato did not, in fact, miss or remain silent on the cause of mental pregnancy—rather his discussion of divine, or beneficial, ἔρως in the *Phaedrus* is just such an account. Discursive reproduction is the product of loving and communing with Beauty itself and, eventually, with the whole intelligible realm. Moreover, I fully expect that if a more complete analysis of the Platonic corpus could be pursued, the extended metaphor of philsophic sex and reproduction would be at play in other dialogues as well.

Second, Burnyeat (2012), McDowell (1973), and Hackforth (1957) raise the concern that if, in the *Theaetetus*, the midwife figure represents the educator who induces recollection, it seems that the offspring brought forth by this maieutic method could never be false, since recollection can never be false (Burnyeat 28 n. 12, McDowell 116–117, Hackforth 128–129).[55] As it stands, the offspring in the *Theaetetus can* be "errors," "phantoms," or "wind eggs" (150c, 151e). It is because offspring are not always veridical that the philosophic midwife's "noblest function" is "to distinguish the true from the false offspring" (150b). This concern can easily be extended to the *Phaedrus*, in which recollection is one of the stages of erotic impregnation and parturition. If recollection is what inseminates the lover, how can the lover ever give birth to false λόγοι?

As I have argued in analyzing the various missteps of inferior lovers, not all who experience the initial recollective longing interpret the longing correctly. Thinking he is thrown into a state of wonder by the sex appeal of the beloved, the appetitive lover will not act in a way that allows for healthy gestation of his offspring. If he does produce discourse, having failed to

[55] Recollected propositions cannot be false without invalidating the reason Socrates invokes recollection, namely, to resolve the paradox of inquiry in the *Meno*.

reach transcendent erotic consummation, the discourse will be a miscarriage or a phantom, lacking any of the genuine and vital substance that marks true philosophy. By extending the process of impregnation to erotic interaction, courting, and consummation, we can thereby locate the failure in one of the other gestative steps beyond recollection itself.

Finally, my analysis does not merely relate ἔρως to λόγος but reveals a larger epistemic point about philosophical discourse: namely, that it finds its roots, or insemination, in a non-discursive vision. Without such immediate acquaintance and intimacy with Truth, pedagogical discourse is bound to fail. Thus, my argument extends the tradition of utilizing recollection as a means of solving the paradox of inquiry within the *Meno*: we can inquire about what we don't presently know because ἔρως draws us toward that which will induce recollection of the knowledge that we have innately always possessed. My reading of philosophy as founded in intimacy with Truth places me squarely in the tradition of theorists such as Russell, who argues knowledge is founded on acquaintance and, "we have acquaintance with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths" (78).

My analysis, as it stands, is merely cursory and a larger discussion of the sexual and reproductive metaphor, intimacy or acquaintance with truth, and the power of erotic love across the Platonic corpus remains necessary. For now, I hope to have illuminated Socrates' surprising claim that the ideal philosopher is "a lover of wisdom and of beauty … cultivated in the arts and prone to erotic love" (248d).

VIII. Conclusion

I have argued that ἔρως is related to λόγος as its natural parent. Without the erotic vision and the forceful motivation toward beauty that ἔρως provides, individuals' discourse will fail to

be truth-tracking. If a lover attends to the sense of wonder and ἀπορία that the first instance of love recalls in him and courts the beloved, thereby inducing repeated recollection, he will become intimate with Beauty itself and will be able to produce beautiful discourse in praise of what he has witnessed. If, on the other hand, the erotic path is not followed, then the forceful nature of ἔρως may lead one to illness, hedonism, sophistry, mental infertility, and deteriorating madness. Erotic love, it seems, is not for the the faint of heart. Some might think that Plato's presentation of the value of ἔρως is so deeply entrenched in his theory of the immortal soul, the existence of Forms, and the method of recollection that our discussion cannot be applicable to those modern readers who are not willing to take up the burden of such theories. Let me address such readers directly: the *Phaedrus* is not simply a series of arguments nor an amusing myth concerning love; it is a declaration—Socrates, or more properly, Plato, does not wish to coolly and dispassionately know truth, as one knows that two plus two equals four; instead, he endeavors to cling to, touch, become intimate with, and *love* Truth itself. Such a longing, if taken up in earnest, would enrich any life. Philosophy, Plato teaches us, is as much a labor of love as it is a labor of reason.

Works Cited

Aristotle. “Metaphysics.” *The Works of Aristotle*, trans. William David Ross, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910.

Barney, Rachel. “*Eros* and Necessity in the Ascent from the Cave.” *Ancient Philosophy (Pittsburgh, Pa.)*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2008, pp. 357–372.

Blickman, Daniel. “The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece.” *Ancient Philosophy (Pittsburgh, Pa.)*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1991, pp. 159–161.

Burnyeat, Myles F. “Socratic Midwifery, Platonic Inspiration” *Explorations in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012a, pp. 21–35.

Burnyeat, Myles F. “The Passion of Reason in Plato's *Phaedrus*.” *Explorations in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012b, pp. 238–258.

Candiotto, Laura. “The Divine Feeling: the Epistemic Function of Erotic Desire in Plato’s Theory of Recollection.” *Philosophia (Ramat Gan)*, vol. 48, no. 2, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2019, pp. 445–462.

Dover, K. J. *Greek Homosexuality*. Updated and with a new postscript. ed.2, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Dover, K. J. *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974.

Ferrari, G. R. F. *Listening to the Cicadas: a Study of Plato's* Phaedrus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Ferrari, G. R. F. “Platonic Love.” *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 248–276.

Fine, Gail J. “Knowledge and *Logos* in the *Theaetetus*.” *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 88, no. 3, Boston: Sage School of Philosophy of Cornell University, 1979, pp. 366–397.

Glidden, David K. “The *Lysis* on Loving One's Own.” *Classical Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press,1981, pp. 39–59.

Hackforth, R. “Notes On Plato's *Theaetetus*.” *Mnemosyne*, vol. 10, no. 1, The Netherlands: Brill Publishers, 1957, pp. 128–140.

Harris, John P. “Divine Madness and Human Sanity in Plato's *Phaedrus*.” *Mouseion (Calgary)*, vol. L, no. III(6:3), 2006, pp. 387–406.

Hayase, Atsushi. “Dialectic in the *Phaedrus*.” *Phronesis (Leiden, Netherlands)*, vol. 61, no. 2, The Netherlands: Brill Publishers, 2016, pp. 111–141.

Heidegger, Martin. “What is Metaphysics?” *Existence and Being*, trans. and ed. Werner Brock. 2nd ed., Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1956, pp. 347–348.

Kraut, Richard. “Plato on Love.” *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, Gail Fine, 1st ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Kreeft, Peter John. *A Study of Wonder in Plato and Augustine*, 1966, pp. 32–92.

Lavilla De Lera, Jonathan. “The Prayer to Pan of Plato’s *Phaedrus* (279B8–C3).” *Symbolae Osloenses*, vol. 92, 2018, pp. 65–106.

Liddell, Henry George, et al. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. rev. Sir Henry Stuart Jones, ed. 9, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.

Lu, Mingjun. “The Dao and The Form: Innate Divisions and the Natural Hermeneutics of Plato and Zhuangzi.” *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 68, no. 4, 2018, pp. 1219–1238.

Mackenzie, M. “Impasse and Explanation: from the *Lysis* to the *Phaedo*.” *Archiv Für Geschichte Der Philosophie*, vol. 70, no. 1, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988, pp. 15–45.

McNeill, David N. “Human Discourse, Erōs, and Madness in Plato's *Republic*.” *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 55, no. 2, Washington: Philosophy Education Society, Inc. The Catholic University of America, 2001, pp. 235–268.

Moravcsik, J. M. E. “Reason and Eros in the Ascent Passage of the Symposium.” *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, ed. J. Anton and G. Kustas, vol. I, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972, pp. 285–302.

Moss, Jessica Dawn. *Plato's Epistemology: Being and Seeming*. First ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Nehamas, Alexander. “*Episteme* and *Logos* in Plato’s Later Thought.” *Archiv Für Geschichte Der Philosophie*, vol. 66, no. 1, Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1984, p. 11–36.

Nehamas, Alexander. *Virtues of Authenticity : Essays on Plato and Socrates*. Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Nightingale, Andrea. “The Mortal Soul and Immortal Happiness.” *Plato's Symposium: A Critical Guide*, ed. Pierre Destrée and Zina Giannopoulou, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 142–159.

Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Rev. ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 165–234.

Pender, E. E. “Spiritual Pregnancy in Plato's *Symposium*.” *Classical Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 72–86.

Plato. “Cratylus.” *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold N. Fowler, vol. 12, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921.

Plato. “Νόμοι.” *Platonis Opera*. ed. John Burnet, Vol. 5., Oxford: Oxford Classical Texts, 1907.

Plato. *Phaedrus*. trans. Benjamin Jowett, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech, 2001.

Plato. *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, trans. G.M.A. Grube, C.D.C Reeve, Nicholas P. White, M.J. Levett, Alexander Nehamas, Paul Woodruff, Stanley Lombardo, Trevor J. Saunders, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997.

Plato. “Republic” *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 5 & 6, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Plato. “Sophist.” *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold N. Fowler, vol. 12, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921.

Plato. *Theaetetus*. trans. John McDowell, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

Plutarch. *Moralia: Platonic Questions*. trans. Cherniss, vol. XIII, Loeb Classical Library, 1976.

Price, A. W. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Rawson, Glenn. “Platonic Recollection and Mental Pregnancy.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 44, no. 2, Atlanta, GA: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 137–155.

"relation, n." *OED Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/161810. Accessed 13 June 2022.

Rowe, C. J. “The Argument and Structure of Plato's *Phaedrus*.” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, vol. 32, no. 32 (212), Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 112–125.

Russell, Bertrand. *Problems of Philosophy*. London: Oxford University Press, 1912, p. 78.

Santas, Gerasimos. “The Socratic Paradoxes.” *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 73, no. 2, Boston: Sage School of Philosophy of Cornell University, 1964, pp. 147–164.

Sappho. “Sappho.” *Greek Lyric*, trans. David A. Campbell, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990, pp. 80–81.

Scott, Dominic. “*Erōs*, Philosophy, and Tyranny.” *Maieusis*, 2007,12–13, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, pp.1–20.

Scott, Dominic. *Recollection and Experience: Plato's Theory of Learning and Its Successors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Sheffield, Frisbee C. C. “*Erōs* and the Pursuit of Form.” *Plato's Symposium: A Critical Guide*, ed. P. Destrée and Z. Giannopoulou, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 125-141.

Sheffield, Frisbee C. C. “Psychic Pregnancy and Platonic Epistemology.” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. XX, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001, pp. 1–33.

Swaine, Lucas A. “A Paradox Reconsidered: Written Lessons from Plato's *Phaedrus*.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 30, no. 3, Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998, pp. 259–273.

Vlastos, Gregory. “Degrees of Reality in Plato.” *Platonic Studies,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, pp. 58–76.

Vlastos, Gregory. “The Individual as Object of Love in Plato.” *Platonic Studies,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, pp. 3–42.

Werner, Daniel S. *Myth and Philosophy in Plato's* Phaedrus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Whiting, Jennifer E. “Impersonal Friends.” *The Monist*, vol. 74, no. 1, 1991, pp. 3–29.