The unity of the *Phaedrus*

R.P. WINNINGTON-INGRAM

R.P. Winnington-Ingram, who died in 1993 in his eighty-ninth year, was Professor of Greek Language and Literature in the University of London at King's College from 1953 until his retirement in 1971. Among his effects his executors found a hitherto unpublished inaugural lecture, delivered at King's in 1953, which the editors of Dialogos *are honoured to include as the first article in the first issue of the new journal.*

The editors wish to record their gratitude to Winnington-Ingram's literary executor, Professor P.E. Easterling, for bringing the lecture to their attention and allowing them to give it a home. They are further indebted to Dr Elizabeth Pender, who prepared the piece for publication. As transmitted to the editors, the lecture was largely without the basic references or notes which the reader of such a text in print would reasonably expect; these Dr Pender has supplied, while at the same time correcting a few minor slips. Her supplements are printed here within square brackets. The editors are grateful, finally, to G.R.F. Ferrari, whom they invited to offer a contemporary response to an argument now some forty years old. Their task has been made easier, as the first issue of Dialogos *has been enhanced, by the promptness with which Professor Ferrari complied with their request.*

Winnington-Ingram is not remembered as, and would hardly have expected to be remembered as, either an ancient philosopher or a specialist in the prose literature of the fourth century BC. He was justly renowned as one of the few authorities on ancient Greek music and, above all, as (in the words of The Times' *obituarist: 12 January 1993) 'perhaps the greatest living interpreter of Greek tragedy'. This being so, it comes as a surprise that his inaugural lecture should have been on Plato. And although the Plato of his lecture is as much Plato* poiêtês *as Plato* philosophos, *and although one of Winnington-Ingram's great strengths as interpreter of tragedy was as a sensitive reader of poetry, his choice of Plato remains surprising. However, the outward-looking concern for things Hellenic that is implicit in this choice is precisely one of the reasons why the editors saw a*

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peculiar aptness in the publication of the lecture in Dialogos. *And it could hardly be more appropriate for the first issue of a journal associated with Hellenic studies at King's College London to give pride of place to the work of one of the College's most distinguished Hellenists, especially when the work in question should have so readily generated a miniature dialogue with a Hellenist of quite different provenance today.*

M.S.S.

Socrates and Phaedrus are walking on a hot summer's day outside the city wall of Athens. An elderly Socrates and a Phaedrus approaching middle age who has not, however, lost his adolescent enthusiasm for *logoi* – for discourses, speeches, literary compositions of all kinds. He has spent the earlier part of the day with the famous orator Lysias, who had composed a display piece, by the clever paradox of which Phaedrus was entranced. Homosexual love affairs were not uncommon in the wealthier section of Athenian society. In strict morality they were condemned, but it was felt that, if a genuine attachment existed, if, in particular, the elder man was genuinely in love with the younger, the relationship might be a valuable experience for the beloved. The paradox of Lysias was to argue that, if a youth was to grant his favours, it was better that he should do so to a man who was *not* in love with him. Socrates discovers that Phaedrus is concealing a manuscript of the speech under his cloak and insists on his reading it aloud, which he does as they sit under the shade of a great plane tree beside a stream.

In its frigid ingenuity, it is a poor enough affair, whether it is a genuine work of Lysias or a pastiche (or parody) written by Plato himself (a matter on which I express no opinion), but Phaedrus is disappointed to find that Socrates does not share his admiration for it, so the latter is induced by a kind of friendly blackmail to try his hand at a better treatment of the theme [236b–e]. And better it certainly is. It opens with a clear definition of Love as a form of desire directed toward physical beauty [238b7–c4], and then marshals a number of convincing arguments why the youth should not surrender himself to a man who is 'ruled by desire and the slave of pleasure' [238e2–3]. One thing the speech of Socrates does not, to the disappointment of Phaedrus, contain: the complementary arguments in favour of the non-lover. But that was a case that Socrates could not bring himself to argue, even in form.

At this point he proposes to cross the river and return to Athens [242a1–2]. He is detained, not so much by the protests of Phaedrus as by the intervention of his celebrated 'divine sign' (δαιμόνιον) [242b8–c3]. It has been borne in upon him that he has committed blasphemy. Love (Ἔρως) is a god and cannot be evil; yet both the speeches had made him out to be so. Socrates must hasten, before it is too late, to make his peace by means of a recantation, like the famous Palinode of Stesichorus to Helen.

The passage which follows [243e9 – 257a2] and which constitutes a quarter of the whole dialogue is one of the most famous in all literature. It defies summary, but some account I must nevertheless attempt to give. Socrates first puts his finger on the radical mistake in the speech of Lysias and in his own first speech. They had assumed that, of the opposite states of madness and sanity, sanity was by all means to be preferred. As though madness were all of one kind. But there is a madness which comes of divine gift and to which men owe the greatest of all blessings. Such a madness is poetry: 'whoever comes to the gates of poetry without the madness of the Muses, convinced that craft alone can make him a good poet, he and his sane man's poetry will be brought to naught and blotted out by the poetry of madmen' [245a5–8]. Such a madness is love. How can this be demonstrated? First by a consideration of the nature of the soul, which is immortal, self-moving, and the source of all motion in physical things [245c5–9]. How then can the *form* of the soul be pictured? Socrates compares the soul to a charioteer driving a pair of horses [246a6–7]. Charioteer and horses are winged, and the wings carry them up to the region where the gods dwell. But in this region the souls of men cannot stay. One of the horses in the team is ill-bred and unruly. The chariot sinks; driver and horses lose the feathers of their wings; the soul becomes imprisoned in a body. But during the time that disembodied souls had kept the company of the gods, they had enjoyed in greater or lesser degree the vision of true reality – the ideal forms of Justice and Knowledge and Beauty that exist for ever without alteration or decay in the region beyond the heavens. It is thanks to this vision that the plight of the human soul is not hopeless. The wings may grow feathers again and the soul rise once more to the contemplation of reality. Through philosophy. But in the pursuit of philosophy, love, and the madness of love, have great part to play. By the sight of physical beauty the soul is reminded of the ideal beauty which it once beheld [254b5–7]. The pangs of love (so vividly described) are the growing pains of the feathers of the soul. But again the unruly horse – which represents desire, just as the good horse represents the sense of honour or pride, and the charioteer reason

– has to be reckoned with, as he struggles for the immediate gratification of desire. The struggle may be long and difficult, but, if it is won, lover and beloved are guided (as Socrates says) into the ordered rule of philosophic life; their days on earth are blessed with happiness and concord; and, when life is over, winged once more and lightened of their burden they stand victorious in that truly Olympic struggle; nor can any greater blessing be secured whether by the sanity that is of man or the madness that is of god [256a7–b7].

All this and much more (I have not, for instance, mentioned the transmigration of souls) is contained in the great second discourse of Socrates, and is expressed, for the most part, in language of a sustained elevation which even Plato never surpassed – blended with humour and irony in a way of which Plato alone held the secret. I doubt if any reader has ever read it through without forgetting entirely the dramatic circumstances of its composition – the speech of Lysias, the first speech of Socrates, the question of *how* a λόγος on the topic of love ought to be composed. There are myths of comparable grandeur in the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, but they come at the end of their dialogues. The myth of the soul in love comes in the middle of the *Phaedrus*; and the reader wonders what can possibly follow.

What in fact follows is a discussion of rhetoric, illustrated in part (but only in part) from the speeches of Lysias and Socrates taken as examples of rhetoric. What is the nature of good speaking and bad? What is the relationship between rhetoric and truth? Is there in fact such a thing as an *art* (a τέχνη – a word which also has some associations of a *science*) of rhetoric, or is it (as Plato once argued) merely an empirical knack, a collection of practical dodges? If there is such an art, in what does it consist? The argument is broken up into short sections and not altogether easy to follow at a first reading. The argument is, however, in fact clear; the conclusion is definite and stated more than once. An art of rhetoric *can* exist, but it can only be founded upon ... *dialectic*. And by 'dialectic' Plato means the minute examination of philosophical questions. It is called dialectic or 'conversation' after the Socratic method of question and answer which is to be employed. In the *Phaedrus* Plato means, in particular, the careful definition of general terms by means of division and sub-division (genus into species and sub-species) – a method of philosophical enquiry in which he placed great hopes, which he employs in several of his later dialogues, and to which (it has been plausibly suggested) he is giving a sort of advertisement in this dialogue. But the fundamental – and revolutionary – point is this: that rhetoric must be based upon the same kind of

knowledge of the same kind of truth as philosophy itself. Equally, since rhetoric is a means of influencing the human ψυχή (a word for which neither soul nor mind is by itself an adequate translation), it must be based upon an adequate psychology – a knowledge, that is, of the ψυχή and its varieties and the ways in which it is affected. When this two-fold conclusion has been reached, Plato adds what is, on the face of it, an appendix in which he compares the written with the spoken word, to the disadvantage of the former.

What then is the true subject of the dialogue? Rhetoric or Love? Rhetoric – the art of the use of words – provides the framework of the dialogue. But would *any* topic have served as well as love for the theme of illustrative speeches? There are other questions, such as the relevance of the appendix to which I have just referred. One could, I suppose, take the view that the *Phaedrus* is a rag-bag, into which Plato stuffed material which he had been unable to use in the great dialogues of his Middle Period. I cannot recollect whether any scholar has had the temerity to put forward this view. It can only be said that, if Plato proceeded in this way, he was very ill-advised to do so in a λόγος which was so much concerned with the correct and well-ordered composition of λόγοι. 'You will admit', says Socrates at one point, 'that any discourse should be constructed like a living creature, with a body of its own; it must have a middle and extremities composed so as to fit each other and the whole' [264c2–5]. A little later there is an interesting reference to Sophocles and Euripides [268c5–d2]. A certain individual is supposed to claim an expert knowledge of tragic poetry because he is capable of writing isolated speeches. But the great dramatists, says Plato, 'would surely laugh at a man who thought a tragedy was anything but an arrangement of such passages in proper relation to one another and to the whole of which they are parts' [268d3–5].

The reference is interesting, and not only because it shows how kindly Plato could speak of the tragedians, when no matter of faith or morals was at stake. There is reason to suppose that Plato was aware of his own dramatic art as akin to both tragedy and comedy; and it could perhaps be shown that his technique owed something to the dramatists – not least in the *Phaedrus*. However that may be, it is certainly apparent that Plato took great pains over the construction of this dialogue. And we may feel it odd if, while lavishing so much art upon his transitions, his juxtapositions, his cross-references, the introduction and the interweaving of his themes, he should have left the broad outlines and the larger form to look after themselves. There are tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides which appear at first sight to have a divided interest. When that is so, we look for a

unifying factor, and generally we can find one.

The main problem of the *Phaedrus* is, of course, the relationship of the great discourse on Love, with its mythical setting and its high poetic tone, to the discussion of rhetoric which follows. Not that close connections of subject matter are lacking. Reduced to its simplest terms, Plato's thesis about rhetoric is that it cannot claim the status of an art (τέχνη) unless it is founded upon two things. First upon a knowledge of truth, of reality, which, in his view, can only be obtained by the method of philosophical enquiry which he called dialectic. Secondly, since rhetoric is a kind of ψυχαγωγία – a means of influencing the soul, it must be based upon an intimate knowledge of the nature of the human ψυχή : in particular, the speaker (or writer) must know whether the soul is simple or complex, and, if complex, what its varieties are and how each of them is affected, so that he can suit his discourse to his audience and to his purpose. Now, to take the first point, objective reality, for Plato, resided, not in the phenomena of the sensible world, but in the realm of εἴδη or Forms, timeless and unchangeable. But it was of these Forms (τὰ ὄντα ὄντως) [247e3] that the soul, before its physical embodiment, had vision, while it followed in the procession of the gods; and it was thanks to that vision that it had the capacity to recover knowledge of reality – a process described as ἀνάμνησις or 'recollection' [249c2]. The account of the adventures of the disembodied soul thus provides a background to the account of dialectic. Similarly, with the soul itself. And here I must join issue with Hackforth (to whose commentary on the *Phaedrus* we owe so much)[1]. It is surely inconceivable, that, when, in the later stages of the dialogue, Plato raises the question of the simplicity or complexity of the soul, he wishes his reader *not* to think of the charioteer and horses of the Myth. We need not suppose that Plato imagined this three-fold analysis of the soul to have the character of a complete psychology. In the *Republic*, where also the soul is conceived in three parts or aspects, Plato admits, almost in so many words, that this three-fold division is an over-simplification (443d). To give an adequate account of the soul (particularly one which could be used for the practical purposes of rhetoric) would involve refinement upon refinement. Such an account, Plato in his published work never attempted to give. Nor did he ever, so far as we know, abandon the tripartite scheme, in which he evidently saw a truth of great importance about human nature. So, when he speaks of the complexity of the soul in connection with rhetoric, he intends undoubtedly to refer back to the Myth, as providing, not the practical detail on which the scientific rhetorician could work, but an essential background of the nature and destiny of the soul.

In these ways the discourse on Love can be said to serve the purposes of the discussion of rhetoric. And, if we are compelled to assign to the dialogue a single theme, then rhetoric it must undoubtedly be. It was a subject to which Plato may have had a number of reasons for returning. I say 'returning', for he had dealt with it many years before in the *Gorgias*, to which dialogue he makes a clear cross-reference in the *Phaedrus*.[2] Now the *Gorgias* breathes an uncompromising hostility towards the rhetoric as it was practised, describing it as a parasitic counterfeit of the true art of life, which is philosophy. The *Gorgias* does not envisage the possibility of a rhetoric which might be consistent with philosophy. Yet speeches must surely be made in any form of society which a Greek could imagine. Plato could not evade the issue, and I doubt if his pupils in the Academy would have allowed him to do so. (We must return to this point.)

The political reference is essential to the discussion of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*; and it is interesting, as a matter of technique, to see how it is introduced. The Second Discourse of Socrates, which contains so much of Plato's philosophy, is almost entirely innocent of politics. The discourses, of which it is the third specimen to be introduced, are up to that point conceived as exhibition pieces – in which such as Lysias display their cleverness for the entertainment of such as Phaedrus. It is to remedy this omission and to place rhetoric in the only context in which the author of the Republic could consider it that he immediately introduces that imaginary politician who has stigmatized Lysias as a mere λογογράφος or hack 'speech writer' [257c6]. As though it were not, says Socrates, the dearest ambition of every politician to leave lasting written memorials of himself in the forms of laws and decrees. The passage [257c4 – 258c6], humorous as it is, establishes the context of *political* persuasion, of assembly and law-court, which is never lost to sight in the subsequent discussion. We are thus prepared for the fundamental question with which the discussion proper is opened: whether knowledge of truth is required in a speaker or merely knowledge of what most people *think* is true (τὰ δόξαντ' ἂν πλήθει) [260a2].

Plato and his students were not the only people in Athens to consider these problems. Some years before Plato founded the academy, Isocrates, a rather older man, a professional speech writer with nobler ambitions, had himself founded a school; this school and Plato's Academy continued for many years to exist side by side as rival establishments. Plato concludes the *Phaedrus* with a 'message' to Isocrates [278e5–279b3] – a message so ambiguous that scholars are still debating whether it was intended as a compliment or an insult. Quite apart from that

reference, it is clear that the dialogue is conditioned in some degree by the conflict of ideals and methods which existed between the two schools. Unfortunately, despite the preservation of voluminous writings by the two principals, the story of their relations remains extremely obscure. Some of the points which are made against the professors of rhetoric are quite obviously aimed at Isocrates – but other points cannot possibly be so aimed; and the transitions from one class of point to another, which were doubtless clear to Plato's readers, are no longer clear to us. I must content myself with a broad statement of what the bearing of the *Phaedrus* on this relationship – and of this relationship on the *Phaedrus* – seems to be.

Plato and Isocrates (who himself claimed the title of philosopher) had a number of things in common: a high seriousness, a belief in the importance of education, a desire to train statesmen who should be capable of ruling states well, a conviction that this training must go beyond the technical tricks of rhetoric. There perhaps the resemblance ends. Plato describes for us in the *Republic* the training of a statesman [521c – 535a]. It begins with the austere discipline of mathematics and continues with the study of what we now call metaphysics, conducted through the minute examination of philosophical problems by the Socratic method of question and answer. The purpose of this was to lead the mind of the pupil to a knowledge of reality and of those true values which alone would fit him for the task of government. To Isocrates this was mere foolishness. He too professed to aim at truth, but thought (and who shall say that he was necessarily wrong?) that exact knowledge was too much to expect in human affairs. So he limited his objective and aimed only at opinion (δόξα) – informed opinion, sound opinion, moderate conservative opinion – the opinions which a well-educated man conversant with politics was bound to form. He aimed at turning out from his school men of the world, with a background of literary culture and a capacity to express themselves in lucid prose.

One can feel considerable sympathy with Isocrates, steering his middle course between the cynical politicians and the arrogant metaphysicians of the Academy. It is a sympathy which, in my case, wanes as I read his works. The truth is that what ought to have been a striking, a 'classical', confrontation of antithetical types misfires somehow. It is a bungled effect in the drama of the development of human thought. Isocrates was not big enough for his part. Common sense dwindles to commonplace, the man of the world to the man in the street; and his few constructive ideas trail off into a sentimental vagueness. The fourth century was indeed destined to provide a 'classical' confrontation of types: it was not Plato and

Isocrates, but Plato and Aristotle.

However, Isocrates and his school were facts for Plato to reckon with. It must have been intensely irritating to Plato, who felt summoned – and qualified – to reform society, that this lesser man, not content with calling himself a philosopher, haunted the ante-rooms of power and, through his writings and his pupils, exerted an influence on contemporary Athenian politics. But there is some evidence that the men were on friendly terms. And in the *Phaedrus*, as I see it, Plato makes every effort to be polite and conciliatory. Such, I feel, is the tone of his final message to Isocrates. But to suggest (as has sometimes been suggested) that even at this stage Plato still hoped to convert an elderly Isocrates to his own conception of philosophy does less than justice to Plato's knowledge of human nature. Isocrates to him was a philosopher manqué, pursuing a method so defective, that, despite his honest idealism, it was likely to differ little, if at all, in its results from the most cynical exploitation of the tricks of rhetoric. Plato's purpose in the *Phaedrus*, was to re-affirm, as against Isocrates no less than the others – as against Isocrates more than the others, for he made higher claims – to re-affirm what he had always taught; that philosophy, not rhetoric, was the true culture of the soul; and to add something new: that only by adopting the method of philosophy could rhetoric deserve the name of an art.

Such was Plato's purpose – or among his purposes – in writing the *Phaedrus*. But how does it explain the form of the dialogue? How does it explain the place in it of the great discourse upon love? It is all very well to point out that the discourse bears on the subject of a rhetoric which is to be founded on knowledge of objective reality and of the nature of the soul. Of course it does. But there were many ways in which Plato could have given some account of the Theory of Forms and of the tripartite soul – ways which would have been superficially more in keeping with the subsequent discussion of rhetoric. We have to explain, not so much the relevance of love to philosophy and so to rhetoric (for Plato has done that for us), or the contrasts of tone and style between different portions of the dialogue (for Plato often works through such contrasts) but the sheer bulk and annihilating power, the elaboration, the magnificence, the richness of imagination of the Palinode. 'We cannot but feel', writes Hackforth, 'that, relatively to the formal structure of the whole, the great discourse is both too magnificent and too long; the balance of the dialogue is upset and the structural plan at least partially obscured'. He may be right: if so, he is also right when he says that 'formal perfection can be achieved at too great a price'[3].

And yet I wonder if it is altogether fair to say that 'the poet, the enthusiast and the mystic have had it too much their own way from the standpoint of the rationalist and the careful planner'[4]. Some such conflict undoubtedly exists, and I shall return to it later. It strikes much deeper than the formal problem we are discussing. What I would say now is that, *given* Plato's conception of philosophy *and* his conception of politics, I wonder if that problem is really so difficult. I suggest that, if we are seeking a formula for the unity of the *Phaedrus*, the following may serve: the vital and indissoluble connection which existed in Plato's mind between the high poetry of the procession of the gods and the tedious and tendentious details of a political speech. Having given my formula I must now attempt to justify it.

There is a question which we are bound to ask, though it may not be easy to answer it with certainty. In what political setting did Plato envisage that this reformed rhetoric would be practised? Not, surely, in the Athens of Isocrates. One point at least is clear: if dialectic is to be the basis of rhetoric, then dialectic is also the education of rulers, which implies that philosophers are performing their proper function in the state – the function which is most fully described in the *Republic*. Now Plato's philosopher is a man of austere life who has been subjected to a rigorous intellectual discipline. Reason holds sway in his soul, and through his reason he is capable of ruling wisely and justly. But, as every student of Plato knows, reason for him was not a cold dispassionate activity. It was an intellectual passion, pursued with a warmer desire and productive of an intenser pleasure than the desires and pleasures of sense or of ambition. The culmination of the philosopher's training is not a series of propositions, but a vision of goodness and beauty which Plato could only describe in terms of mystical experience. In the *Republic* we are told how the philosopher-kings, when they have reached this culmination, are obliged to return to the ordinary world and busy themselves with affairs of state [519c–521b]. Now in the *Republic* Plato describes the basic organization of an ideal state, but says little about its day-to-day life; he describes the education of rulers, but says little about the processes of ruling. However, we can surely assume that Greeks ruling Greeks would have occasion to employ the human faculty of speech. And, if by some odd chance it had not occurred to Plato to consider how they would speak (and how their speeches would compare with the oratory of normal states), we may suppose that his pupils would have questioned him on the point. In a later dialogue, the *Politicus* or *Statesman* (we need not consider whether it is earlier or later than the *Phaedrus*), Plato makes an interesting, but brief, reference to rhetoric as an art ancillary to that of statesmanship [304d4–

e2]. What is interesting is the way in which Plato describes the function of rhetoric. It is to persuade the masses, 'not' (he says) 'by the way of formal instruction, but by telling them stories' [304d1–2]. At first sight this might seem something very different from the 'dialectical' rhetoric of the *Phaedrus*. And it is certainly narrower. The philosophic ruler will sometimes find it possible and desirable to explain things rationally to the ruled. But the rhetoric of the *Phaedrus* includes, I think, the political persuasion – διὰ μυθολογίας ἀλλὰ μὴ διὰ διδαχῆς – of the *Statesman*. The primary reason for the orator to study dialectic is that *he* should know the truth, not that he should convey it dialectically to an audience. The reason why he should know the souls of men and their affections (πάθη) is in order that he may lead them in the direction that they should go: the very term used in the definition of rhetoric – ψυχαγωγία – means a 'leading of souls' and is a word whose associations are primarily emotional. And this is, I am sure, in the political context, how Plato saw the function of rhetoric: a means by which the enlightened ruler may control and direct the unenlightened masses – not by force (though that will sometimes be necessary), but by persuasion. And persuasion would have to take into account the full complexity of human nature, in a degree perhaps which Plato had not entirely envisaged when he wrote the *Republic*. For it seems that Plato was forced progressively to take more account of the irrational element in human nature (just as he came to take more interest in the nature of the physical world).

But, if the *Phaedrus* belongs to a rather later stage of Plato's political thinking than the *Republic*, I doubt if it implies a radically different form of political organization. It certainly does imply that sharp differentiation between rulers and ruled which was and remained fundamental to Plato's thought. It is in this connection that the content of the great Discourse appears to have an essential relevance. From the point of view of the ruled (of those, that is, upon whom rhetorical persuasion is brought to bear) it provides the guarantee that it will be employed in their own wider interests. For rhetoric is a dangerous art. And the more expert the orator and the better he knows his audience, the more dangerous it is. The clearer he is in his own mind (and Plato specifically makes this point), the better he can beguile and deceive. But rhetoric will not be so used by men who have risen above the lower passions of humanity to a vision of true reality and are inspired in their task by a religious experience. From the point of view of the rulers the discourse is no less relevant. When they descend once more into the Cave (if I may recall the imagery of the *Republic*) and busy themselves with the practical

affairs of human society, tedious and distasteful though these affairs must be to men who have enjoyed the supreme vision, they will draw their inspiration and their purpose from that vision. That is why I suggest that, if we want to find the unity of the *Phaedrus*, it lies in the essential connection that existed in Plato's mind between the high poetry of the procession of the gods, together with the praise of love as the supreme motive power of the human soul, and (on the other hand) the making of a political speech or the drafting of the preamble to a law. We may believe or disbelieve in this conception, we may like or dislike its implications, but that is what Plato thought.

I mentioned earlier that comparable myths in other dialogues come at the end, after dialectical arguments have led to conclusions. As Jaeger puts it: 'long after the reader has forgotten the tortuous complications of Plato's logical arguments, he can remember the picture given by the myth, which becomes a symbol of the philosophical meaning of the whole work'[5]. The function of the myth in the *Phaedrus* is different: if it precedes the logical arguments and the prosaic discussion, that is in order that it should illuminate them. But at the end of the discussion, when he has summarized its results, Plato raises the tone and strikes once more a religious note. The task, says Socrates, may be difficult, but great things are at stake; the wise man does not undertake this formidable labour in order that he may speak to his fellow men and deal with them; he does so 'that he may be able to speak what is pleasing to the gods and in all his dealings to do their pleasure to the best of his ability' [273e6–8].

Now, in a sense, I have brought my theme to a natural close, having advanced an argument, which seems to me reasonably convincing, for regarding the *Phaedrus*, despite superficial appearances, as a unity. But I feel (if the comparison is not impious) a little like Socrates when he had concluded his first discourse. The point of view from which I have approached the *Phaedrus* is, I trust, important and valid. But I have left out something that is equally valid and may be more important. And I have dealt with the subject according to 'the sanity which is of man' rather than the 'madness which is of god'. Socrates went on to deliver a second discourse, but there are many reasons why I should not do the same. Nevertheless, I should like to give a brief sketch of what such a second discourse might be.

It would begin, I think, by pointing out that the term λόγος in the dialogue has a wider range of reference (which might in itself warn us against an exclusively political interpretation of what Plato says about rhetoric). λόγος embraces all

forms of spoken and written composition: poetry no less than prose; philosophical disputations as well as speeches in the law courts and in the assembly. Plato is constantly running these different kinds together and making the point that the same fundamental principles apply to all of them. My discourse would then call attention to the three λόγοι in the earlier part of the dialogue, which are not political speeches, deliberative or forensic. The discourse of Lysias belongs to a third recognised type of oratory – the ἐπίδειξις or display piece. The first discourse of Socrates answers it in its own kind. But his second discourse is really of yet another type – it is a λόγος προτρεπτικός – an exhortation to the study of philosophy. To whom is it addressed? To Phaedrus? Or to Plato's reader? Which immediately raises the question: what sort of a *logos* is the *Phaedrus* itself?

And that would be the real subject of the second discourse: the nature and value of philosophic writing and the light which is thrown by the *Phaedrus* upon it. For this, equally with the political theme, is a true subject of the dialogue. And the relationship between the two themes raises the question of the unity of the dialogue in a far subtler form than the relatively crude problem we have been considering.

Plato chose to end the dialogue with quite a long discussion about the comparative values of written and spoken *logoi* [274b6 – 277a5]. And he does not mean political pamphlets as compared with political speeches. He means written and published philosophical works (like the *Phaedrus*) as compared with the living contact of master and disciple in the Academy.

That Plato laboured over the composition of his dialogues we might have guessed without an expressive phrase he uses elsewhere in the *Phaedrus*, where he speaks of 'twisting sentences this way and that for hours, glueing them together and pulling them apart' [278d9–e1]. Yet he was apparently in doubt whether this was a serious occupation for a philosopher at all. After the agonies and triumphs of literary creation, he looked dubiously at what he had created: he spoke of it as a pastime, as a recreation that men such as he prefer to the pleasures of the drinking party [276d]. This is not Socratic irony, for Socrates did not *write* dialogues. And that is the point or part of the point. To the end of his days Plato felt an intense loyalty to the person and methods of Socrates, who wrote not in a book but 'in the soul of the learner' [276a 5–6]. 'The dialectician', says Socrates, 'selects a soul of the appropriate type, and in it he plants and sows his words founded upon knowledge, which ... are not barren, but contain a seed whence other words grow in other types of minds; whereby this seed is vouchsafed immortality and its possessor the fullest measure of blessedness to which man can attain' [276e5 –

277a4]. This was the way of Socrates, and it must be the right way; and it was the way to which Plato aspired, as he taught in the Academy.

Yet he wrote and published dialogues. The philosopher spoke with the tongue of a dramatist and a poet; and no dialogue owes more to the poetic imagination, the madness of the Muses, than does the *Phaedrus*. What function, then, in relation to philosophy, did Plato really think that his poetic imagination performed? The poetry reaches its heights when Plato handles the most important of his beliefs. It was a poignant dilemma. The rationalist finds that, when he comes to the truths which alone give meaning to his whole philosophic position, he can express them in no other way than by the exercise of the poetic imagination. A dilemma and – surely – a conflict.

If I hesitate to deliver this second discourse, it is not merely that I lack time. I am deterred by something else. One cannot, as I see it, get very far in these questions without trespassing on the intimacies of Plato's mind in a way which for ordinary mortals (if not for a Wilamowitz!) is impertinent. Nevertheless, let me end with a speculation, impertinent though it may be, about the *Phaedrus*.

It was suggested to me by a remark of Otto Regenbogen's[6], who calls attention to a passage, towards the close of the dialogue, when Plato recapitulates for the last time his conclusions about rhetoric: 'you must', says Socrates, 'discover the type of speech appropriate to each nature ... addressing a complex soul in a complex style that ranges over the whole gamut of tones (ποικίλῃ μὲν ποικίλους ψυχῇ καὶ παναρμονίους διδοὺς λόγους)' [277b8–c3]. Regenbogen rightly saw the *Phaedrus* itself as such a ποικίλος καὶ παναρμόνιος λόγος. But whose is the complex soul? The soul of Phaedrus? No: Phaedrus is a dramatic convenience, and little more. The soul, I suggest, is Plato's. I will suggest further that, when, in the introductory passage, Socrates is made to put the question whether he is a complex and turbulent beast, or a 'simple gentle being' [230a 3–5], Plato was comparing in his own mind his complexity with the simplicity of Socrates – Socrates for whom, I suggest, the famous paradoxes 'virtue is knowledge' and 'no one does wrong wittingly' were self-evident facts of his own experience. (If this seems far-fetched, read first the account in the *Symposium* of the temptation of Socrates by Alcibiades and then the account in the *Phaedrus* of the mortal struggle of the lover to restrain his unruly horse.)

It is the complexity of Plato that accounts in part for the fascination which his study holds – a fascination not unmixed perhaps at times with repulsion. Aristocrat, poet, lover, and perhaps mystic, he forged his philosophy out of his pride and

his passion as well as his intellect. He was a proud aristocrat who had half-learnt humility from the stone mason's son; a poet of supreme lyrical and dramatic gifts, who never completely reconciled the poet to the philosopher; a lover who placed upon the experience of love a weight of interpretation which it almost certainly cannot bear; a mystic – or perhaps rather a would-be mystic, who could comprehend a rapture to which he himself may never have attained; finally, a complex and versatile person who above all things feared the complexity and versatility of human nature. How Plato, as he lived and taught in the Academy, was able to harmonize these aspects of his personality it is not given to us to know. In his major works, and most of all, I suggest, the *Phaedrus*, such a harmony appears, which not even his mistrustful irony can mar. The creation of such harmonies is a function of imaginative literature, which is often addressed in the last analysis to its own author. If that last sentence were translated into Greek (which would not be impossible) and communicated to Plato (which would be more difficult), he might write it down as pernicious nonsense. And yet he may not have been wholly unaware that his dialogues, besides whatever public purposes he conceived them to serve, served also inner needs of his own nature.

But even on his own terms he was surely too distrustful of his written works. Platonism, transmitted from master to disciple, soon lost its vitality in the Hellenistic world. It was the written word of Plato which flowered in Neoplatonism. It was the written word which helped to shape the Renaissance. The written word is still with us and still has power to write in the soul of the learner περὶ δικαίων τε καὶ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν.

NOTES

1 R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge 1952) 147 n.1.
2 Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* 121–2.
3 Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* 136–7.
4 Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* 137.
5 W. Jaeger, *Paideia : the Ideals of Greek Culture,* vol.2 (Oxford 1944) 151.
6 O. Regenbogen, "Bemerkungen zur Deutung des Platonischen Phaidros", in *Kleine Schriften* (ed. F. Dirlmeier, Munich 1961) 248–69, quotation from p.269.