

THE PRAYER TO PAN OF PLATO'S *PHAEDRUS* (279B8–C3): AN EXHORTATION TO EXERCISE THE PHILOSOPHICAL VIRTUE

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The current article offers a new reading of Socrates' prayer to Pan in Plato's *Phaedrus*. By means of a comprehensive approach, the paper shows that the prayer not only gathers together the most relevant topics dealt with during the conversation, but it also exhorts us to engage in the way of life depicted by Socrates' character, namely that of philosophy, which can be clearly distinguished from that of traditional rhetoric. To this extent, *eros* and *logos*, two elements closely related to Pan, show themselves to be of primary relevance. Besides these issues, we discuss the puzzling nature of the prayer, defending the idea that it was authored with the same writing method as the full dialogue. Socrates' *psychagogic* attempt with *Phaedrus* is analogous to Plato's didactic effort to engage the reader in philosophy: instead of supplying a straight message which must be learnt by heart by *Phaedrus* or the reader, both Socrates and Plato offer *friendly logoi* intended to promote active research in the receivers.

Keywords: Plato; *Phaedrus*; prayer; Pan; *eros*; *logos*; temperance [σωφροσύνη]

Ἑρμῆς: —Εἰπέ δέ μοι, γεγάμηκας, ὦ Πάν, ἤδη; ...
Πάν: —Οὐδαμῶς, ὦ πάτερ· ἐρωτικός γάρ εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἀγαπήσαιμι συνὸν μιᾶ.

[*Hermes: —But tell me, are you married yet, Pan? (...)*
Pan: —Certainly not, dad. Since I am amorous and I wouldn't be satisfied joining just one.]
(*Lucianus, Dialogi deorum* II 4.1–3)

1. Aim and scope

Socrates' prayer to Pan that ends Plato's *Phaedrus* reads as follows:

ὦ φίλε Πάν τε καὶ ἄλλοι ὅσοι τῆδε θεοί, δοίητέ μοι καλῶ γενέσθαι τάνδοθεν· ἔξωθεν δὲ ὅσα ἔχω, τοῖς ἐντὸς εἶναι μοι φίλια. πλούσιον δὲ νομίζοιμι τὸν σοφόν· τὸ δὲ χρυσοῦ πλῆθος εἶη μοι ὅσον μήτε φέρειν μήτε ἄγειν δύναιτο ἄλλος ἢ ὁ σῶφρων.

Dear Pan and all you gods of this place, grant me that I may become beautiful within; and that what is in my possession outside me may be in friendly accord with what is inside. And may I count the wise man as rich; and may my pile of gold be of a size which only the temperate could bear or carry.

(279b8–c3.¹ Trans.: C. J. Rowe with slight changes)

Scholars did not pay very much attention to this short passage until the mid-1960s, since they considered it a *merely* artistic ending, and as such philosophically uninteresting. For instance, Hackforth (1952, 68–69) attributed minor relevance to the plea, as he believed that it has no substantial connection with its dialogical context.² Prompted by Leo Strauss, Jacob Klein, and Stanley Rosen amongst others, a newer interpretive style encouraged the reader to be attentive to every detail of the dialogue – not only to its most thoroughly argumentative sequences – including dramatic features. Now many scholars are of the opinion that every single Platonic passage has been written for some specific and philosophically meaningful reason. It is the reader's task to find its meaning and function within the context of the dialogue to which it belongs. The same could be said about the prayer. In order to understand the dialogue correctly it is necessary to understand the meaning of the plea (Gaiser 1990, 35), which must be considered within the context of the whole dialogue (Griswold 1986).

In accordance with the newer approach,³ the prayer has been given more serious consideration, and the literature on it has correspondingly increased. Unfortunately, this increase in literature has not always led to the elucidation of the passage or to a general consensus about its meaning. In a recent work, Capra (2014, 123–124) points out that even modern researchers agree only upon the fact that its nature is enigmatic.⁴

By means of a comprehensive approach, the current paper aims to shed some light on this passage. To do so, it reads the text in its dramatic context, considers the general content of the dialogue, and supports its theses by means of internal pieces of evidence. In so doing, the paper will show that the prayer sums up the main topics of the dialogue,⁵ namely, λόγος (henceforth *logos*), ἔρως (henceforth *eros*), and *philosophy*. Besides, the prayer also refers to some other themes connected with main topics of the dialogue: the inside–outside dichotomy, the discussion on writing, and temperance as virtue. Although the basic conclusion is no novelty *per se*,⁶ the analysis explains the articulation of the three main topics in a way that, as far as we know, has not yet been considered: first, the paper claims that the inner beauty asked for refers to the harmonious tripartite soul described in the palinode; second, it argues that when he requests the outer possessions be in friendly accord with what is inside, Socrates alludes to the speeches produced by good rhetoric;⁷ third, it shows that the *gold* and the

temperate person mentioned in the prayer correspond to *money-loving* [φιλοχρήματος] sophist and *temperate* philosopher, respectively, that is to say, to the one practicing bad rhetoric and the one exercising good rhetoric.

2. *The prayer as a gathering of the topics of the Phaedrus*

According to Plato, language is always contextual.⁸ Its meaning depends on the concrete situation in which it appears. Let us accordingly place the prayer in its context. The *Phaedrus* is a dialogue of travels both literal and figurative (so Bonazzi 2011, x). The conversation starts with both protagonists' walking toward the countryside, leaving the city centre. Beyond the city walls, Socrates, who seems to be out of place, acts like a *visitor* delighted by the rural atmosphere along the river Ilissus, in the company of Phaedrus, whom he calls a great *leader for foreigners* [ξεναγωγός] (230c). The main part of the discussion takes place in a definite spot in the countryside reached after a walk. Analogously, at the end of the dialogue both partners are about to move back inside the city walls (278b8; 279b4; 279c8), so as to conclude the trip presupposed in the dialogue. Thus *movement* seems to be important in the dialogue. This fact is confirmed by several parts of the action. First, the dialogue starts and ends with verbs of motion.⁹ Second, in the palinode's so-called *proof of the immortality of the soul* (245c5–246a2) the soul is described as ever-moving. Motion is therefore one of its eternal properties. What is more, *eros*, the main topic of *Phaedrus*' three speeches, is introduced in the palinode as the natural tendency that constantly moves our souls. Third, *Phaedrus*' discussion starts with a speech attributed to Lysias; the whole conversation bears on the question posed by Phaedrus, τί σοι φαίνεται ... ὁ λόγος; (234c6), which will be restated by Socrates in a more general inquiry at 259e1–2: what is the nature of good and bad speaking and writing? In other words, one of the dialogue's main threads is the art of good speeches, i.e. rhetoric, which is described as a kind of *leading of the soul* [ψυχαγωγία τις] (261a7–8).

The journey is not only literal, but also figurative. The characters' discussion represents a thought journey, and the prayer to Pan comes at the end, just at the point when the literal journey might conclude. That is why one of the most remarkable functions of the passage is to sum up the main threads of the dialogue. It gathers together the different topics discussed in the figurative journey, but it also prepares for the literal return. In the beginning of the dialogue there is an unusual focus on the setting (as is stressed in Ferrari 1987, 2–4); the landscape, the weather, and the time are not merely mentioned, but also described. Constant and precise indications of the scene are uncommon in the dialogues. At the end of the

Phaedrus the characters reinforce the setting of the conversation. As Friedländer (1969, 240) states, “the prayer that Socrates, in conclusion, offers to Pan and that other gods dwelling in this place awakens once more, after the long discussion, the feeling of closeness to nature that pervaded the first part of the dialogue.” While gathering together the main topics of the discussion, the end of the plot recalls its beginning. At this point, the reader should wonder about the consequences of the literal and the figurative journeys.

The prayer turns the reader’s attention to the scene of the dialogue. In view of this, Socrates’ invocation of god Pan is no surprise at all, since the god seems closely identified with the locale. There is fourth-century archaeological evidence which suggests that some place nearby might have been sacred to Pan, among other deities (see Rosenmeyer 1968, 37 n. 1; Borgeaud 1979, 159–160; and Yunis 2011, 96; see also *Phdr.* 230b7–8 – although Pan is not mentioned – and 263d5–6; for illustrative images about the place and the archaeological evidence, see Travlos 1980, 291, figure 379, and 294, figure 382). The places commonly associated with Pan are those outside the city centre (see Borgeaud 1979, 15–16) that are not cultivated (see Borgeaud 1979, 94–95). This son of Hermes, linked with both shepherds and hunters, is related to the *edges* [ἔσχαται] of human civilization (see Borgeaud 1979, 95). The dialogue takes place in such an atmosphere, beyond the city walls. In that context, Socrates emphatically displays delight at the beauty of the place (230b2–c5), to the extent that he declares the place to be divine (238c9–d1). The atmosphere, *Phaedrus*’ beauty (234d1–6), and the supernatural forces of the place affect Socrates. He even claims to be possessed by the gods of the place (237a7–237b1; 238c5–d3; 241e3–5; 262d2–6; 263d1–3; 279b1–3), including Pan (263d5–6). In this way, Socrates claims to associate his speeches with some *outer* powers that are beyond the limits of human capacities. Interestingly, inspiration and possession are recurrent themes in the dialogue.

Not only is Socrates depicting himself as being under *poetic inspiration*, but also as being under some kind of inspiration related to purification and initiation rites. Some scholars (e.g., see Kerényi 1991, 45–46) have noticed that *Phaedrus*’ spot is close by the place where the lesser mysteries were carried out. Moreover, some passages of the dialogue, especially at 249c and 250b–c, display an explicitly mystical vocabulary.¹⁰ If we consider that the historical *Phaedrus* was condemned to go into exile for having profaned the mysteries (see *And.* 1.15; see also Nails 2002, 232–234), it is not implausible to think that Plato could be depicting his Socrates in an ironic fashion, trying to make his interlocutor to feel uncomfortable with his usual position. *Phaedrus* does not seem to be able to judge things by

himself in a critical way (see Werner 2012, 20). He seems to be one of those citizens too easily influenced by the intellectual avant-gardes (*Prt.* 315c) of the period (so Szlezàk 1989, 74).¹¹ That is probably why Socrates repeatedly (243a4; 235b7; 237a7–b1; 244b6–244d5; 274c1–2; 275b7–c1) defends traditional beliefs and practices, in order to prompt Phaedrus to doubt about his own beliefs and to think for himself. In this regard, it could be noteworthy that in some contexts Pan played the mediating role of initiate-initiator of a cult addressed to some other gods (see Borgeaud 1979, 255–256). Although his connection with Demeter and the mysteries is not direct, Pan could play some minor role in those kinds of initiatory practices (see Borgeaud 1979, 205 ff.). Were this true, the place in which the action is developed and the presence of Pan would give continuity to the Socratic method of prompting the modern-minded Phaedrus to change his attitude.¹²

It is not only the place that is suitably linked to Pan, but also the time of day. Socrates plays with the idea that the gods of the place have possessed him. At 238d1 he declares that he has suffered an attack of *nympholepsy*. Noon was supposedly the hour at which one was most likely to be affected by the powers of the nymphs and Pan (see Borgeaud 1979, 163, 167–168). Several passages (242a4; 258e6–259b2; 259d8) recall that the scene is set at midday, i.e., exactly when the presence of the nymphs and Pan is most likely to manifest itself. One should notice that the conversation takes place in summer, at midday, that the weather is hot, and that the chosen spot, close to the river and under the shadow of the plane tree, is perfect for a nap (230c3–5). Socrates is well aware of the danger of falling asleep. With his Cicada story (258e ff.) he warns his partner about the risk of nodding off under the song of the cicadas. According to Socrates, due to the laziness of their minds, most people would have a nap in that circumstance; however, such behaviour would be proper to slaves and sheep (259a4–6). Hence, Socrates suggests that they should avoid falling asleep under the Siren song of the cicadas and continue with their discussion. The characters must overcome the dangers – viz. falling asleep, possession, inspiration — of the place, as Odysseus on his return to Ithaca. This detail could be especially meaningful if we consider that Pan is favourable to those who take a nap at noon (see Borgeaud 1979, 168). Regardless of the atmosphere, Socrates wants to engage Phaedrus in a discussion and prevent him from falling asleep as if they were shepherds or, even worse, sheep, neglecting in that way the shepherd god. He opts to fight against the cicadas' song to earn their respect and, maybe in that way, to obtain the gift of the gods (259a6–9), even if by doing so they risk disturbing Pan, who might be sleeping at that time (see Grimal 1990, 325; and Werner 2012, 137). That is, both men

must overcome the dangers of the panic landscape, where strange phenomena that go beyond the power and the will of humans take place (see Borgeaud 1979, 93).

Before continuing, we may point out something about all these strange and traditional phenomena mentioned. There is no room in this paper to develop the problem, but let us assert that Socrates' traditional mood in this work, his overly emphatic remarks on the landscape, his presentation of philosophy as a kind of *initiation*, and his eulogy of different forms of divine *mania* and *inspiration*, are not serious at all (*pace* Gaiser 1990, 69–70, 80–81), but form part of Socrates' didactic attempt to change the attitude of the modern and sophisticated Phaedrus, who is incapable of thinking for himself.¹³ This is an important matter, since this ironic method is directly connected to some of the different elements that could be associated with Pan in the dialogue. Therefore, not only is the prayer to be understood as part of this method, but so too the previous allusions to the goatherd god.

If we are not mistaken, Socrates uses several methods to examine Phaedrus and his reactions to the topics discussed. In this connection, it is of major importance to be aware that there is a strong parallel between Socrates' palinode,¹⁴ which can be understood as a prayer to *eros*,¹⁵ and the concluding passage of the dialogue. Both start with a vocative: ὦ φίλε Ἔρως (257a3) and ὦ φίλε Πάν (279b8) respectively. Moreover the two prayers have strong structural parallels (see Capra 2014, 125); both conclude in the same way, namely by Phaedrus' willingly joining Socrates' prayers (257b7–8 and 279c6–7). It is noteworthy how the modern and sophisticated Phaedrus joins Socrates' prayers without being able to criticize any element of them. In the beginning of the plot his aim was to reproduce some other's (viz. Lysias') speech. Similarly, in the end of the dialogue it seems that his main task is merely to go back to the city and somehow to reproduce¹⁶ Socrates' speeches for Lysias, Homer, Solon and in general to whomever was concerned with speeches (278b7–d1). In this way, the reader of the dialogue should understand that Phaedrus' attitude, as a speech-lover¹⁷ [φιλόλογος] who has made or has spurred others to make a lot of speeches (242a7–b5. See also Ferrari 1986, 5), does not change significantly within the dialogue. The journey does not lead him from philology to philosophy. Socrates might persuade him about some theses but is not able to germinate in him the philosophical attitude (*pace* Hackforth 1952, 13, 169; Rosenmeyer 1962, 43; Motte 1963; Theodorakópoulos 1971, 383; Gaiser 1990, 32–22; Reale 1990, 17; and Yunis 2011, 248–249).

A comprehensive reading offers several pieces of evidence to believe that just as the many allusions to inspiration and divine possession are ironical elements, so too is the prayer. They

are part of the didactic method Socrates uses with Phaedrus, but which Plato also uses to compel the reader to consider what is suggested by the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus. In that sense, one of the main aims of the prayer is *to put the reader to the test* (see Gaiser 1990, 71; Stavru 2011, 271). For passing the test, the reader should reach the conclusion that in making his prayer Socrates is asking to be a philosopher, a type developed during the whole dialogue and explicitly characterized immediately before the prayer. At 278b2–4 Socrates prays to become a philosopher, viz. a dialectician (among others, the following scholars defend this claim: Jackson 1971, 29; Theodorakópoulos 1971, 383; Griswold 1986, 228; Gaiser 1990; Motte 1992, 322–323; Stavru 2011; Lavilla de Lera 2014, 382–392) and the prayer to Pan would do the same, although in a cryptic way.¹⁸ In both passages the verb used is εὔχομαι (278b3, 279b6), so despite the different form in which both requests are presented, Plato offers the clues necessary for connecting both passages. More importantly, at the end of the palinode Socrates calls upon the god Eros to turn Lysias to philosophy (257a3–b7). In his reply, Phaedrus uses a compound form of the verb εὔχομαι, namely συνεύχομαι (257b7), thereby joining Socrates in his prayer. In this way, by these three prayers Socrates asks for the same and Phaedrus immediately joins them all (257b7, 277b5–6, 279c6).

If this reading is right, it would mean that the prayer is not serious at all; it is not a real request (as is claimed in Dillon 2016, 7–8). Socrates does not ask the *local gods* for a gift (*pace* Gaiser 1990, 59). On the contrary, by means of the prayer he expresses the urgent need to practice the virtue in which philosophy consists (see Bonazzi 2011, 247 n. 302; and Dillon 2016, 8). In using the traditional form of the prayer, Plato does not want to employ the genre in the usual way, but to transmute it in accordance with his philosophical project.¹⁹ This point is relevant to grasping correctly the nature of the prayer.²⁰ In this dialogue, Socrates depicts philosophy as a mystical initiation, reached somehow as the outcome of a divine inspiration. The reader must be careful, understanding that these elements form part of the Socratic irony in this dialogue and, more generally, of Plato's writing method.²¹ In the same way, the reader must understand that philosophy cannot be equated with a passive attitude; it cannot consist of asking someone for gifts. Differently, several pieces of evidence challenge the reader to realize that philosophy involves an active search for the truth, and is closely related to temperance and reasoning. Philosophy is a virtue, which is necessarily earned through effort and constancy, but never acquired as a gift.²²

Platonic dialogues are not literary pieces meant to be memorized. The *Phaedrus* entitles to observe that the transmission of knowledge does not come about through learning by heart a set of propositions. Phaedrus might have learnt by heart Lysias' speech, but he is far from being a philosopher. Later on, he seems to be persuaded by Socrates – or, at least, he is unable to rebuke him –, but he is still far from becoming a philosopher. Philosophy consists in an active search for the truth; the philosopher must perpetually engage in this search.²³ External propositions – someone else's propositions, but also those that a person might make by himself and then learn by heart²⁴ –, even if correct, cannot in itself constitute knowledge (274c5–275e6). In order to become a philosopher, Phaedrus should start thinking by himself. Platonic philosophy involves a dialogue of the soul with itself (see also *Tht.* 189e6–7 and *Sph.* 263e3–5), an active process directed toward the truth (see Delcomminette 2013, 63–66; and Trabattoni 2016, 1–12). Plato, Socrates, and in general speech (oral or written) cannot by itself transmit knowledge to someone else, since knowledge involves an active attitude; they can merely help, *leading* someone – good rhetoric is described as ψυχαγωγία τις (261a7–8) – to engage the philosophical way of life. Platonic and Socratic words are not always clear, probably, because they have been designed as elements that should not be easily understood; they should prompt the reader or listener to consider what the conversation outlines. The puzzling nature of the prayer must be understood in the light of this method.

3. *Rhetoric, love and the soul*

The previous section argued that there is a strong link between several themes of the dialogue and the prayer. Rhetoric and *eros*, two of the most significant topics of the dialogue, are connected to the final plea as well. The relevance of rhetoric to the *Phaedrus* is beyond doubt. The dialogue starts with a discussion about a speech composed by the logographer Lysias and later on two Socratic speeches compete with it. After the three speeches, the characters engage in conversation about the nature of good and bad speaking and writing (259e1–2), which constitutes the key to judging not merely Lysias' speech (234c6) but any speech whatsoever, whether oral or written. That is to say, the *Phaedrus*' main discussion is about the art of speaking and writing well, namely rhetoric. Rhetoric is described as *a kind of leading of the soul* [ψυχαγωγία τις] (261a7–8) by means of language [*logos*]. However, insofar as Plato equates good rhetoric with philosophy (as is stressed in Cassin 1995, 419; Trabattoni 1995, 178; and Bonazzi 2011, 32), i.e. with dialectical method, it seems entirely appropriate to

maintain that this dialogue's main theme is broader still than rhetoric itself, comprising also *logos* in general (see Kahn 1996, 375; and Lavilla de Lera 2014, 18).

This topic is closely related to the figure of Pan. As most commentators (see, for instance, Rosenmeyer 1968, 37–38; Jackson 1971, 29; Clay 1979, 347–348; Griswold 1986, 228–229; Gaiser 1990, 69; García Peña 2011, 345–346; Capra 2014, 128; and Lavilla de Lera 2014, 387) observe, in the *Cratylus* Pan, son of Hermes, is said to be either *logos* itself or the brother of *logos* (*Cra.* 408d2–3). *Logos* can express everything [τὸ πᾶν] (*Cra.* 408c2), whether true or false (*Cra.* 408c3). In the *Phaedrus* Socrates gives two speeches on love that, according to Socrates' words, seem to be contradictory: the first, similar in content to Lysias' speech, would be *false* and even *impious* (242c3), while the second would be *true* and *divine* (266a7). One should notice that Plato makes a distinction between traditional rhetoric and good rhetoric, the former misleading the soul, the latter leading it toward truth. In the same way, Pan's nature is double and seemingly contradictory: his lower part, related to myths and falsehoods, dwells below, amongst humans, being rough and goatish [τραγικόν], while the upper, associated with truth, is smooth and divine and resides above, amongst the gods (*Cra.* 408c5–8). In any case, it is clear that he remains one thing in spite of being composed of two different parts. Analogously, the *Phaedrus* permits one to understand that the left-handed and right-handed loves (266a5–6), described in the first and second speeches respectively, although contrary at first sight, are actually different manifestations of a single phenomenon (for a defence of this claim, see Lavilla de Lera 2016).

Pan is closely connected with *logos* and rhetoric. Already Ficino, in his commentary on the *Phaedrus*, linked the goatherd with eloquence [*facundia*] (see also Rosenmeyer 1968, 36–37). The dialogue depicts the god as being son of Hermes (263d6) and associated with *logos*. Interestingly, at *Phaedrus* 263d5–6 Socrates attributes his earlier eloquence to Pan, along with the Nymphs. Socrates plays with the concept of *inspiration*, and Pan is one of those gods who can supply eloquence,²⁵ since he is λογοποιός (see Rosenmeyer 1968, 37 n. 1). The *Phaedrus* thus conceives the god in a way reminiscent of the *Cratylus*: he represents *speech* and its ambiguous nature (as claimed in García Peña 2011, 345–346).

Analogously, the importance of *eros* in the dialogue is manifest, being as it is the main topic of its three speeches. Moreover, when Socrates gives his two speeches, he plays the role of the ἐραστής (243e34–6) who wants to persuade his beloved by means of a speech, and Phaedrus plays that of the young²⁶ ἐρώμενος (243e7–8).²⁷ Thus Plato also involves the two characters in a subtle erotic and didactic parody.²⁸

Besides, Plato offers several clues as to how to realize a stronger link between rhetoric and *eros*. Rhetoric is a kind of ability to lead souls, i.e. it is an ability for persuading them. Persuasion is closely related with desire, since it involves the power of affecting the soul's desiderative elements; it should be remembered that Phaedrus is characterized as a φιλόλογος (as noted in Griswold 1987, 29; and Sala 2007, 51–52). Therefore, the topics of *logos* and *eros* are examined in their relation to the soul. That is why both Socrates' first (237d6–9) and second speeches (245c5–258c2, and 253c7–e4) feature images of the human soul. The result is the following: according to Socrates' speeches, the soul is essentially erotic.²⁹ In the famous simile of the winged chariot not only are the black and the white horses erotic, but the charioteer is as well. The appetitive, the spirited, and the rational parts of the soul *desire* – i.e. are erotic – although, depending on their degree of knowledge, they desire different objects. Every soul and every part of the soul desires the Forms by nature, but only those who remember the latter know that the true object of their desire are the Forms and explicitly desire them. The rational part, the only one that has seen the Forms, not only turns the appetitive and spirited parts toward the objects of the intelligible realm but it desires them itself as well.

In addition to expressing the essentially erotic nature of human beings, the palinode explains the unity and multiplicity of *eros*. Desire is always genuinely an impulse directed toward the Forms, but depending on one's degree of knowledge and self-knowledge, one perceives it and directs it in different ways. Plato presents his philosophy – viz. good rhetoric – as the most natural and genuine way of *desiring*, because the erotic impulse is directed toward its natural object (see Lavilla de Lera 2016).

The dialogue reflects on the soul and its erotic nature, and there is an interesting passage in which Socrates claims that he wants to know for himself whether he is a violent and complex beast as Typhon or a simpler creature that participates in some divine nature (230a2–7). The reference to Typhon immediately follows the story of Oreithyia and Boreas (229b4–d2). Both mythical references are noteworthy. The myth of Boreas and Oreithyia narrates how the former falls in love with the latter, and after failing to seduce her, abducts her by force. As in the three speeches of the dialogue, in this myth the reader confronts a story about *eros*. In all these passages, Plato shows some aspect or other of *eros*. One of the problems that the reader has to overcome is that of understanding what humans and desire are. The reference to Typhon is related to this challenge, inasmuch it is one of the passages in which Socrates shows more emphatically his concern with knowing himself (229e4–230a7). To know oneself

means, to a great extent, to understand one's erotic nature and the reason desire reveals itself in different ways.

In this dialogue, the reference to Pan must be understood as a Platonic challenge to the reader: Try to know yourself.³⁰ Pan's connection with *desire* is beyond doubt. The goatherd god is well known for his lewdness, lust, and violent loves (see Borgeaud 1979, 86–87).³¹ Pan's great sexual appetite spurs him to pursue nymphs and young men repeatedly. What is more, he is ready to give satisfaction to himself, when failing of his goal (see Grimal 1990, 325). Pan is usually associated with despised and unfruitful love (see Borgeaud 1979, 181–182). His love is violent and capricious (see Borgeaud 1979, 187). Boreas' love would not be different, since according to the myth he abducts Oreithyia, thereby also causing her death. So, Pan and Boreas exhibit loss of self-control.

In any case, these are not the only possible references to excessive or violent loves. Plato depicts a kind of parody in which Socrates and Phaedrus would be close to having a homosexual relationship. One should notice that the expression *to honour Pan* [τὸν Πᾶνα τιμᾶν] was used to refer to homosexual practices.³² In addition, at 236c7–d3 Phaedrus wants to force Socrates to give a speech, reminding him that they are alone in an empty place – in the territory of Pan, at the edges of civilization – and that he is stronger and younger than he, so that he could *force* him to do whatever he wants. When Socrates at first refuses to give a speech to compete with that of Lysias, it appears that Phaedrus addresses an implicit threat to Socrates, loaded with an erotic touch: Phaedrus clearly menaces him with physical violence so as to compel him to talk; on the other hand, it could be understood that he threatens Socrates with rape if he does not agree to give him pleasure by offering a competing speech.

4. *The prayer*

Having considered the different ways in which Pan and his symbolism is related to the main threads of the dialogue, we may move to an analysis of this prayer. On one level, it is not difficult to grasp Socrates' demands: Most scholars see him as requesting four different things: I) to become beautiful within; II) that what is in his possession outside him may be in friendly accord with what is in his inside; III) to count the wise man as rich; and IV) that his pile of gold be of a size that only the temperate could bear or carry.³³ In addition, we have observed that most commentators point out that this plea asks to become a philosopher. Controversy arises over the interpretation of these demands, since not only is their meaning unclear, but so too is the meaning of *philosophy*. This is why the plea appears as a riddle. In

an effort to solve it, we will analyse each of the requests separately. In so doing, we will offer our own theses and justifications. Most scholars' commentary on the passage is either overly synthetic³⁴ – and then there is no justification of the theses defended — or insufficiently justified.³⁵ For this reason, when engaging in discussion, we will do so particularly with Gaiser (1990), Stavru (2011), and Capra (2014), whose commentaries reflect relatively thorough research.

4.1. *The prayer's first request*

The best clue to understand the plea is offered by Socrates some lines before, at 277e5–278b4, where he expresses the wish to be a philosopher. In the prayer, as well as at 257a3–b7, he expresses the same wish, though in a different form. The first two requests of the plea must be understood in this light. First, one should notice that Plato is playing with the dichotomy *inside–outside* [ἐνδοθεν–ἔξωθεν], used in several ways throughout the dialogue. At 245e5 the dichotomy is used for distinguishing soulless and ensouled bodies. The soul is not moved by an external element; the soul moves itself, has the cause of its motion in itself – so it is immortal – and imparts motion to the body it ensouls. Interestingly, things that have the cause of their movement *inside* themselves are ontologically superior to those which have the cause of their motion *outside* themselves. Later on, at 275a3–4, the dichotomy is used again, although in a different context. By means of the myth of Theuth and Thamus (274c5–275e6), Socrates shows that knowledge cannot be externally contained as a fixed proposition in a text. Knowledge cannot be outside of the soul. Writings can be external marks that help someone to activate the soul's process for acquiring knowledge, but nothing more. Knowledge has to do with a practice [μελέτη] of the soul; this practice is born in the soul itself and by itself. Here too, the dichotomy gives greater importance to what is internal and contains the cause of its own motion.

But these are not the only elements useful for understanding the dichotomy mentioned in the prayer. Although the dialogue starts *inside* the city walls, it is developed *outside* them. In addition, Socrates depicts himself as being inspired by *external* powers, such as the beauty of the spot and the local gods. But he attributes his speeches and myths to Sappho, Anacreon, Stesichorus, or Egyptians too. He suggests being like a vessel [ἀγγεῖον]: by himself he is empty and everything he knows comes from external sources (235c8–d3). The plea to Pan would agree with this Socratic characterization, since it asks an external power for gifts. Our second section offered some hints about this unusual behaviour: it is part of Socrates' didactic

method. Indeed, it is Phaedrus who always is concerned about the opinions of the experts. He is merely a compiler and a reproducer of external messages. So Socrates is imitating his partners' behaviour when he gives primacy to external elements.³⁶ Analogously, Phaedrus does not go in depth in the matters discussed. He does not care about the true nature of things, but merely about appearances. He accordingly shows his praxis to be determined by outer factors like the weather and the time (242a3–5; 279b4–5). Contrarily, Socrates goes far beyond external appearances. As a hint of this attitude, Plato makes Socrates immediately unveil Lysias' text, which Phaedrus kept concealed inside his cloak (228d6–8).

In short, Plato shows throughout the dialogue that the philosopher, viz. Socrates, prefers the elements related with the inside and activity, while the non-philosopher, viz. Phaedrus, cares about external appearances and displays a passive attitude.³⁷ In the prayer, Socrates accordingly gives priority to his inner part. When he asks to become beautiful within, he is requesting a beautiful soul.³⁸ As has been observed by commentators, this is rather vague a statement and fails to elucidate the prayer. That is why, in contrast with previous analysis, this article seeks to interpret what it means to have a beautiful soul. At 249d4–250c6 Socrates differentiates earthly beauty and true beauty; true beauty refers to either the Form of beauty or the beauty of the Forms. Every human has somehow seen the Forms (249b5–6) and, although humans do not normally remember them appropriately, there is some trace of them printed in their souls. But if every human shares this condition, it would make no sense to ask for something already printed within the soul. So what is Socrates asking for? The answer lies in the palinode. The soul is most beautiful when its parts are organized according to their natural functions. Socrates' second speech uses a simile in order to explain the nature of the human soul. The soul is like a winged chariot composed by a charioteer (the rational part), a white horse (the spirited part), and a black horse (the appetitive part).³⁹ Every single part *desires*, but, according to its nature, each desires different objects.⁴⁰ This jeopardizes the soul's unity, since each part can pursue different objects. Socrates makes clear, however, that the souls' natural hierarchy is not arbitrary. Every part has a specific role by nature, even if sometimes this hierarchy is inverted. The charioteer is the only one who knows what is best for the ensemble of the chariot – since he is the only who has seen the truth (247c7–8; 248a2–3) – and so it is his responsibility to subjugate⁴¹ the other parts and direct them toward what is best for the ensemble. That is to say, the variegated erotic unity of the soul must be led by its rational part, which although rational, is essentially erotic, since it is desire for the Forms. When a soul is ordered in this way, it is harmonious and beautiful. This organization is the

most natural, yet it is rare amongst humans; often it is the white horse or, even worse, the black horse that shows itself to be the stronger and determines the way of behaving of the whole soul. According to Plato's Socrates, when the soul is naturally disposed, it is beautiful; when it is unnaturally disposed, it is not beautiful.

In the palinode, Socrates clearly states that the soul's natural nourishment are the Forms (247d1–3), which were seen only by the charioteer (247c7–8; 248a2–3). He also explains why very few people are concerned about the Forms in the world: When souls fall to earth they lose their wings and are filled with forgetfulness (248c5–d1). In that situation, souls stop being nourished by the Forms and feed on opinion (248b5). In consequence of their forgetfulness, souls generally ignore that the reality perceived by body-senses is merely apparent compared with the true reality. In the same way, souls are not normally aware that earthly beauty perceived by eyes is only a pale reflection of the authentic beauty (250c8–e1). That is why, although the soul desires the Forms by nature, it forgets that they exist, believing that true beauty dwells on the earth. Certain souls believe that beauty consists in attractive bodies; certain others that it lies in persuasive speeches; some others are of the opinion that it involves fame and honour. As a result, the soul's desire is genuinely a wish for the Forms, but because of the precarious epistemological situation of embodied humans, it can be manifested in multiple ways. The only exception is the philosopher, whose desire is not directed to the changing objects of the sensitive world, but to the Forms. The soul is most beautiful when it pursues its natural object, i.e. the Forms. Socrates expresses these considerations about the soul in the palinode, where he offers a ranking of different kinds of human life (248c8–e2). The ranking depends on the soul's *erotic* disposition, which varies according to its epistemic condition. The philosopher is placed at the top of the ranking. His soul is the most beautiful, since its *erotic* disposition is the most natural and its structure the most harmonious.

Thus Socrates explains why beauty and *eros*, each of them being one by nature, reveal themselves in multiple ways. He distinguishes the different manifestations of desire, classifies them, and shows that, although being originally a positive *impetus*, desire can become an insane affection. According to the palinode, the philosopher's *eros* is according to nature and fully beneficial. However, there are damaging forms of desiring, such as those described by Lysias' and Socrates' first speeches, but also by the palinode (250e1–251a1). Even though human desire is one by nature, it can reveal itself in multiple ways, some of which are positive and some negative. The various manifestations of *eros* are closely related to the different dispositions adopted by the soul. When the charioteer rules the full soul, it is maximally

beautiful; it is just the opposite when the charioteer is led by one of the horses. In that situation, the soul is not so beautiful; even more, in some cases it could be said that it is ugly and wretched, especially if the black horse takes over, and the desire turns into a damaging *impetus* for the soul.

For this reason, this paper maintains that the key to understanding the first request can be found in the dialogue, and especially in the palinode: the first request of the prayer would be pointing out the necessity of displaying the soul in the most harmonious way. To be beautiful within would mean being a philosopher. This reading is no longer vague: according to the palinode, the soul is most beautiful when its rational part governs it. That is to say, the soul is most harmonious when the rational desire leads the variegated desires that are found in the human being. Plato in this way shows the necessity of combining *eros* and *logos* in the best way. The request seems to be linked with Pan's nature, who, being twofold, can be rough and goatish but smooth and divine too. Analogously, Socrates speaks about a left-handed and right-handed love (266a5–6): the former is referred to in his first speech, but also in Lysias', and the latter is depicted in the palinode by the characterization of the philosophical desire.⁴² Human love can be as violent and capricious as Panic and Typhonic desire, but also constant and fully beneficial. The human's interior is rough and goatish when it desires in a way contrary to nature, but it is beautiful and divine when directed toward the divine.

4.2. *The prayer's second request*

In requesting that what he possesses outside him is in *friendly accord* [φιλία] with what is inside, Socrates is recalling the traditional Greek idea of *καλοκάγαθία*, which comprised both physical beauty and virtue. Stavru (2011, 282–283) analyses the way in which Plato is ironically transforming the idea. The second request recalls the handsome Alcibiades' words in the *Symposium* and, more generally, Socrates' ugly appearance, similar to that of satyrs and silenī⁴³ (*Smp.* 215a6–215b6). Many commentators (e.g. Clay 1979, 350; Stavru 2011, 281) read this passage of the *Phaedrus* in connection with silenī's statues described in the *Symposium*. When these statues were opened in the middle [διχάδε διοιχθέντες], gods' statuettes appeared within [ἔνδοθεν] them (*Smp.* 215a6–215b3). The alliteration διχάδε διοιχθέντες strengthens the idea that both Socrates and silenī were constituted by two different parts (as pointed out in Stavru 2011, 281). On the one hand, there is their external appearance that can be seen at first sight; on the other, their true nature, which can only be seen after having opened them. This recalls the earlier mentioned topic of the difference between

appearance and reality. Similar to Pan, *eros*, *logos*, and rhetoric, the statues and Socrates have a twofold nature. This is noteworthy since according to the *Phaedrus*, the dialectician's main trait is being able to grasp the unity underlying that which is shown in multiple ways, as well as understanding the variety in which a single reality can appear (265c8–266c8).⁴⁴ Contrary to the traditional idea of *καλοκάγαθία*, Plato suggests that there is no strong connection between virtue and physical beauty, since physical beauty can be merely apparent.

According to Alcibiades' comparison, although Socrates does not look beautiful, in *opening him up* and seeing his interior, one realizes that there is something divine within him. This physical appearance suggests that the second request of the prayer is ironic. It stresses the Platonic moral transformation. According to Plato, being beautiful means to have *eros* led by a good *logos*.⁴⁵ This is indeed Socrates' case; but he is not physically beautiful, so what does he mean when he asks for a kind of harmony between his inside and outside? As a pattern, the dialogue favours the inside and the concealed nature of reality over external appearances. In addition, it does not seem plausible that Socrates expects some change in his physique. So, Socrates is ironic when referring to physical beauty. He privileges the soul over the body⁴⁶ and the prayer does not subvert this point. He is not wishing to become handsome. Then, what is he asking for?

Solving this riddle requires understanding the full dialogue. As has been argued above, a soul's beauty would consist in the harmonious display of its parts. Every soul has the engine of its motion within itself. That is to say, every soul is essentially erotic and tends toward beauty and pleasure. However, this tendency can be good or bad depending on its direction. It is good, and thus beautiful, when the rational part takes the lead and directs the soul's erotic multiplicity toward authentic reality. This is exactly the soul structure a philosopher has. With this soul-structure, the philosopher engages in dialectic, which seeks knowledge by means of *logos*. Note that this *logos* is no outsider but comes from the soul itself; it consists of a dialogue of the soul with itself. That is to say, although Socrates claimed throughout the whole dialogue to be determined by external powers and speeches, actually he is determined by the *logos* carried within himself and by himself. On the contrary, Phaedrus *moves* from one opinion to another depending on the persuasiveness of *alien* speeches, but it does not seem that he manages to think for himself. In this sense, his relationship with *logos* is external; external factors determine his movement.

This is particularly noteworthy if one remembers that one of the main topics of the dialogue is rhetoric. The dialogue shows the reader the way in which Phaedrus is affected –

viz. led – by *logos*. Socrates uses a specific method – in this case a mimetic parody – and some concrete kind of *logoi* in order to help his partner. He wants Phaedrus to become beautiful within. Socrates' attempt to transform Phaedrus into a lover of Forms is an example of *good rhetoric*. However, Socrates' effort cannot be successful if Phaedrus himself does not understand what is at stake. Socrates can persuade him about some specific theses, but in order to become a philosopher he has to actively engage in dialectic, which is a dialogue of the soul with itself. In other words, in order to become a philosopher he would need to get rid of his passive attitude relative to *logos*. Socrates' method – analogous to Plato's method in regard to the reader – has a clear goal: favouring by *logoi* the active search of his discursive partner.

Should this be true, Socratic *logos*, even if external, would try to be beneficial or *friendly* with the soul at which it is directed. An extrinsic *logos* can never be the most important good for someone. Nevertheless, an alien *logos*, for instance the full dialogue Socrates has with Phaedrus, can be fully beneficial if it drives the inner dialogue. In any case, not every external *logos* is friendly toward the soul to which it is addressed. For instance, although he tries to show the opposite,⁴⁷ Lysias' non-lover's speech is not friendly toward the sought-after youth to whom it is directed. Indeed, the non-lover tries to persuade his beloved in order to obtain his favour. Moreover, Lysias' speech does not have a good impact on Phaedrus' soul, since it does not help him lead it to its natural goal; what is more, the speech guides Phaedrus' desire to a mistaken goal. That is why there are two kinds of rhetoric, a good one, philosophy, and a bad one, traditional rhetoric; the former attempts to be friendly with the soul at which it is directed, while the latter does not. Even though they have gone outside it for a while, Socrates and Phaedrus inhabit the city, the Athens of multiple speeches. The citizen cannot be isolated from this reality. External speeches are a continuum in the life of a citizen. Some of them affect the soul in a good way, and thus one could say that they are friendly; those speeches do not only persuade the soul, they give it a proper education. On the contrary, some others have a damaging effect on the structure of the soul, perverting it or causing the atrophy of its natural capacity to desire the objects of knowledge. In this sense, the comprehensive approach permits to understand the second request of the prayer in a concrete sense as well: it demands that the external *logoi* affecting someone be friendly with his interior.

One should observe that speech by itself is neither damaging nor helpful. Socrates' words try to restore harmony in Phaedrus' soul, but they do not succeed. On the contrary, although Lysias' speech does not intend to be friendly in the way just explained, when Socrates is

affected by it, he manages to make something helpful out of it. By his two speeches Socrates shows that Lysias' *logos* is not entirely misleading, but only partially so. It is wrong to believe that *eros* is demarcated by Lysias' speech or by the first Socratic speech. Both speeches depict the so-called left-handed *eros*, i.e. merely one of the ways in which *eros* can be manifested. In the same way, it would be wrong to believe that *eros* is delimited by the philosophical love described in the palinode and called right-handed *eros*. By means of his two speeches, Socrates tries to compel Phaedrus to understand in what sense Lysias' speech was wrong, but also in what sense it could be helpful for considering its true nature. When Socrates is affected by Lysias' speech, his soul does not lose its harmony; on the contrary, he engages in an active research into *eros*. One could thus say that Lysias' speech is friendly with Socrates, but only because his interior is beautiful enough to go beyond Lysias' thesis. *Logos* is an ambiguous reality that, as a φάρμακον,⁴⁸ can save or kill.

This conforms to Socrates' remarks on writing. In the myth of Theuth and Thamus, Socrates states that the products of writing can only be *external* marks that by themselves favour not memory [μνήμη], but reminding [ὑπόμνησις]; by itself, what has been written down does not have the capacity of teaching. Writings thus do not actually make their users wiser, but merely confer on them the *appearance* of being wise. In the beginning of the dialogue Plato lets the reader know that Phaedrus has learned by heart Lysias' speech, which does not give him any wisdom.⁴⁹ Someone who hears Phaedrus uttering the full speech of Lysias without reading it might think that he knows a lot about love. However, Phaedrus does not know anything essential, as his *logos* is not an active and internal process of the soul with itself, but only an alien mark [ἀλλότριος τύπος]. Relying on these kinds of external marks can cause not only forgetfulness [λήθη] (regarding the topic discussed) but, because of the negligence in the practice [ἀμελετησία], also the atrophy of the soul's internal potentiality for developing a dialogue within itself. Indeed, this is the most dangerous damage related to using letters. Plato, then, is asserting that knowledge [μάθημα] involves an internal activity, the dialogue that the soul carries out within itself. It is always necessary to be cautious with external marks, such as written texts. The key to learning is not learning a text or a speech by heart but engaging in dialectic. For doing so, it is necessary to understand what the soul is and what its relation with *logos* is. Stated differently, the problem is related to the self-knowledge referred to by Socrates in the passage of Typhon. Socrates wants to know himself, since he is not satisfied solely with the appearance of things. He is aware that within himself there is a

big potentiality, i.e. *eros*, that can be either as immoderate as Typhon or temperate and fully beneficial.

For this reason, the followers of the Tübingen-Milan school are right to point out that in the prayer Plato is summing up the issue of writing and showing that what has been written down cannot constitute true knowledge (e.g. Szlezák 1989; Gaiser 1990; Reale 1990). However, they are wrong in arguing that Plato is merely defending oral communication over written. Phaedrus would not become wiser by learning Socrates' speeches by heart, even though they are oral. Good *logoi*, which can be oral or written, prompt dialectic. But external *logoi* have no guarantee of being successful, as the most important thing is the attitude of the soul affected by them. In this sense, Lysias' text does not impel Phaedrus to practice dialectic, nor have Socrates' oral speeches been more successful. Although Socrates' *logoi* try to be friendly with Phaedrus, if he does not receive them in a critical way, they will not confer any knowledge on him. For his part, the reader of the account must understand that he himself is in an analogous situation. He receives the Platonic dialogue as an alien mark, which intends to be friendly. If the reader learns the dialogue by heart or does not go beyond its appearance, it will not be helpful to his soul. It is clear that by means of spoken speeches it is easier to try to lead a conversational partner to join philosophy, but that is all. So, by the second request, Socrates would be stressing the importance of being affected by friendly *logoi*. However, he clearly states that the most relevant are not the *logoi* we receive from outside, but the inner dialogue born in our soul. That is why at 274c1–3 Socrates suggests that it is not sensible to trust people's opinions – even if those people are wise – when one searches for the truth by oneself.⁵⁰

The difference between a good rhetorician⁵¹ – a philosopher – and a bad rhetorician – a traditional rhetorician – is analogous to that between the earnest farmer and the person who sows his seeds in some garden of Adonis (275c5–277b3). The first seriously makes use of the science of farming, selecting his best seeds, searching for the best soil and taking care of the growing process over a period of eight months, in order to bear fruits; the second completes a fast process in summer time, with the mere hope of watching the seeds blossom into a beautiful mature plant within eight days and to be amused during the Adonia festival. As the kind of education offered by traditional rhetoric – for instance, Phaedrus learns by heart in a very short period a text written by a logographer –, the gardens of Adonis are fast-growing but deprived of nutritious properties. On the contrary, good rhetoric involves a slow and difficult process,⁵² although its fruits should be the best and most nutritive. The fruits of the gardens of

Adonis supply a mere appearance; in the same way, the lessons offered by traditional rhetoric give no knowledge because they do not promote the active research of the soul within itself. Good rhetoric should be concerned with the fruits of one's efforts. That is why the philosopher not only cares about the seeds – i.e. speeches – but also about the soil – i.e. the soul – in which he sows them. Oral communication is better, because it can be shaped according to the auditor in each case, while written texts are fixed. In any case, although both are external marks that can contribute to education,⁵³ the didactic process will only come about if the soul engages in an active research. So, it does not seem warranted to hold that the first and the second requests of the prayer refer to the so-called *esoteric* and *exoteric* lessons of Plato and his Academy (as stressed in Capra 2014, 125; *pace* Rosenmeyer 1968, and Gaiser 1990). Any kind of lesson and more generally any kind of *logos* coming from outside is merely an alien mark. That is why, although Plato judges the spoken word a better tool to lead souls toward philosophy, he does not reject writing. What is more, he spent a big part of his life preparing texts that prompt readers to engage in *philosophy*.

The second request of the prayer, then, would ask external elements – especially speeches – to have a friendly rapport with the soul's structure. That is to say, after having considered that speeches can be good or bad and that rhetoric can also be beneficial or damaging, Socrates asks for good speeches, for *logoi* that can help him in his active search for truth. Asking for this is not different from asking for speeches that help him to reinforce – or to achieve – the harmonious ordering within his soul. Socrates would hereby be stressing the relevance of philosophical παιδεία, which attempts to direct the soul's impulses toward the upper part of Pan and avoids granting too much influence to the drives associated with the lower part of the goatherd god. In any case, although the relevance of the *psychagogic* processes is acknowledged by its second request, the prayer gives privilege to the soul's own activity. Indeed, when a soul is harmonious and strong as the one of Socrates, it can transform a bad speech into a stimulus to engage in dialectic, as the *Phaedrus* shows by Socrates' attempt with Lysias' text.

Once again, the key lies in the interior. It is the inner capacity to judge the appropriateness of the speeches that determines the beauty of the soul. Phaedrus must consider by himself the value of the different speeches. He is always ready to promote and to hear speeches. However, his only criterion by which to judge them seems to be their rhetorical appearance. He is concerned only about the quantity of speeches⁵⁴ and about their stylistic ornament. By contrast, Socrates cares about their quality and their appropriateness. Socrates is not

concerned about sowing as many seeds as he can in as many different soils as he finds. He cares about true education and not for mere persuasion. That is to say, he is concerned about the *seriousness* of speeches in the same way as cities should care about the *seriousness* of farming. For him the amusement of promoting speeches without a criterion and the amusement of the gardens of Adonis should be put aside, in order to engage in speeches, like agriculture, in a *serious* way.

Interestingly, the σπουδή–παιδιά [seriousness–play] dichotomy is important in the dialogue. It is used in several key texts in which Socrates refers to the main traits of the philosopher. Very close to the prayer to Pan, at 277e5–278, it is used to describe the way in which the philosopher is related to speeches. The philosopher is first of all concerned about the inner speeches, those written in the soul (278a3), which deserve the most serious attention. The outer speeches are also appreciated – although the inner speeches are the most important – but only when they can teach, i.e. promote the inner dialogue that seeks the truth. On the contrary, he considers as a futile *amusement* the outer speeches that persuade without teaching. That is to say, if Phaedrus wants to become philosopher, he needs to have a serious criterion to distinguish between the serious and the childish speeches. In fact, the full conversation of the characters aims to find a criterion for judging *logoi*. The way to this is indicated by Socrates at 265d3–266c1. The criterion lies in the *dialectical* method. It is noteworthy that Socrates claims that dialectic is the only thing that was more than a mere amusement throughout the full conversation (265c8). That is the criterion Phaedrus needs for making his interior beautiful, which represents the most serious concern for every single citizen. Only with that criterion would he be able to engage with texts like Lysias’ speech in an appropriate way. In the same way, only with that criterion will the Platonic reader be able to grasp the extent to which the prayer to Pan is a mere amusement and the extent to which it is serious.

If this is so, for understanding the prayer one should engage in dialectic. This has also been pointed out by some authors (this includes Theodorakópoulos 1971; and Jackson 1971), but without solidly justifying it or clarifying the sense in which it is so. The present reading is novel insofar as it makes clear that dialectic is the key to having a beautiful interior but also to adopting an attitude in which external speeches can be friendly in regard to the soul. In this respect it is possible to grasp clearly the extent to which the present reading differs from Stavru’s (2011), which is one of the best and more exhaustive contributions to elucidating the ironic nature of the prayer. The Italian scholar reads the inside–outside dichotomy as

principally reflecting the physical appearance–virtue dichotomy. According to Stavru, there is no real opposition between Socrates’ inside and his outside: his lustful and ugly appearance corresponds well to his (too) intense desire. But Socrates restrains his *eros* by *logos*, so that the philosophical virtue he asks for in the prayer would consist in this. Philosophy has to do with temperance. Even if he looks ugly and his speeches seem excessive, when one manages to open Socrates and his speeches, virtue – gold – is found in their inside, just as it happens with the sileni’s statues previously mentioned. The analysis is detailed and intriguing, but if our claims are right, the inside–outside dichotomy is not to be understood in this way. A beautiful inside, described in the palinode, is not a restrained desire, but rational – *logistikon* – desire. In addition, the beautiful inside involves an inner *dia-logos* of the soul with itself, whereby it stands in contrast to the external speeches.

4.3. *The prayer’s third and fourth requests*

The prayer’s last two demands are no less cryptic. The first two requests mention soul and body not without some irony, and the last two come to grips with the idea of material goods or properties. The prayer recalls the tripartite gradation offered at 239a2–240a8 and 241c3–5, where psychic and intellectual goods are rated higher than physical properties, and physical properties higher than material possessions. Socrates’ third request is that he counts the wise [ὁ σοφός] as rich. Reading this literally would be suitable, since it advocates something similar to the ranking of goods previously introduced (239a2–240a8; 241c3–5). According to a literal interpretation, true richness would not rest in material goods, but in the intellectual and psychic virtues of the wise. Yet this interpretation is not the only one possible.

In this dialogue the terms “wise” [σοφός] and “wisdom” [σοφία] are frequently used ironically (see the analysis of Stavru 2011, 276). This should come as no surprise, since many Platonic passages show that the highest goal that a human can achieve is not wisdom, but philosophy. Human beings cannot possess an omniscient and certain knowledge (as argued in Trabattoni 2016, 1–12 and 31–41). Objects of true knowledge are transcendent, so that one cannot grasp them while incarnated in a body. The best human condition is always set in an intermediate position between the wise, who knows everything with certainty, and the ignorant, who neither knows anything nor cares to (278d2–6; see also *Smp.* 203c6–204a7). This is why *eros* is so important, namely as the inner impulse that perpetually leads the philosopher to attempt to be wise, although, well aware of his limits, he knows that he can never reach that goal. In contrast to Plato, some other thinkers claimed to be wise. That is why

Plato makes Socrates use the term “wise” ironically in several passages, intending to separate his philosophy from other educational proposals. For instance, at 275b7 Socrates uses the term σοφός ironically when applying it to Phaedrus and the modern sophisticated persons like him; so too, at 229c6 he applies it to those rationalist interpreters of ancient myths who do not care about self-knowledge, but only about a rustic kind of wisdom (229e3); similarly, at 236b7 Socrates refers to Lysias’ wisdom. Indeed, Socrates uses the term several times to refer to traditional rhetoricians.⁵⁵

Consequently, it seems likely that Plato is ironically distinguishing the practice of the sophists from that of the Academy, indicating that a philosophical teacher never seeks money, while the sophist always does. This means that being wise and having a beautiful interior cannot be equivalent (*pace* Gaiser 1990, 37–40). This being so, Plato may be expressing in a concealed way that sophists are materially rich because they mainly care for possessions, whereas philosophers do not care about them.⁵⁶ Such a reading seems to be corroborated by the final request of the prayer, in which Socrates wishes gold [χρυσός] to be of an amount only a temperate man [σώφρων] can bear or carry. It is noteworthy that in this last sentence he does not speak about the wise, but about the temperate. If the word “wise” really refers to rhetoricians, there is little doubt that they could carry or bear with them a great amount of gold, since instead of philosophical temperance they show πλεονεξία [excess]. For their part, philosophers, to whom this paper will apply the term σώφρων, have a moderate desire and care not for gold and possessions.⁵⁷ As Stavru (2011, 275) states, the temperate man defines himself as one deprived of any riches, in contrast to sophists, who were by definition lovers of money [φιλοχρήματοι]. So, we must ask why Plato introduces the term χρυσός in the plea.

Sala (2007, 50) and Capra (2014, 126), among others, point out that this is not the first time that the term χρυσός is used in the dialogue. This is an interesting fact, since the word could be used ironically in the prayer, by way of reference to its previous uses. Let us refer to the previous uses, in order to point out that it is Phaedrus and not Socrates who may care about gold. The term appears five times in all. Phaedrus uses it first. In the very beginning of the dialogue, when Socrates has not yet unveiled the text that Phaedrus carries under his cloak, the latter pretends to be modest when the former asks him to reproduce Lysias’ speech. Phaedrus claims that he would like to be able to, even more than he would like to get a great amount of gold (228a3–4). Even if it seems that Phaedrus gives priority to eloquence and beauty over wealth (as is argued in Yunis 2011, 88–89), he and Socrates are not “in fundamental alignment” (*pace* Yunis 2011, 88–89), since the latter does not care for

possessions. Although he has some other priorities such as speeches (as stressed in Griswold 1986, 228), Phaedrus does not claim that he does not wish to come into a fortune. Later on, immediately after having read Lysias' speech, Phaedrus is so eager to hear a competing speech that he promises Socrates that if he utters a new speech, not only will he set up in Delphi a gold life-sized statue of himself, but also one of Socrates (235d9–e1). Once again, he shows avidity for hearing and promoting speeches, but he takes wealth into account as well. After having heard his interlocutor refer to gold twice, the philosopher's reply is not deprived of irony. He calls his partner "truly golden" (236e2). Socrates' reply seems to suggest that Phaedrus fails to understand that gold has no value for him. Finally, the last use of the term before the prayer, occurring as it does in Socrates' first speech (240a2), is not as meaningful. In any case, it is interesting to note that gold is important in some erotic relationships – as in those narrated by Lysias and Socrates' first speech –, but not in the philosophical relationships described in the palinode. That is why in contrast to the palinode, Lysias' speech has a materialistic tendency, and the first Socratic speech refers to gold. In sum, the information given by these four passages is useful for understanding the prayer.

Phaedrus might prefer intellectual pleasures over material pleasures (258e1–5). Yet, he does not understand that the philosopher does not care for having a great amount of gold. Nor does he understand that Socrates is not concerned about speeches themselves, but about the truth and authentic reality. Speeches and dialogue are the means for pursuing these goals. The pleasure sought by the philosopher consists in that activity. In the prayer, as throughout the dialogue, Plato wants to distinguish clearly philosophy from other intellectual tendencies, which might look like it (see *Ar. Nu*, 181 ff., where Socrates is represented in *The Thinkery* as one more of the sophists)⁵⁸ or might even be named by some with the same term,⁵⁹ but are substantially different. If so, the last two requests set apart the wise sophist and the temperate philosopher. The former is concerned with gold, while the second would not care about bearing or carrying any amount of gold.⁶⁰ Thus the passage would have at least two possible readings. We contend that the concealed reading just presented is crucial, but the literal one would be neither contrary to nor incompatible with it: Socrates would be claiming that what the philosopher truly appreciates is wisdom, and that he accords only moderate importance to gold and other material goods. In this case, wealth would be a metaphor for wisdom.⁶¹ This reading is possible too, but it should be kept in mind that the philosopher desires wisdom as a merely idealistic aspiration. He is well aware that he will never achieve it during his life, since only gods can be truly wise.

If these considerations are on target, an attentive reading allows one to defend a concealed reading. However, this paper took for granted that it is possible to equate the σώφρων of the prayer with the philosopher. Someone might reproach us by claiming that σώφρων and σωφροσύνη are associated in this dialogue with the logographers' non-lover and the concealed lover in Socrates' first speech. Both, and especially Lysias' speech, equate love with insanity [μανία] and ὕβρις, to contrast it with the cold utilitarian reasoning of the temperate man, which is likened with good sense. Even if that rebuke is right, it does not demolish our argument. In the same way as there is a left-handed and a right-handed love, and in the same way as there is an upper and a lower Pan, the dialogue exhibits a clear distinction between the cold utilitarian calculation of benefits called temperance [σωφροσύνη], which is not at all philosophical, and philosophical temperance [σωφροσύνη]. The final part of the palinode, which depicts a paradigmatic relationship between philosophers, clearly shows that philosophical desire is as strong as rigid, since it does not pursue other goals than those appropriate by nature. Philosophical temperance means the charioteer ruling over the horses. Alcibiades' words in the *Symposium* express the very same, stressing that Socrates never yields to the requests of the handsome youngsters he is acquainted with. The virtue of the philosopher consists in directing his desire according to *logos* (see Stavru 2011, 282), seeking only the Forms. This virtue is nothing other than σωφροσύνη (as is argued in Stavru 2011, 282) and thus the philosopher is essentially a temperate man [σώφρων] (see Lavilla de Lera 2016, 140–145). In this sense, Socrates yields neither to the requests of his young partners nor to the temptations of other kinds of goods, such as good reputation or gold. In the same way as left-handed and right-handed love are different manifestations of a single phenomenon, there are two kinds of σωφροσύνη and two kinds of σώφρων: on the one hand, there is the one described in the first two speeches of the dialogue; on the other, the one described in the palinode. Certainly, when Plato applies the term σώφρων to the philosopher in the prayer, he refers to the σωφροσύνη described in the palinode.

If one is attentive to the passages where the term μέτριος and related terms are used, the same can be observed. At 236a7, Phaedrus uses this term to express that Socrates' words are reasonable when he says that it is not possible to say different things from those claimed by Lysias. Similarly, at 267b5 the term is used as one of the criteria with which Prodicus judges the greatness of a speech: a speech must be of moderate length. In a totally different way, at 265c1 and 279c4 it is used to express the temperate nature of the palinode and the prayer respectively. Analogously, the term is used at 277b3 and 278b7 in reference, respectively, to

the temperate nature of the philosophical demonstration and to the temperance of the philosopher toward speeches. It is clear that the way in which moderation [μετριότης] is considered by the philosopher – viz. Socrates – and both the sophist – viz. Prodicus – and the one influenced by sophistry – viz. Phaedrus – is significantly different.

The first two requests, then, point out dialectic as the key trait of the philosopher, while the last two requests stress that in the same way as philosophical *eros* and sophistic *eros* seek different objectives, philosophical and sophistic moderation are substantially different. Thus, the last two requests of the prayer sum up some of the main topics of the dialogue, indicating Plato's attempt to distinguish his philosophy from other intellectual movements. Moreover, he uses the same writing method as in the full dialogue: instead of transmitting any straight message that the reader must learn by heart, he writes it in such a way that the reader is compelled to go beyond the appearances in order to find the message Plato wants to sow in his soul. Even if the message sown is important, its desired outcome, namely the subsequent research consisting in going beyond the merely apparent, is even more crucial. In the same way as the reader must understand by himself the unity underlying several topics in the dialogue, he must understand the function of the prayer within the *Phaedrus* as a constitutive part of it. The dialectician should be able to correctly grasp the parts and the whole [τὸ πᾶν].

5. Conclusion

Apart from offering the main traits of the philosophical way of life, the *Phaedrus* has been written in such a way as to exhort the reader to engage actively in philosophy. It is impossible to understand this dialogue fully without a process of active reading in which one carries on a dialogue within oneself. The dialogue is a friendly *external* attempt, but its result depends on the inner qualities of the reader. The prayer to Pan must be understood in the terms of this writing method, which is why it is puzzling to so many. To some extent, it serves to measure the reader's activity. After the whole conversation, one should be able to penetrate its cryptic appearance and grasp its somehow concealed nature. In a way corresponding to the position of the reader, the prayer is used to analyse Phaedrus' movement – activity – during his talk with Socrates. In Phaedrus' case, the result is not fruitful: despite the pains taken by Socrates, he has not materially changed his attitude. If the prayer's request is to become a philosopher, there is little doubt about the prayer's ironic character, which is why the prayer cannot be an expression of hope (*pace* Griswold 1986, 226). Becoming a philosopher means engaging in an active process that cannot be attained as a gift received from outside; it is a virtue earned with

effort. Not only does Phaedrus fail to understand that Socrates is expressing this idea about the philosophical way of life in his prayer, he is incapable of adding something of his own: he asks that Socrates make the prayer on his behalf as well (279c6). In this way, the outer character of the prayer – asking someone else for gifts – becomes even more extrinsic to Phaedrus. It is Socrates who has to ask the gods on behalf of Phaedrus to grant him their gifts. Phaedrus is unable to speak for himself, and his last words, “friends have all things in common,” a Pythagorean proverb (see Diogenes Laertius 8.10), indicate the same, in that he uses alien words. This is possibly why Socrates assigns him the role of herald at the end of the dialogue (278b7–d1; 278e4). In short, whether or not he has changed his thinking – in case this can be accomplished by moving from modern and sophisticated slogans to a Pythagorean motto –, Phaedrus remains fixed in the same fundamental position.

The palinode introduces the idea that the soul has its own principle of movement. This is a crucial point, since *eros* is the principle of this motion. *Eros* is the driving principle shared by every living thing. But this principle can be directed in different ways. The lustful directs it to the body; modern and sophisticated Phaedrus to external speeches; some wise sophists to gold; and temperate philosophers to the Forms. It is the greater or lesser activity of the rational part of the soul that determines the way in which *eros* is manifested in someone. *Logos* is therefore the element that plays the decisive role in orientating *eros*. Moreover, Plato believes that the most genuine and natural type of psychic desire is displayed when it is directed toward the Forms. When it directs its desire in this way, the latter neither ceases nor decreases. While other kinds of love are changing and cease when they reach the desired object, the philosopher’s desire is constant; it never changes and can never be fulfilled (see Ferrari 1987, 155–159). Not only is this kind of love the most natural, but the one that best preserves the driving principle of the soul, preventing it from a kind of atrophy. According to this and other criteria, Plato distinguishes and evaluates the different kinds of love, setting apart philosophy – viz. right-handed love – from all other erotic dispositions and intellectual disciplines.

In a dramatic dialogue set at noon, Plato locates the human in Pan’s centre. This god has a twofold nature: his upper part is divine,⁶² while his lower part is bestial, *theriomorph*. The human would be an erotic force in the middle of those realms, the divine and the bestial. If he is temperate and pursues the Forms, he will be prone to lead himself to the divine, in the attitude most favourable to the pursuit of ὁμοίωσις θεῶν. Humans cannot be *wise*, but they can be philosophers. If he does not, however, he will not develop his potential to the fullest and, in

the worst cases he will act like a four-footed animal (250e4). The human is neither a god nor a beast, but an intermediate being. But he harbours the impulse – *eros* – that can direct himself toward either Pan’s upper or his lower part. In other words, depending on his knowledge and his way of driving *eros*, the human can be either a simple and tamed creature that shares some divine nature or a complex and violent beast (230a1–b7).

With clear irony, the prayer not only contrasts the philosopher’s σωφροσύνη with the love of money of putatively wise sophists; it also contrasts the temperate *eros* of the philosopher with the violent impulses of Boreas, Typhon, and Pan himself. Expressed differently, the prayer touches on the topic of temperance, or the absence of temperance in relation to *eros* (see Griswold 1986, 228–229). Like Pan, humans are closely connected to *eros* and *logos*. Although *eros* is essentially one by nature, it can be manifested in multiple ways, according to the *logos* related to it. Certain *logoi*, those which correspond to Pan’s upper part and are friendly, are linked with the truth, while some others, those related with his lower part, are goatish and connected to falsehood. Humans can advance toward either the upper or the lower part of Pan. Plato’s proposal is clear: turn your back on Pan’s tragic side and direct yourself toward his truthful side, i.e. be a philosopher.

Notes

¹ Every unspecified *Stephanus* reference is to the *Phaedrus*.

² Rosenmeyer (1962) and Motte (1963) are two noteworthy exceptions, antedating as they do the beginning of a new style of interpretation initiated by Leo Strauss, Jacob Klein, and Stanley Rosen. The two mainly focus on philological questions, however.

³ It will be convenient to call this approach *comprehensive*, inasmuch as it is rooted in the thesis that every Platonic passage must be read attending to its whole context, so that it cannot be analysed without considering the literary work of which it constitutes a part. According to this, the main evidence for interpreting a passage of a given dialogue is to be found inside that dialogue and not in other Platonic writings. One should notice that this is not to deny the importance of taking into account other passages or dialogues found within the *Corpus Platonicum* in order to understand various works and passages. However, every single passage must in the *first* place be construed in its closer context.

⁴ Rosenmeyer (1962, 38), Clay (1979, 353), Griswold (1986, 289 n. 33), Gaiser (1990, 34), Yunis (2011, 248), and Stavru (2011, 271) note the *paradoxical*, *enigmatic*, or *jesting* nature of the prayer.

⁵ Although they do not always agree what the main questions of the dialogue are, and how they are summarized in the petition to Pan, several scholars have rightly sensed that this passage gathers up the

main topics of the dialogue. See Clay (1979, 348), Griswold (1986, 226), Reale (1990, 19), Sala (2007, 282), Bonazzi (2011, 245 n. 302), and Capra (2014, 129).

⁶ Clay (1979, 348) points out these three elements (i.e. *logos*, *eros*, and philosophy) as the key topics that are summed up in the passage, but neglects to offer solid evidence to support his claims, or to explain the specific meaning Plato attaches to those matters.

⁷ Following the categories used by Cassin (1995, 419), the present work will assume the distinction between traditional rhetoric and good rhetoric. After the three speeches on love, Socrates engages in a research for a criterion which would allow one to judge the three speeches and, more generally, every kind of speech. That is to say, Socrates wonders what rhetoric, namely, the art of speaking and writing well, consists in. The key passages that make this research explicit are 258d7 and 259e1–2. As a result of the conversation, Socrates concludes that the true art of speaking and writing well is dialectic – called in this paper *good rhetoric* – (265c8–266c5; see also Trabattoni 1995, 137). Phaedrus, however, has not understood that what Socrates means is that true rhetoric is nothing but dialectic. He thus suggests that they have failed in their research, since they have not found the rhetorician, but the dialectician (266c6–9). Phaedrus has not grasped Socrates' conclusion, because the term “rhetoric” only recalls for him the theories and treatises of the rhetoricians criticized by Socrates within the Platonic dialogues – called in this paper *traditional rhetoric* in contrast to the true or good rhetoric proposed by Socrates –, such as Theodorus of Byzantium, Euenus of Paros, Gorgias of Leontini, Prodicus of Ceos, Hippias of Elis, Polus of Athens, Thrasymachus of Calcedon, Eryximachus of Athens, and Protagoras (266d5–269d1). Phaedrus' conception of rhetoric is referred by Socrates in 272d2–273d1. However, he points out that this conception does not refer to true rhetoric, but to the necessary previous knowledge [τὰ πρὸ τῆς τέχνης ἀναγκαῖα μαθήματα, 269b7–8] of the rhetorical art only. True rhetoric is dialectic.

⁸ For a defence of this thesis, see Scolnicov (2006, 183).

⁹ In the first words of the dialogue, ὦ φίλε Φαῖδρε, ποῖ δὴ καὶ πόθεν; (227a1), the verb πορεύη is to be understood (see Plato, *Lysis* 203a6–b1), and the work concludes in 279c8 with Socrates' hortatory ἴωμεν addressed to his companion.

¹⁰ Velardi (2006, 146–147 n. 4) associates the passages in which Socrates veils (237a4–5) and unveils (243b4–7) his head with an imitation of a ritual practice of the Eleusinian mysteries.

¹¹ The historical Phaedrus was condemned to exile, while the Platonic character shows an incredulous attitude toward traditional practices. At 236d9–e3 he makes an oath, not invoking any god, but addressed to the plane tree on the spot where they are. Analogously, at 229c4–5 Phaedrus clearly shows that he does not believe in traditional myths. Thus Griswold (1986, 24) is right when pointing out that Phaedrus “has no great respect for tradition, the opinions of the ancients, and the like.”

¹² At 275b5–c2 Socrates distinguishes between the wisdom of the men from elder times [οἱ ... τότε] and that of moderns [οἱ νέοι], counting Phaedrus among the latter. Yunis holds that Socrates is being ironical and suggesting to his partner that “the practices of these simple ancient people may contain a valuable lesson for sophisticated modern like” him (2011, 229).

¹³ In this dialogue he does not state any thesis of his own; he simply reads Lysias’ text. In the *Symposium*, his speech does not seem to be a research carried out by himself, but a cobbling together of some ideas and beliefs expressed by others. Amongst others, Phaedrus refers to the epic poets Hesiod and Homer, to the logographer Acusilaus, the philosopher Parmenides and the tragic poets Aeschylus and Euripides; Phaedrus does not explain the nature of *eros* by means of critical research, but by uncritically following the things he has heard or read. Rosen asserts that “Phaedrus does not argue from the nature of the cosmos or the god, but from what has been written about Eros by ‘private or public’ men” (1968, 46). This article does not consider the matter in depth, but when Socrates claims that his two speeches are not his own, he seems, as part of his didactic method, to be imitating Phaedrus’ attitude toward *logos*. For a study of this didactic method, see Lavilla de Lera (2018).

¹⁴ Clay (1979, 345–346) goes further, claiming that Plato has organized the dialogue as a triptych. Along with the vocatives referred to Eros (257a3) in the palinode and to Pan (279b8) in the prayer, the initial ὦ φίλε Φαῖδρε (227a1) would be the third key moment that allows us to find the tripartite structure of the dialogue. This tripartite organization is not well justified, however. The dialogue contains many vocatives, so that we should be given a good reason for selecting precisely these three as the key junctures of the composition.

¹⁵ It is not only Phaedrus who seems to understand the palinode as a prayer (257b8–c1); at the end, Socrates explicitly asks the god Eros to turn Lysias to philosophy (257b1–6).

¹⁶ It could for these reasons be argued that the role of herald is in a certain sense assigned to Phaedrus. As the son of Hermes, one of the roles played by Pan is that of herald (as is pointed out in Borgeaud 1979, 196–197).

¹⁷ Although Socrates describes himself as a speech-lover at 236e4–5, he does so using an ironic method by which he characterizes himself with his interlocutor’s attributes (see Griswold 1987, 29; and Sala 2007, 51–52; Lavilla de Lera 2018, 157–159).

¹⁸ Jackson (1971, 29) and Theodorakópoulos (1971, 383) link the prayer explicitly with 278b2–4. More generally, many scholars notice that the prayer asks for the virtue that corresponds to the philosopher (see, for instance, Stavru 2011).

¹⁹ Plato transforms the traditional plea in order to subordinate it to his philosophy (as is suggested in Stavru 2011, 274 n. 20; and Werner 2012, 234). Traditional prayers ask for external goods, while Socrates’ does not.

²⁰ In ignoring the ironic nature of the plea, many commentators have interpreted it wrongly. This includes Motte (1963), Clay (1979), Gaiser (1990), and Capra (2014).

²¹ Werner (2012, 17) and Lavilla de Lera (2018) analyse different levels of communication in Plato's *Phaedrus*. On a first level, there is the conversation between Socrates and Phaedrus; on a second level, the communication of Plato the author with the reader. Elements such as irony can be found on both levels.

²² That is why one cannot consider right Capra's (2014, 129) reading, who suggests that Socrates is actually asking the Muses for their gift (paraphrasing his words, asking for completing his incomplete poetic initiation).

²³ It seems clear that, for Plato, knowledge has to do not with fixed possessions, but with an active process of the soul that searches for truth. Knowledge is always associated with the act of thinking and not with a set of fixed propositions derived from that act. As Nightingale puts it, "truth itself cannot be fixed in a finite set of propositions" (1995, 171). This seems to be one of Plato's main reasons for his preference for the dialogue form.

²⁴ As Nightingale observes, "Plato's philosopher [...] must endlessly revise the text of his soul" (1995, 171).

²⁵ Both mantic and poetic inspiration were referred not only to nymphs and Muses, but to Pan as well (see Borgeaud 1979, 163).

²⁶ Socrates refers to his partner by means of terms such as *νεανίας* (257c8) and *παῖς* (267bc). In addition, Phaedrus himself mentions that he is *stronger and younger* than Socrates (236d1). Nevertheless, Nehamas (1999, 332) and Yunis (2011, 7) discourage us from thinking that Phaedrus is actually young. He is no longer an adolescent, but now an adult, although younger than Socrates. Therefore, the reader should not think that the plot depicts the traditional context of the homoerotic and didactic relationship known as *παιδικὸς ἔρωρ*. Phaedrus is a person unsuitable for the role of the young beloved (whether Socrates' or Lysias'). Erotic passivity was tolerated in the youth, but not in adults (see Buffière 1980). We must accordingly understand that the erotic relationship depicted by Plato is part of Socrates' ironic method. Lysias' speech presupposes a situation in which an adult tries to persuade a young beloved to confer on him his favour; later on, both Socrates' speeches take their departure from a similar situation. In that circumstance, Socrates adopts the role of the lover – first as concealed lover and then as unveiled lover – and gives Phaedrus the role of the beloved. One sees that the terms *νεανίας* and *παῖς* are used only subsequent to the speeches.

²⁷ According to Murray, this kind of performance should not surprise us, "for when someone speaks in the voice of another [...] he makes himself like that person not just in voice, but also in character: he adopts his looks, his gestures and even his thoughts, so that in a sense he almost becomes that person [...]. *Mimesis* thus has profound effects on character" (1996, 4).

²⁸ Motte (1963, 466–467) is well aware of the erotic atmosphere given by Plato to the conversation. He claims that the scene depicts a kind of initiation rite, in which Socrates adopts the role of the initiator

and Phaedrus that of the ephebe. For more about the typical pedagogic pederasty [παιδικὸς ἔρωϛ] of that period, see Dover (1978) and Buffière (1980).

²⁹ Interestingly, Socrates clearly claims that every soul is erotic. Indeed, he states that even non-lovers desire handsome youths (237d4–5).

³⁰ Griswold (1986, 227) links the prayer with the passage about Typhon, pointing out that the deities Pan and Typhon indulge in immoderation.

³¹ The river-god Achelous, referred to in the *Phaedrus* (230b8; 263d5) in close connection with the nymphs and Pan, was linked with sexual vigour and animal brutality (see Werner 2012, 22).

³² Borgeaud (1979, 117) justifies this claim by showing that Eratosth. 1.40 refers the expression to the loves of Heracles and Chiron in the cave of Pelion.

³³ For a different position, see Stavru (2011, 272–273), who argues that only the first two clauses are proper requests, while the last two clauses should be understood as an explanation of the first two requests. This paper does not agree with Stavru’s interpretation on this point.

³⁴ Although his commentary is not long, probably Werner (2012, 232–233) is the one who has best understood the general meaning of the prayer, and especially of the first two requests. What is more, he is well aware of the “multiple layers of meaning” (234) of the prayer, which forces the reader to bring to bear an active reading. More precisely, this multiplicity requires thorough attention to the prayer, adverting to the possible internal allusions, indicating all its several readings, and stressing the soundest among these. For instance, one might reasonably hold that Werner’s explanation of the last two requests should be completed by considering the previously suggested demarcation between philosophy and sophistry. In addition, the prayer should be clearly related to dialectic, the key trait of the philosopher. For his part, Griswold (1986, 226–229) aptly underlines the topic of self-knowledge with which the prayer is connected. He fails to offer a thorough analysis of it, however, mentioning the prayer only to stress that the main thesis defended throughout his commentary coheres with it. As a result, his commentary on the passage is too general and vague, and further analysis is required.

³⁵ Ferrari (1986) offers a clear example of the limited attention given by many scholars to the prayer, for in his book on the dialogue he omits altogether to discuss it.

³⁶ At 235a1–2 as well, in stating that he has merely paid attention to the rhetorical aspects of Lysias’ speech, Socrates is employing a mimetic parody. The dichotomy of form and content that Socrates uses to speak about the appropriateness of speeches is related to the dichotomy of appearance and reality suggested throughout the dialogue. The philosopher is the one who manages to go beyond the (external) appearance of the things to understand their true (internal) nature.

³⁷ Fully attentive to the homosexual-parody engaged in by Socrates with Phaedrus, Svenbro (1988, 212–222) shows consistently that in antiquity the dichotomy of active and passive was used not only in reference to the relationship between lover and beloved, but also to the relationship of writer to reader. The Greeks would have supposed that the relationship between lover and beloved was in some

sense similar to the relationship between writer and reader: lover and writer are active, while beloved and reader are passive. In this regard, Svenbro suggests that, when he reads Lysias' text, Phaedrus willingly accepts a passive role, in the terms of a sexual relationship inappropriate for an adult Athenian citizen.

³⁸ At 250c4–5, Socrates speaks about the relationship between the soul and the body in terms borrowed from Orphism: the body [σῶμα] is like a tomb [σῆμα] in which the soul is imprisoned and one is purely oneself only when one's soul is not embodied.

³⁹ Strictly speaking, there is no allusion to the *rational*, *spirited* and *appetitive* parts of the soul discussed in the *Republic*. In the palinode the soul and its parts are described by the simile of the winged charioteer. However, we believe that in the palinode the tripartite doctrine of the soul is implied. The main reason for thinking this is that there is a strong parallel between the functions assigned by Socrates to each part: the rational part of the soul and the charioteer are in charge of acquiring knowledge and governing the whole soul; the spirited part and the white horse should willingly ally with the rational part, defending honour, and restraining the appetitive part; and the appetitive part and the black horse are the origin of the most primitive impulses, such as sexual desire, hunger or thirst, and they should obey, even against their will, the rational and spirited parts of the soul.

⁴⁰ Human, viz. the soul, must achieve knowledge through practicing recollection (249b6–c4).

However, only the charioteer can be in charge of this function, since only the charioteer can see – and has seen – the truth, viz. the Forms, which is the nourishment that properly belongs [προσηκόν] to the rational part of every soul (247c3–248c2). The white horse is a lover of honour with temperance and shame [τιμῆς ἐραστῆς μετὰ σωφροσύνης τε καὶ αἰδοῦς]; it is an ally of true glory, and needs no whip, being led by the charioteer's word of command alone (253d2–253e1). The black horse is hot-blooded, a comrade of excess and vainglory [ὑβρεως καὶ ἀλαζονείας ἑτάϊρος], hard of hearing, and hard to restrain with whip and goad (253e1–5); in addition, the palinode's description of the lover's soul in front of his beautiful beloved shows that the black horse is lustful (253e1–255a1). Thus the palinode suggests that each part of the soul desires a different object: the charioteer the Forms; the white horse honour and glory; and the black horse material objects. In addition, one should note that although every rational part of a human soul has seen the Forms and, thus, can gain knowledge, the embodied charioteers show different degrees of knowledge on earth. Socrates states that, depending on how much truth each soul has seen before its embodiment and depending on its degree of forgetfulness, humans adopt different kinds of life; namely, they aim at different objects (248c2–e3). To sum up, on the one hand, each part of the soul desires different objects according to its nature; on the other hand, the rational part of the soul, which according to its nature should always desire Forms, can desire different objects depending on its degree of knowledge.

⁴¹ Borgeaud (1979, 189–191) notes that Pan is associated with the whip [μάστιξ], as he sometimes uses this tool to govern and dominate flocks. The whip is one instrument used by the charioteer at 253e4 and 254e4 to control the unruly black horse.

⁴² García Peña (2011, 345–346) points out that in the same way Pausanias in the *Symposium* talks about two Aphrodites – Aphrodite Pandemos and Aphrodite Urania – the *Cratylus* refers to two gods Pan, the rough and the divine (see also Stavru 2011, 281 n. 41). In this regard, Plato would be showing that there are two kinds of speeches, those associated with traditional rhetoric and those concerning good rhetoric. Rhetoric is always one – namely, a kind of leading of souls by means of words –, but it can be employed in multiple ways, since it can lead souls toward either moral disaster or the good. Plato does not merely distinguish two different types of *eros* and *logos*, he also explains in which sense its different kinds have a common nature.

⁴³ Pan is associated with satyrs, sileni, and centaurs (see Borgeaud 1979, 75).

⁴⁴ That is to say, the philosopher must know the whole reality he examines and not merely one or some of its parts. Interestingly, some authors (see, for instance, Griswold 1986, 229; García Peña 2011, 346; and Lavilla de Lera 2014, 390–391) point out that Plato could be making a joke with the name of the god Pan [Πάν], since, as referred at *Cra.* 408c2, he can express *the entirety* [τὸ πᾶν], and the *Phaedrus* is a dialogue in which its parts seem to lack unity, as demonstrated by the old – and still lively – debate about its unity. Like the goatherd god, the dialogue constitutes a whole composed by clearly differentiated parts, and the dialectician must be aware of the parts and the whole they make up. If so, Plato would have written the dialogue to *lead* the reader to engage in dialectic and find the unity beyond the apparent multiplicity. See Lavilla de Lera (2018) for a defence of this thesis.

⁴⁵ It has been indicated (for instance, by Griswold 1986, 49) that not only Lysias' non-lover, but also the palinode's black horse (254a–b) can use a *utilitarian* speech that is designed to legitimize and select the best means to attain objects longed for by them (i.e. by Lysias' non-lover and by the black horse). Thus being beautiful within means having *eros* led not by any *logos*, but by the one of the rational part of the soul that is directed to the Forms.

⁴⁶ In Socrates' first speech (239a2–240a8) there is a clearly a descending evaluation of goods: first of the intellect [διάνοια], then of the body [σῶμα] and finally of material possessions [κτήσεις]. This gradation is reinforced at the conclusion of the speech (241c3–5), if with different terminology: soul [ψυχή], body [σῶμα], and property [οὐσία]. Gaiser (1990, 38–39) and Bonazzi (2011, 245 n. 302) have been attentive to this tripartite hierarchy of goods recalled in the prayer by the inner beauty, the external beauty, and gold.

⁴⁷ In different passages of his speech, Lysias' non-lover calls the relationship proposed to the young *friendship* [φιλία], trying to distinguish his position from the excess and insanity of *eros* [love]. However, he does not explain what φιλία consists in; he only refers to some examples of friendship, all of them related to family bonds (233c6–d4).

⁴⁸ At 230d6 Socrates explicitly refers to *logos* by the term φάρμακον. Interestingly, in the myth of Boreas and Oreithyia referred to by Socrates, there is reference to Pharmaceia [Φαρμακεία] as having been playing with Oreithyia when she was abducted by Boreas (229c8). Boreas, who has usually been interpreted in this story as representing *erotic violence*, could be representing *erotic violence of speech* as well. A possible reading of this myth would be the following: Boreas persuades Oreithyia by means of *logos* – viz. a φάρμακον – with terrible consequences for the girl. This interpretation would not be out of place, especially, if one considers that the dialogue examines the way in which several *logoi* affect Phaedrus' soul.

⁴⁹ It seems that Phaedrus, always interested in the opinion of other people, could be identified by the term δοξόσοφος used at 275b2. What is more, this term is linked in the text with those who use letters carelessly, exactly as Phaedrus does regarding Lysias' text.

⁵⁰ With a big dose of Platonic irony, Phaedrus replies to this suggestion stating that the question itself is ridiculous [γελοῖον]. It could appear that he agrees with Socrates that it is better to search for the truth by themselves than to trust someone else. Nevertheless, he immediately asks Socrates to narrate what he has heard (274c4), showing that he is eager to hear one more outer *logos*. That is to say, although Phaedrus claims the inner research to be more important than the theses coming from outside, actually he exhibits the opposite attitude.

⁵¹ The dialogue depicts the philosopher as a ψυχαγωγός who tries to lead his partner to philosophy. It is partly relevant to the present interpretation to note that, as a shepherd, Pan was also seen to be a guide, and there is one inscription that refers to him by the term προκαθηγέτης (see Borgeaud 1979, 96).

⁵² Bonazzi (2011, 215 n. 269) claims that some Platonic passages depict dialectic as a long path (see, for instance, 247a and *Republic* 504b and 621d). Opposed to the *no difficult task* [οὐδὲν ἔργον] (269c3) proposed by rhetoric, philosophy constitutes *no light task* [οὐ σμικρόν ... ἔργον] (272b5–6).

⁵³ Interestingly, Detienne (2007, 189) explains that the Adonia were understood as opposed to Demeter's cereal-growing culture. Several authors relate the festival to the idea of a sterile farming that does not bear any fruit, so that it would represent a light task, something superficial and deprived of maturity. To this extent, it is of interest to consider that, although he was associated with the reproduction of flocks, Pan's loves were as a rule fruitless (see Borgeaud 1979, 118, 132). Pan's love is generally associated with violent love, extramarital love, onanism, and even with bestiality (as stressed in Borgeaud 1979, 122–123).

⁵⁴ It is quite clear that, as a promoter of speeches, he cares about the quantity of speeches: the more the merrier. Analogously, it seems that the quantity could in his eyes be related to the length of speeches and the number of arguments (234e1–4). Greatness of a speech would then depend on expressing all the things that can be said in a worthy way (235b1–5). Accordingly, as Prodicus suggests, good speeches should not be long – i.e. should not be repetitive in their arguments – nor short – i.e. should

not leave out any relevant aspect of the topic – but of a fitting length [μετρίων] (267b2–6). To this extent, at 241d4–7 Phaedrus seems disappointed about the length of Socrates’ first speech, considering that after having offered a great number of arguments against the lover, the same number of arguments should be offered to support the goodness of the non-lover. On the contrary, it seems that Socrates is searching for a criterion for judging speeches that has to do with neither quantity nor length, but with the qualitative dimension of the speech.

⁵⁵ Brancacci (2011, 30) holds that the term σοφός is used at 278d2 to allude to Antisthenes the rhetorician, who refers to his discipline with the term σοφία.

⁵⁶ The topic of economy is present from the beginning of the dialogue. Sales and Monserrat (2013) point out the materialistic tone of Lysias’ non-lover. To a large extent, Lysias’ speech could be described as a concealed proposal for prostitution.

⁵⁷ As Yunis observes, “Socrates’ poverty, a result of his utter indifference to wealth, is a fundamental aspect of his character” (2011, 248). See also Capra (2014, 129).

⁵⁸ Though we today assume that philosophy and rhetoric are distinctly different forms of discourse, the process that distinguishes them – along with poetry and some other forms of *logoi* too – seems to begin with the Platonic Socrates. Philosophy’s delimitation is one of the most recurrent themes of the Platonic *Corpus*. That is to say, Platonic dialogues trustworthily *show* [δείκνυμι] in a fictional – viz. literary – context the philosophical kind of life that the author prompts the reader to choose. This task is especially important if one considers that Plato wrote the *Phaedrus* in a competitive atmosphere of different forms of (rhetorical) discourse. It is noteworthy that Plato’s work was very successful at that point, since we understand the terms “philosophy” and “rhetoric” with the meaning that he – and not Isocrates, Alcidas, and others – launched. On these points see Ausland 2010, 2, 11, and 16–18).

⁵⁹ Isocrates, mentioned ironically at 278e5–279b3 (see Rowe 1986, 215–216 and Brancacci 2011), called his own activity *philosophia*. It is noteworthy that Phaedrus calls Isocrates a companion [ἑταῖρος] of Socrates. Even if there is a great pinch of irony in Phaedrus’ words, Plato could put this word in his mouth to express that only non-philosophers like Phaedrus would believe that philosophy and traditional rhetoric consist in the same thing, precisely because they share a similar *appearance* or because they are designated by some with the same *term*.

⁶⁰ As most commentators see (e.g. Vicaire 2002, 91 n. 1; Yunis 2011, 248), ἄγειν καὶ φέρειν could be expressing the idea of looting (*pace* Capra 2014, 128). The temperate would not – after the manner of Typhon – be able to seek wealth by way of violence.

⁶¹ The reading put forward by some followers of the Tübingen-Milan approach who consider *gold* to be a metaphor for the wisdom displayed in the Academy (see e.g. Gaiser 1990) is unconvincing for lack of any solid evidence.

⁶² Pan is a god and so, strictly speaking, he is entirely divine. However, Plato himself describes his character in a figurative way, pointing out that his top part is divine [θεῖος], i.e. truthful and good,

while his lower half is goatlike [τραγικός], i.e. false and immoderate (*Cra.* 408b8–408c8). In this conclusion, we follow Plato’s figurative description to speak about Pan and human condition.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Jan Opsomer for having accepted me at KU Leuven’s Institute of Philosophy as visiting scholar and for the assistance given. I would also like to express my gratitude to Nicholas Zucchetti, who was always there for me both through his constant help and his friendship during my stay in Belgium. I am grateful to Anastasia Maravela as well, whose patience and kindness during the evaluation process were an invaluable support. I would also like to express my appreciation to Georgios Karakasis for his friendship and his help correcting this paper. Last but not least, I wish to offer my most sincere thanks to Hayden Ausland, who took great pains with this paper and has substantially contributed to its improvement.

Funding

This work was supported by the Fundació Universitària Agustí Pedro i Pons under its Grant program Ajuts per a estudis o projectes fora de Catalunya.

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