

## Antilogy, dialectic and dialectic's objects in Plato's *Phaedrus*

### Abstract

Plato's *Phaedrus* is a dialogue in which rhetoric is not only discussed, but also displayed. The first half of the plot depicts a rhetorical contest in which Socrates himself offers two opposite speeches on love, a kind of *dissoi logoi*. The current paper tries to explain that the second half of the dialogue offers the necessary keys to understand that for Plato true rhetoric is nothing but dialectic and that beyond the apparent antilogic exercise carried out by Socrates there can be found philosopher's dialectical practice itself. Last but not least, the article defends that dialectic does not necessarily deal with Forms.

### Keywords

Plato; *Phaedrus*; Dialectic; Antilogy; Forms.

### Introduction

Throughout the last decades there has been general agreement amongst scholars in pointing out that the main subject of Plato's *Phaedrus* is rhetoric. A speech authored by the logographer Lysias (henceforth L) triggers the dialogue. Together with this speech, two more speeches — uttered by Socrates (henceforth S)— complete the so called *first part* of the *Phaedrus*, which could be understood as a rhetorical contest. Each *logos* fights to be proclaimed the best. In that context, Phaedrus' (henceforth Ph) words (*Phdr.* 257b7-c7) seem to quickly acknowledge the superiority of the second Socratic speech (henceforth also *the palinode*). Nevertheless, S proves himself to be much more moderate, highlighting the need for a general criterion to judge not only L' speech,<sup>1</sup> but any speech, whether written or spoken (*Phdr.* 258d7 and 259e1-2). The so called *second part* of the *Phaedrus* is a quest for the criteria for writing and speaking well, that is to say, an investigation on rhetoric.

If so, the first part of the dialogue would display a rhetorical *ἀγών*, whilst the second would show an inquiry into the art of rhetoric. The result of the research is stated by S in *Phdr.* 265d3-5 and *Phdr.* 265e1-3, albeit Ph seems to be somehow perplexed: they were seeking for rhetoric and they have found dialectic (*Phdr.* 266c5-9). Even though the conclusion could be misleading for Ph, it is not so. S would be asserting that true rhetoric —the true art of both writing and

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<sup>1</sup> S would be replying here to Ph' question in *Phdr.* 234c6: in order to judge L' text, it is necessary to find the criteria for judging any written speech.

speaking, but also the true art of judging well any kind of speech— is nothing but dialectic (Cassin 1995: 419; Trabattoni 1995: 178), whilst traditional rhetoric would be its spurious brother, which does not constitute a true art. By the distinction between *true rhetoric* and *traditional rhetoric*,<sup>2</sup> S recognizes the close family resemblance of both activities, but in order to demonstrate that, although they might look similar, their nature is distinctly different.

Firstly I aim to show below to what extent Plato depicts a close bond between the philosopher and the rhetorician —especially the antilogician— in the first part of the *Phaedrus*. To be specific, Plato depicts S as an antilogician who is able to offer two apparently contradictory speeches on love, namely, his first speech and the palinode.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, I show that Plato himself provides the necessary keys to distinguishing clearly the philosopher —i.e. S— from the rhetorician. Some authors have stated that this distinction cannot rest on a matter of methodology, but merely on different moral purposes (see, for instance, McCoy 2009). I, on the contrary, defend that the methodological aspect is as relevant as moral purposes to making this distinction.

### **A discursive contest**

L has written a speech on love which has amazed Ph. According to the latter, the logographer is the most terrific writer of their time (*Phdr.* 228a1-2), and his text is ingenious (*Phdr.* 227c7), extraordinary in its vocabulary (*Phdr.* 234c6-7) and exhaustive in the quantity and quality of its arguments (*Phdr.* 235b1-5). The text represents the proposal submitted by a mature male to a beautiful young man. The elder requires the favours of the younger, arguing that favours should not be conceded to a lover, but to someone as him, who is not in love. To give support to his thesis, he depicts love as a disease (νόσος) which overthrows the order and control of the mind. Rhetoricians usually chose paradoxical viewpoints (Rowe 1986: 136) and Ph' words (*Phdr.* 227c3-8), which point out the ingeniousness or subtlety of the speech, express admiration for this very thing.

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<sup>2</sup> I use here the same expressions employed by Cassin (1995: 419). *True rhetoric* would be the authentic art of speaking and writing mentioned by S in 265c8-266c5 (namely, dialectic), whilst *traditional rhetoric* is depicted by S in *Phdr.* 272d2-273d1 and would allude to the theories and treatises of the so called *sophists* (mentioned in *Phdr.* 266d5-269d1). It is worth noting that this distinction between two kinds (εἶδεις) of rhetoric is also present in *Grg.* 503a5-503b3: traditional rhetoric would be the rhetoric S criticizes all through the dialogue, which would not constitute an art, but a mere knack acquired by routine (ἐμπειρία καὶ τριβή. *Grg.* 463b4); oppositely, true rhetoric would be philosophy itself, understood as an art.

<sup>3</sup> At *Phdr.* 265a2 Socrates describes with great irony his two speeches on love as *opposite* (ἐναντίος).

Its paradox does not seem to lie in the thesis itself. Love, an ambiguous phenomenon, has been widely depicted both as a blessing and as a curse. For instance, Homeric epos portrays Penelope in the *Odyssey* as the personification of the praiseworthy side of love, whilst in the *Iliad* Helen is represented as the embodiment of its evil side. The first depicts the blessings of love, which lead to marriage and culture, whilst the second, the destructiveness of love, which provokes the ruin of marriage and culture. For her part, Sappho considers love a twofold phenomenon, *sweetly bitter* (γλυκύπικρον). Plato himself, in his *Symposium*, makes Pausanias refer to two loves: the one linked to Heavenly Aphrodite and the one derived from Popular Aphrodite. Hence, both characterizations of love were not at all rare and L' thesis would not be innovative (Nehamas 1999: 335) or astonishing. Thus, it seems that what amazes Ph. must be the very nature of the proposal represented, which would constitute a cold proposal of prostitution,<sup>4</sup> even if cunningly veiled to the point that it might look moral to the reader —i.e. to Ph on this occasion— (Benardete 1991: 119). Sales and Monserrat (2013) have effectively pointed out the economic tenor of the proposal.

For his part, S does not seem to be surprised at all, just the opposite. He claims that L' thesis, —that love is a disease and hence it is better to mingle with a non-lover than with a lover— is necessary (*Phdr.* 235e2-236a6). On the one hand, S pretends not to know that love is an ambiguous phenomenon which can be introduced from different —almost contradictory— viewpoints; on the other hand, he suggests the proposal not to be paradoxical but obvious, as its main thesis constitutes a must for any sound man. Hence, S' only point to criticizing L' text seems to be its arrangement (διάθεσις, *Phdr.* 236a5). In fact, while Ph judges it exhaustive, S claims that in its rhetoric aspect the speech is monotonous and repetitive (*Phdr.* 235a; Hackforth 1952: 31). That is why, pushed by Ph, S consents to utter a new speech which should defeat L' in its arrangement. S' first speech, then, starts a discursive contest, which, at least in its origin, is purely rhetorical, since the thesis held by both speeches seems to be *necessary*; the discussion is merely about their stylistic aspect.

At *Phdr.* 241d3 S concludes his first speech and expresses his intention to leave. Ph does not seem happy or fully satisfied. First, he suggests that the speech is too short and asks S to continue (*Phdr.* 241d4-7). When the latter refuses to extend it, the former requests S to remain in that place to discuss what has been said by both speeches (*Phdr.* 242a3-6). In that context, S suddenly changes his mind: his δαιμόνιον —his divine sign— appears to him and prevents him

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<sup>4</sup> Interestingly enough, L' *Contra Simonem* would depict a similar context: two men litigate on a court for the favours of a youngster who prostitutes himself.

from leaving (*Phdr.* 242b8-d2); the reason being that he has vilified love. Love is a god and therefore something eminently good, but it has been blamed in both speeches (*Phdr.* 242d11-243a7). At this point, S declares that he will atone for blaming love by means of a palinode that shows love's grandeur. This twist makes Ph exultant, as he is eager to continue with his discursive feast (*Phdr.* 242b6, 243b8-9).

The twist changes the nature of the discursive contest. The first two speeches share a common thesis and compete in their rhetorical arrangement. The palinode, which defends that love is a god and the cause of the greatest blessings, introduces the opposite thesis: it is better to grant favours to the lover rather than to the non-lover, as love is a god and something divine (*Phdr.* 243d5-7). Hence, the discursive contest leaves behind its merely rhetorical nature. Now, the discussion is also about the content. *Apparently*, with his palinode S wants to refute the first two speeches of the dialogue. That is to say, his main intention is not to stylistically surpass the first two *logoi*, but to show that they were false (*Phdr.* 242e5-243a1), shameless (*Phdr.* 243c1), foolish and impious (*Phdr.* 242d7). To this end, he declares that the palinode on love is somehow true (*Phdr.* 265b6-7) and pious.<sup>5</sup>

This time, by means of the palinode, S amazes Ph. The latter recognizes that the palinode is much greater than the previous speeches, to the point of being afraid that L will not be able to contest it with a new speech (*Phdr.* 257c1-7). However, Ph' answer shows that he is concerned not so much about its thesis, but with the beauty of the speech. Certainly, the palinode's rhetorical disposition is impressive, adorned with nice images —v. gr. the winged chariot allegory— and painstaking language. If so, the Platonic reader should be careful to avoid hastily interpreting the palinode as the privileged text of the dialogue by means of which S utters the truth on love. Were this true, the third speech would not introduce a twist since it rhetorically competes with the previous two. Ph has been delighted by the third speech not because of its content, but due to its great arrangement.

Furthermore, we could state that S' procedure is distinctly rhetoric. As if he were an experienced antilogician (ἀντιλογικός), he offers two speeches on the same topic which are apparently contradictory. He also manages to delight his audience by defeating his opponent —i.e. L— and showing himself to be the greatest speechmaker. If this were true, the Platonic reader might wonder why Plato depicts S as an antilogician in the dialogue and not as a philosopher.

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<sup>5</sup> The palinode is presented by Socrates as a prayer to the god of love (*Phdr.* 257a3-b6).

### Antilogic in the *Phaedrus*?

It is not difficult to verify that S' antilogician appearance cannot be derived from chance or ignorance. At *Phdr.* 261c5-e4, S describes the method he himself has used to speak about love, attributing it to the Eleatic Zeno and calling it *antilogic* (ἀντιλογική).<sup>6</sup> S affirms that by some art (τέχνη) the Eleatic makes the same thing appear to the same audience good in one instance, and then in another just the opposite.<sup>7</sup> Kerferd is one of the authors that has best grasped the key of the problem: antilogic is described as the art which establishes contradictory predicates for the same subjects, making the same things both alike and unlike (Kerferd 1981: 60-61). It is clear that S is well aware that he has developed an antilogical procedure with Ph, first depicting love as a disease and then as a divine blessing. S makes Ph conceive love at one point as harmful and at another as beneficial.

To understand what is going on in the *Phaedrus*, one should keep in mind the Platonic distinction between eristic and antilogic highlighted by Kerferd (1981: 61-63). The former would be a kind of art which only seeks victory in argument by means of whatever useful device is available for that purpose, such as fallacy and ambiguity. However, the latter is not in itself dishonest or aiming to deceive, as pointed out by Kerferd (1981: 63): "it consists of opposing one *logos* to another *logos*, or discovering or drawing attention to the presence of such an opposition in an argument or in a thing or state of affairs. The essential feature is the opposition of one *logos* to another either by contrariety or contradiction". The antilogician seeks verbal contradiction, but not necessarily to deceive or to win in conversation.

Even if for Plato antilogic is not as blamable as eristic, it falls short of his philosophic purpose, since it remains on a merely discursive level (Kerferd 1981: 64).<sup>8</sup> The point is that antilogic is

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<sup>6</sup> Nerczuk (2019: 5) recalls that, despite the fact that there are very few records of this method, it has been referred by means of different expressions: "In ancient texts, this method is called the method of 'opposed speeches' (*logoian tikeimenoι, logoi enantioi*), 'two-fold arguments' (*duo logoi, amfo to logo, dissoi logoi*), 'antilogic' (*antilogike*), or 'enantiology' (*enantiologia*)".

<sup>7</sup> This is the definition of the method of antilogic given by Socrates: "the science (τέχνη) of antilogic [...] is not only concerned with law-courts and public addresses, but, so it seems, there will be this one science —if indeed it is one— in relation to everything that is said, by which a man will be able to make everything which is capable of being made to resemble something else resemble everything which it is capable of being made to resemble, and to bring it to light when someone else makes one thing resemble another and disguises it" (*Phdr.* 261d10-e4; translated by Rowe 1986).

<sup>8</sup> With Nerczuk (2019), I do not believe that antilogic per se was limited to a discursive level. This paper does not deal with antilogic itself, but only with the way in which Plato presents it. However, one should bear in mind that Plato represents the method of antilogic as opposed to dialectic, that is to say, as pseudo-dialectic, in the same way he does so with rhetoric itself. In this regard, it is worth mentioning Robinson's (1941: 88-89) words: "Plato constantly has in mind a certain opposite of dialectic, something superficially like dialectic and yet as bad as

not necessarily bound to *reality* as Plato understood it, and therefore it can be used in vain. Antilogic can be a good procedure for philosophical purposes, since it can highlight the internal contradictions of a thesis or offer different perspectives on the same topic. However, if it remains at a merely discursive stage it would be frivolous or futile, according to Plato. More precisely, antilogic is not necessarily linked with reality in the precise way in which Plato understands it. That is, one of the keys of the antilogical approach is conceiving that speeches are, in the same way as the phenomenal world, in continuous flux, which makes them soundless and changeable, even seeming to be contradictory. Even though Plato would somehow agree with this view of the phenomenal world, he states that, strictly speaking, reality is unchangeable and fixed, and therefore cannot be contradictory. Furthermore, even if phenomenal reality is constantly changing, it is possible to find both the unifying principle of some phenomena and the different ways of being displayed —its kinds—, and also to understand the natural difference between distinct phenomena. The ἀντιλογικός, however, is not concerned with these matters, but merely with showing the *apparent* contradiction and ambiguity of both *phenomena* and *logoi*. Hence, antilogic would fall short because it is not bound to an unchangeable reality and the truly unifying and distinctive principles of the phenomena, but just to the ambiguity of the phenomenal world and the merely discursive stage (Kerferd 1981: 66-67).

If this is so, we need to examine S' two speeches to judge whether his δισσοὶ λόγοι are enclosed within the limits of both phenomenal and discursive appearances, or —contrary to what appears— are linked with (true) reality, i.e. with the very essence of love or, at least, with the unifying principle of the erotic phenomenon and the classification of its forms of appearing or manifestations. In other words, one should check if beyond the two different images of love he offers a synoptic image that makes it possible to understand them not as contradictory speeches on the same topic, but as two speeches on the different natural parts of a single reality.

### **Is Socrates an antilogician?**

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dialectic is good, something against which the would-be dialectician must always be on guard. He has two chief names for this shadow or reverse of dialectic, antilogic and eristic. By 'eristic,' or the art of quarrelling, he indicates that the aim of this procedure is to win the argument, whereas the aim of dialectic is to discover truth. By 'antilogic,' or the art of contradiction, he indicates that it is a tendency to contradict, to maintain aggressively whatever position is opposite to that of one's interlocutor [...]. The more detailed connotation of 'eristic' and 'antilogic' tends to be whatever Plato happens to think of as bad method at the moment, just as 'dialectic' is to him at every stage of his thought whatever he then considered the best method".

Even if S himself does his best to present his two speeches as opposite *logoi* on the same topic, actually, an attentive reading makes it possible to grasp that they are not contradictory but complementary. S' first speech defines love as some kind of desire (ἐπιθυμία τις), which is directed towards what is beautiful (*Phdr.* 237d3-5). His second speech does not rebuke this thesis, since love, in its most genuine form, is depicted as the natural *desire*<sup>9</sup> of the rational part of the soul for grasping the truth, i.e. the Forms, which are the most beautiful objects. This kind of love, which is the most genuine or natural according to S, corresponds to the human whose life is governed by his soul's rational part.

In both speeches, love is a desire for beauty. They do not depict essentially different realities, but different kinds of one single passion. So, there are different types of love. Some of them are more appropriate for certain natures, whilst some others are not appropriate at all. According to the palinode, the human soul —especially its best part— naturally seeks the Forms (*Phdr.* 248b5-c2), which constitute the most beautiful reality. However, only the rational part of the soul knows, and can know (*Phdr.* 247c7-8) them, so it has to govern and direct the other constitutive parts of the soul towards that goal. For their part, the appetitive and the spirited parts of the soul also desire, but they desire other objects, since they do not have access to the Forms. The point is that only the rational part can know the Forms and, thus, only it knows what is really beautiful and what the true scope of human desire should be. The spirited and the appetitive parts desire different objects, since, due to their ignorance, they consider other realities such as honors and beautiful bodies to be beautiful. Since the human soul is a unit composed of different parts, its desire can manifest itself in many ways according to the part that rules the whole soul. To be precise, the love described and blamed in the first two speeches of the dialogue corresponds to the kind of love felt by the appetitive part of the soul or by the human governed by it.<sup>10</sup> Although it does not focus on this fact, the third speech shares this approach; the chariot allegory clearly shows that the rational part of the soul must command the whole soul, leading it according to its knowledge and desire, without giving in to the desire of the other parts (*Phdr.* 250e1-251a2). The function of the soul's rational part is to lead the

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<sup>9</sup> It must be said that Plato would not use the term ἐπιθυμία to allude to rational love. However, ἐπιθυμία and *rational desire* would be analogous passions, as both are desire for what is beautiful. The only difference is that rational desire is accompanied by knowledge and, thus *knows* what is really beautiful. The appetitive part, however, desires beautiful bodies as it *does not know* —and cannot know as that is not its function— what is really beautiful.

<sup>10</sup> Apart from being suggested in the chariot allegory (see *Phdr.* 253c7-255a1) by the attitude towards beautiful youngsters that would have a soul ruled by the black horse (i.e. governed in a way contrary to nature), the palinode (*Phdr.* 250e1-251a2) also describes non-philosophical love as a *love contrary to nature*, that is to say, as a blameable erotic disposition. Note, however, that love contrary to nature is still love, and that S tries to justify why a unitarian phenomenon —love— can be portrayed in such a variegated way.

whole soul, since it is the only one which knows the appropriate goal of the whole. When the rational part is in charge, that person is led by the sort of love most exhaustively described in the second Socratic speech. Oppositely, when the rational part does not develop its natural function, it is the other part of the soul which leads the whole soul. For instance, when the appetitive part commands the soul, the sort of love which takes priority in that life is the one blamed by the first two speeches of the dialogue.

If this reading is right, the apparently opposite *logoi* given on love would not be contradictory—truly opposite—, but complementary. In other words, both speeches depict different, or multiple, manifestations of a single reality or phenomenon, i.e. love. What's more, the speeches do not just give an account of the multiple ways in which love appears, but also classify them according to a hierarchy. On the one hand, the sort of love introduced by the third speech is the best, since it is the most appropriate for our soul's nature (*Phdr.* 247d1-3: the natural nourishment of our whole soul is the Forms); on the other hand, the sort of love introduced by the first two speeches of the dialogue is fully blamable, because it is not appropriate to our nature. The palinode does not claim that L' speech was completely false, but that its thesis does not constitute *a simple truth* (*Phdr.* 244a5-6). The first two *logoi* describe just one of the many ways in which love manifests itself.<sup>11</sup> The third speech describes another of its manifestations. This being so, neither of these theses would be *totally* false: they are *partial*, since they claim to give an exhaustive account of a complex phenomenon by means of one of its manifestations. Nevertheless, thanks to the two *different* speeches given by S, Ph and the Platonic reader can grasp the unitarian nature of love, its unifying principle, which lies beyond its many ways of appearing.<sup>12</sup> If combined, the two speeches allow us to understand the unity or essence of love, that which is fixed and unchangeable. Hence, we can conclude that S is far from limiting himself to being an antilogician: his speeches are neither contradictory nor a mere description of the flux of the phenomenal world and human opinion, since when combined they lead us to the unifying principle of love, that is to say, to the correct understanding of its reality.

### **Socrates dialectician**

One of the keys for correctly reading the *Phaedrus* is to understand that, while he *pretends* to be an antilogician, in fact, S is displaying dialectic. This method, described at *Phdr.* 265d3-266c5, consists of “perceiving together and bringing into one form items that are scattered in

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<sup>11</sup> That is why at *Phdr.* 266a5-6 Socrates affirms that left-handed love was abused with justice.

<sup>12</sup> Babut (2007: 26) and Mouze (2007: 67, 69) also interpret that L' speech is not completely false, but partial; they also defend that the two Socratic speech must be combined (Babut 2007: 25; Mouze 2007: 75-76).



many places, in order that one can define each thing and make clear whatever it is that one wishes to instruct one's audience about on any occasion" (*Phdr.* 265d2-5; transl. by Rowe 1986), and oppositely, "being able to cut it up again, form by form, according to its natural joints, and not try to break any part into pieces, like an inexpert butcher" (*Phdr.* 265e1-3; transl. by Rowe 1986). Actually, Socrates has offered a variegated image of love according to its natural joints (the left-handed love and the right-handed love. See *Phdr.* 265d5-7 and 265e3-266b1), but he has also given the necessary keys to bringing the many things said about love into one single form.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, S adds that displaying dialectic is the only serious matter of the full conversation (*Phdr.* 266d2-3). This must be understood as follows: his antilogician farce has veiled his serious effort to supply Ph with a criterion to judge not only L' speech but any *logos* in general. The criterion is dialectic and has nothing to do with being victorious in a discursive contest, but with correctly grasping reality. In order to judge L' text there is no other way but to inquire about what love is and how it has been depicted. In this sense, by means of his discursive masquerade, S suggests that the text which Ph carries with him is not laudable at all. The reason is that, even though it only *partially* represents love, i.e. it only depicts one of its manifestations or kinds, it introduces that *partial* picture of love as the definitive image of the *whole* erotic phenomenon. Furthermore, S' two speeches would not be more satisfactory if they were not combined. Depicting different manifestations of a single phenomenon is not relevant unless they are analyzed as the different natural ways in which a single reality is manifested. In other words, the speech is only praiseworthy when it is firmly bound to reality or truth, with the unifying and distinguishing principles of reality. A speech, written or spoken, is good if it gives account of the unifying principle of things (unity) and their many parts (multiplicity).

This means that S' speeches are a serious attempt only if they lead to a full understanding of the entire erotic phenomenon, i.e. its unity and its kinds. Otherwise, if they are understood as mere *dissoi logoi* which do not allow the bringing together of the erotic phenomenon into one form (understanding as a whole), their value is not high, but a mere pastime (παιδιά).<sup>14</sup> Without

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<sup>13</sup> We should not forget that this dialogue depicts philosophy as true rhetoric. Ferrari (1987: 73) has pointed out well the necessarily rhetorical aspect of the philosophic teaching: "Truth must be communicated if it is to be learnt; teaching is rhetoric too".

<sup>14</sup> However, our analysis shows that antilogic could be useful for philosophical rhetoric. Even if per se it does not fulfill the technical requirements demanded by Plato—that is why this and other rhetorical procedures would be mere antecedents (see *Phdr.* 269b7-8: τὰ πρὸ τῆς τέχνης ἀναγκαῖα μαθήματα) of the true rhetorical art—, it can turn out to be useful—even propaedeutic—to whom masters dialectic. As stated by Balla (2004: 63), in the *Phaedrus* Socrates would accept that some procedures of traditional rhetoric "far from being at odds with philosophy, presupposes the study of it". The same idea has been defended by Moss (2012: 19), who holds that in

dialectic, the criterion that is directed towards the correspondence between reality and *logos*, the speech would be mere entertainment that should be evaluated according to its *rhetorical disposition*. Without dialectic, language would be a dangerous tool, limited to appearances, which leads us to skepticism.<sup>15</sup> That is why, while he feigns to act as an antilogician, S not only gives us the key to understanding that dialectic is the only valid criterion for judging speech, but he also displays it.<sup>16</sup> Even if S persuades Ph, the former's didactic strategy<sup>17</sup> will only be successful if the latter is able to realize by himself that all three speeches on love, including the palinode, were somehow partial and that the key lies in combining all of them to obtain a synoptic representation of love.

At this point we can complete our definition of true rhetoric, following Moss' (2012) reading. At the beginning of this paper I held that true rhetoric is dialectic, since dialectic is the only method that makes it possible to speak or write in accordance with the truth. Let me now add that to the extent that rhetoric in general involves soul-leading (*ψυχαγωγία*. See 261a7-9), true rhetoric is also a kind of soul-leading. Both traditional rhetoric and good rhetoric produce persuasion by means of speeches, but only the former does it with art (*τέχνη*). That is to say, only true rhetoric produces *logoi* based on the truth that lead someone to the truth. That is why these two kind of rhetoric are clearly different: whilst the former persuades by mere belief, the latter persuades by teaching the truth. These two different kinds of rhetoric are explicitly referred in *Gorgias* 454c-455a and 458e6-459a1, where Socrates distinguishes between a persuasion that produces mere belief —*πειθὸ πιστευτική*— and an instructive persuasion —*πειθὸ διδασκαλική*.<sup>18</sup> Thus, apart from describing true rhetoric, Socrates is also displaying it, since he is trying all along the conversation to lead Phaedrus towards the truth by *logoi* (see Moss 2012: 15-22). That is to say, “the soul-leading Plato has in mind includes among other things (...) conversion to the philosophical life” (Moss 2012: 16).<sup>19</sup>

### **Which are the objects of dialectic?**

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this dialogue Plato would recognize that some tricks from traditional rhetoric —the antecedents mentioned in 269b8— can be philosophically very useful.

<sup>15</sup> Solana (1994: 234-236) has highlighted that Plato criticises antilogic because it works in the domain of mere appearance or *doxa*, while his dialectic is devoted to the truth.

<sup>16</sup> I agree with Mouze (2007: 62), for whom one of the main purposes of the dialogue is to differentiate philosophy from non-philosophy —in this concrete case from rhetoric.

<sup>17</sup> Solana (1994: 235) notes that S' strategy in this dialogue is didactic.

<sup>18</sup> For this distinction in the *Gorgias* and its link with the *Phaedrus*, see Taglia (2014, pp. xvii-xviii).

<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, there is no evidence to believe that S' attempt achieves to redirect P' life; despite S' efforts, P remains the same in the beginning and the end of the dialogue (see Poratti 2010: 408 and Rowe 1986: 193).

So far this paper has defended that S' main aim is to show that in order to speak or to write well (but also to judge speeches, for instance L'), it is necessary to possess knowledge of the topic being discussed. Besides, I have stated that the means for achieving knowledge consist of philosophizing (*Phdr.* 261a1-5), which means, as S lets us know at *Phdr.* 265d3-5 and *Phdr.* 265e1-3, practicing dialectic. Thus, dialectic is the method which enables the speaker or the writer to acquire knowledge about the topic being discussed so as to speak well, i.e. so as to persuade or speak according to reality.<sup>20</sup> This method is especially relevant when dealing with things that are ambiguous, i.e. things that look similar despite having a different nature, and things that look different whilst sharing the same nature (*Phdr.* 261d10-e7). Dialectic is especially linked to the analysis of these things; it is when speaking about ambiguous realities that controversies arise, since we do not clearly know their nature. Then, it is also in that context that it is more difficult for an audience to judge if a speech correctly represents reality or if it is misleading. That is why not only the speaker but also the audience needs dialectic to speak well about a topic and be able to assess a speech.

The dialogue between S and Ph shows that it would be absurd to be deceived about things that are clear for everyone: for instance, no one is misled about what *iron* is or what *silver* is, and about what they diverge in (*Phdr.* 263a6-8);<sup>21</sup> so it would be ridiculous to try to cheat people by uttering a false speech about gold and silver. It would be easy to know if the speeches are right or false, and, thus, to judge them. Oppositely, it is easy to cheat people by talking about issues such as *justice* and *goodness*, since those matters provoke controversies (*Phdr.* 263d9-b2). They are controversial themes, because their nature is not obvious and there are different approaches to them. In other words, knowing them is not something spontaneous, and there are many different opinions about them.

Accordingly, the *Phaedrus* shows that rhetoricians such as L and antilogicians such as Zeno deal with ambiguous realities that require dialectic. Love constitutes an unclear and controversial phenomenon (*Phdr.* 263c7-d1) and that is why S can offer two different perspectives of it. However, S' intention is not merely to produce a *dissoi logoi*, since he gives the necessary keys to understanding the unity and the multiplicity of love. He displays not just

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<sup>20</sup> As stated by Balla (2004: 47), in the *Phaedrus* Plato understands rhetoric as dependant to philosophy: "According to Plato, the reason that human δόξαι appear consistent as they do is that they reflect, albeit in an imperfect way, the higher realm of ideas, which can be known only through philosophy".

<sup>21</sup> The same could be said about donkeys and horses: no one doubts what a horse is and what a donkey is and what they differ in (*Phdr.* 260b1-c2), so it would be ridiculous to try to cheat an audience about that topic. Notice that this kind of speech is opposite to the speech on good and evil (*Phdr.* 260c1), which does not constitute a clear matter.

antilogic, but also dialectic, offering the key to both fully understanding the erotic phenomenon and correctly judging any speech about love, written or oral.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, dialectic is the method for properly knowing reality and especially knowing the reality that cannot be clearly grasped from the very beginning. Some authors have defended that this method only has to do with Forms. However, it is not obvious that Plato means it in this way.<sup>23</sup> The *Phaedrus* seems to suggest that it has to do with ambiguous realities of which we do not have a clear and direct knowledge. Having said that, it is not clear that there must be a Form for love according to Plato. Love is a desire for what is beautiful. So, in order to justify or explain<sup>24</sup> love there is no need for the Form of love. It is enough that there are souls and that there are Forms, since souls — at least rational souls or the rational part of them — *love* Forms. If so, dialectic would not be necessarily a method addressed to the Forms. More broadly — and without denying that it can be used directed to the Forms — dialectic would relate to unclear matters and its main scope would be to achieve knowledge on those matters. For instance, dialectic would give us knowledge not only about the multiple realities that we call *love*, but it would also tell us what the common essence is that makes it possible to understand them all as a whole —unity— and that manifests itself in diverse —multiple— kinds.<sup>25</sup> Analogously,

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<sup>22</sup> To state it in other words, S is trying to lead P' love of beautiful *logoi* towards the love of wisdom (Moss 2012 *passim*). As it has been argued by Moss (2012: 5-6), one of the *Phaedrus* main problem is *soul-leading* as S' educational lifelong mission.

<sup>23</sup> In the previous sections of this paper, I argued that philosophy differs from antilogic not only in its moral purpose, but also in its method, that is to say, in the use of dialectic. Henceforth I will try to show that dialectic is not only applicable to Forms, but also to objects that have no correspondence in the *hyperuranios topos*. That is why I would like to make it clear that I do not suggest that there is any kind of causal relationship between these two theses; I present them as independent. It is also important to point out that in this paper I circumscribe the latter thesis —i.e. dialectic does not only work with Forms— to the *Phaedrus*. However, let me add the following: currently it is generally accepted that the *Phaedrus* is a work of maturity, chronologically very close to the group of dialogues written in the last period of Plato's life. Its date of composition would be immediately after that of the *Symposium*, and the *Republic*, very close to that of the *Parmenides* and the *Theaetetus*, and somewhat earlier than the *Sophist*, the *Politician* and the *Philebus*. This is important, since it would be interesting to take this research a step further and try to find correspondence between the *Phaedrus* and the so called *dialectical dialogues* —such as the *Parmenides* and the *Philebus*—, where, according to an important critical current, the dialectic —understood as the method that deals with the One and the Many— is shown and applied without a clear limitation to the Forms.

<sup>24</sup> Forms would be reality's principles, the first principles that allow us to explain things (scientifically). Without them, we could not explain the phenomenal world.

<sup>25</sup> An object can be simple (*ἄπλοῦς*, *Phdr.* 270d1) or complex (*πολυειδής*, *Phdr.* 270d1). When the object is complex —as both love and the human soul are— the antilogician can easily take advantage of it producing *dissoi logoi*. That is why, the first thing a dialectician must do is consider the nature of that object, i.e. whether it is simple or complex, and, then, if complex, to analyze its natural parts or its different forms of appearing (in fact, the term *πολυειδής* itself is ambiguous, since it can be understood both as *having many parts* and as *having many forms*. (Yunis 2011: 212)).

dialectic would be useful for understanding when we (improperly) call two —multiple— different realities by the same name, although they do not share a common nature.<sup>26</sup>

Some might claim that our thesis is weak, since at *Phdr.* 249b6-c1 the dialectical collection is referred to in the following terms: “A man must comprehend (συνιέναι) what is said universally (κατ' εἶδος λεγόμενον), arising (ἰόντ')<sup>27</sup> from many sensations (ἐκ πολλῶν ... αἰσθήσεων) and being collected to a unity (εἰς ἓν ... συναιρούμενον) collected by reasoning (λογισμῶ)” (trans. by Rowe). The κατ' εἶδος translated by Rowe as *universally* could also be read more technically as *according to Form*, in which case some might claim that collection is necessarily linked to Forms. We could respond to this counterargument with the following three objections: firstly, Plato does not usually use this word technically in his dialogues, as this can be seen in this dialogue itself;<sup>28</sup> secondly, there is a long tradition of scholars which denies that this passage must be necessarily linked to Forms;<sup>29</sup> thirdly, when we interpret this passage it is not necessary to understand the two possible readings —i): the term must be read in a technical way; ii) the text points to a mere conceptualization— as mutually exclusive.

Actually, even if the first counterargument is prudent, it is not a sufficient piece of evidence, as there are some passages in which Plato does use this term technically. Furthermore, the second

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<sup>26</sup> This paper does not engage in this discussion, since it would divert from the main theme. However, the *Phaedrus* could be suggesting that S' and Isocrates' practices, even if named by the same term, i.e. philosophy, would not share the same nature. That is to say, dialectic not only allows us to properly collect and classify multiplicity — the different kinds of love—, but also to correctly divide multiplicity and not be deceived by the terms/*logoi* —the different practices that are improperly called by the same name.

<sup>27</sup> I follow the emendation that reads ἰόντα instead of ἰόν, as most modern scholars do. For instance, see Griswold's (1986: 266, n. 51) justification.

<sup>28</sup> The *Phaedrus* contains many passages where the term εἶδος —including its derivatives but also the compound words which are created by it— is used in a clearly non-technical way (I do not include in the list the terms which, albeit might be non-technically employed, have aroused some controversy amongst scholars). See, for instance, *Phdr.* 229d6: εἶδος, 237a7: εἶδος, 246b7: εἶδεσι, 251a2: θεοειδές, 251b7: εἶδος, 253c8: εἶδη, 253c8: εἶδος, 253d4: εἶδος, 259d2: εἶδος, 263b8: εἶδους, 263c1: εἶδος, 265a9: εἶδη, 265c9: εἶδοιν, 265d8: εἶδος, 265e1: εἶδη, 265e4: εἶδος, 265a3: εἶδος, 266c7; 270d1: πολυειδές, 270d5: εἶδη, 271a7: πολυειδές, 271d2: εἶδη, 271d4: εἶδη; 272a6: εἶδη, 277d1: εἶδος. I will not go on deep in this matter, but it is interesting to focus on the word εἶδη in *Phdr.* 271d4 and 272a6, which is used to refer to the *kinds* of speeches. It is clear, the *logoi* constitute a human product and, thus, it is not convincing at all that there must be a Form of speech. However, human discursive products can be classified according to some unifying and dividing principles or common and distinctive traits. In fact, when we speak we need to classify the phenomena of our world even when there is no possibility to find a correlative Form. In these cases, however, we can unify and divide the phenomena according to the true properties of the analyzed phenomena or according to spurious or partial criteria. If I am not wrong, to find the unitary principle and the different kinds of that type of phenomena would also mean to do dialectic, at least, if we do so trying to grasp correctly the nature of the matter analyzed.

<sup>29</sup> Even if his claims are not solid, Thompson's (1868) not only defended that understanding the passage technically was an evidence of *bad Platonism*, but also that the passage was not referring to dialectic at all. On their behalf, Moreschini (1956) and Verdenius (1955: 265-289), by means of different arguments, point out that the passage does not necessarily refer to Forms and that it could be alluding to mere generalizations. For their part, some translators, such as Rowe (1986: *universally*), Brisson (2004: “forme intelligible”), Benardete (1991: “by species”), Nehamas & Woodruff (1995: “in terms of general forms”), Velardi (2006: “genere”), Poratti (2010: “conceptualmente”) and Ryan (2012: “class [or type]”), show a similar interpretation in their translations.

counterargument is not solid, since the context in which the term εἶδος appears—in a text which deals with recollection (ἀνάμνησις, *Phdr.* 249c2)<sup>30</sup> immediately after having spoken about Forms (*Phdr.* 247c3-e6)— makes it very likely that the term is used technically. That is probably why many scholars translate the passage in a technical way.<sup>31</sup> Even so, the third counterargument should prevent us from choosing a too easy solution: not only the two derivatives of the term *logos* (λεγόμενον and λογισμῶ) suggest that (re)collection has to do with both language and reasoning, but the allusion to the many sensations (πολλῶν ... αἰσθήσεων) hints at the fact that (re)collection also has to do with the reasoning that a human being does in the sensitive world (Sallis, 1975: 150-151). In other words, even if the Forms are the key ontological basis that makes knowledge possible, human knowledge has to do with unifying and dividing the phenomena of his world. This would mean that there is not only knowledge of those realities for which there is a corresponding Form. Dialectic would also have something to do with the phenomena—passions like love, artefacts, etc.— that, despite not having a corresponding Form, can be unified and divided according to their nature, and can also be distinguished from other phenomena with which do not share a common nature even though they might look similar.

If this reading is not mistaken and the text can be read according to these two kinds of knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the Forms and knowledge of the phenomena for which there is not a Form), then our thesis would stand firm against the abovementioned objection. It goes without saying that dialectic has to do with the process of collection and division according to Forms; however, it does not necessarily point to objects for which there is a corresponding Form. It is also the necessary method for understanding the phenomena of our world which do not have related Forms and, especially, those phenomena which are complex and ambiguous, since the correct understanding of them requires a thorough examination that simple objects usually do not need.

## Conclusions

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<sup>30</sup> Trabattoni (2011: 314) and Bonazzi (2011: 111, n. 135) has solidly defended that recollection is not at odds with dialectic, but mutually dependent.

<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, Hackforth (1952: “Forms”), Sinaiko (1965: “form”), Vicaire (1985: “Idées”), Griswold (1986: “form”), Bonazzi (2011: “forma”), White (1993: “Form”), Nicholson (1999: “form”), Dixsaut (2001: 114: “Forme”), Mouze (2007: 245: “Forme”. See also p. 85), Bredlow (2017: 175: “forma”).

If this reading is not wrong, Plato distinguishes philosophy, i.e. dialectic, from rhetoric—in this case from antilogic—not only because of their different moral purposes, but also due to their different methods. Both antilogic and dialectic offer different perspectives on a topic, but the latter goes further, seeking a comprehensive view of that topic. Plato and Socrates display an antilogical exercise within the *Phaedrus*, but they give the necessary clues to spur the reader and Phaedrus on to leaving behind mere antilogic and engage in dialectical practice.<sup>32</sup> This is not because antilogic is bad *per se*; quite the opposite, this dialogue shows that it can be very useful for philosophical purposes. However, according to Plato, it would not be enough: without dialectic, antilogic does not guarantee the ability to think or speak correctly about a topic.

Furthermore, this paper has argued that, according to the *Phaedrus*, dialectic objects are not necessarily Forms; dialectic can also be used with objects for which there is not a corresponding Form, such as love or philosophy.

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<sup>32</sup> Rowe (2007: 268) has rightly noticed that one of the main aims of Platonic writings is to force the reader to think by himself or herself. More specifically, Mouze (2007: 62, n. 3) holds a similar idea about the *Phaedrus* by pointing out its *protreptic* nature.

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