

d directly burst into song, without food or drink, until it is time for them to die. After they die, they go to the Muses and tell each one of them which mortals have honored her. To Terpsichore they report those who have honored her by their devotion to the dance and thus make them dearer to her. To Erato, they report those who honored her by dedicating themselves to the affairs of love, and so too with the other Muses, according to the activity that honors each. And to Calliope, the oldest among them, and Urania, the next after her, who preside over the heavens and all discourse, human and divine, and sing with the sweetest voice, they report those who honor their special kind of music by leading a philosophical life.

There are many reasons, then, why we should talk and not waste our afternoon in sleep.

PHAEDRUS By all means, let's talk.

e SOCRATES Well, then, we ought to examine the topic we proposed just now: When is a speech well written and delivered, and when is it not?

PHAEDRUS Plainly.

SOCRATES Won't someone who is to speak well and nobly have to have in mind the truth about the subject he is going to discuss?

260 PHAEDRUS What I have actually heard about this, Socrates, my friend, is that it is not necessary for the intending orator to learn what is really just, but only what will seem just to the crowd who will act as judges. Nor again what is really good or noble, but only what will seem so. For that is what persuasion proceeds from, not truth.

SOCRATES Anything that wise men say, Phaedrus, "is not lightly to be cast aside";³⁰ we must consider whether it might be right. And what you just said, in particular, must not be dismissed.

PHAEDRUS You're right.

SOCRATES Let's look at it this way, then.

PHAEDRUS How?

SOCRATES What if he replied, "I have no idea. My claim is that whoever learns from me will manage to do what you ask on his own"? c

PHAEDRUS I think they'd say the man's mad if he thinks he's a doctor just because he read a book or happened to come across a few notions; he knows nothing of the art.

d SOCRATES And suppose someone approached Sophocles and Euripides and claimed to know how to compose the longest passages on trivial topics and the briefest ones on topics of great importance, that he could make them pitiful if he wanted, or again, by contrast, terrifying and menacing, and so on. Suppose further that he believed that by teaching this he was imparting the knowledge of composing tragedies—

PHAEDRUS Oh, I am sure they too would laugh at anyone who thought a tragedy was anything other than the proper arrangement of these things: They have to fit with one another and with the whole work.

e SOCRATES But I am sure they wouldn't reproach him rudely. They would react more like a musician confronted by a man who thought he had mastered harmony because he was able to produce the highest and lowest notes on his strings. The musician would not say fiercely, "You stupid man, you are out of your mind!" As befits his calling, he would speak more gently: "My friend, though that too is necessary for understanding harmony, someone who has gotten as far as you have may still know absolutely nothing about the subject. What you know is what it's necessary to learn before you study harmony, but not harmony itself."

PHAEDRUS That's certainly right.

269 SOCRATES So Sophocles would also tell the man who was showing off to them that he knew the preliminaries of tragedy, but not the art of tragedy itself. And Acumenus would say his man knew the preliminaries of medicine, but not medicine itself.

rhetoric testify that it is an art. For it seems to me as if I hear certain arguments approaching and protesting that that is a lie and that rhetoric is not an art but an artless practice.³¹ As the Spartan said, there is no genuine art of speaking without a grasp of truth, and there never will be.

261 PHAEDRUS We need to hear these arguments, Socrates. Come, produce them, and examine them: What is their point? How do they make it?

SOCRATES Come to us, then, noble creatures; convince Phaedrus, him of the beautiful offspring,³² that unless he pursues philosophy properly he will never be able to make a proper speech on any subject either. And let Phaedrus be the one to answer.

PHAEDRUS Let them put their questions.

b SOCRATES Well, then, isn't the rhetorical art, taken as a whole, a way of directing the soul by means of speech, not only in the lawcourts and on other public occasions but also in private? Isn't it one and the same art whether its subject is great or small, and no more to be held in esteem—if it is followed correctly—when its questions are serious than when they are trivial? Or what have you heard about all this?

PHAEDRUS Well, certainly not what *you* have! Artful speaking and writing is found mainly in the lawcourts; also perhaps in the Assembly. That's all I've heard.

SOCRATES Well, have you only heard of the rhetorical treatises of Nestor and Odysseus—those they wrote in their spare time in Troy? Haven't you also heard of the works of Palamedes?³³

c PHAEDRUS No, by Zeus, I haven't even heard of Nestor's—unless by Nestor you mean Gorgias, and by Odysseus, Thrasymachus or Theodorus.³⁴

SOCRATES Perhaps. But let's leave these people aside. Answer this question yourself: What do adversaries do in the lawcourts? Don't they speak on opposite sides? What else can we call what they do?

PHAEDRUS Yes.

SOCRATES Second come the Statement of Facts and the Evidence of Witnesses concerning it; third, Indirect Evidence; fourth, Claims to Plausibility. And I believe at least that excellent Byzantine word-wizard adds Confirmation and Supplementary Confirmation.

PHAEDRUS You mean the worthy Theodorus?

SOCRATES Quite. And he also adds Refutation and Supplementary Refutation, to be used both in prosecution and in defense. Nor must we forget the most excellent Evenus of Paros,³⁷ who was the first to discover Covert Implication and Indirect Praise and who—some say—has even arranged Indirect Censures in verse as an aid to memory: a wise man indeed! And Tisias³⁸ and Gorgias? How can we leave them out when it is they who realized that what is likely must be held in higher honor than what is true; they who, by the power of their language, make small things appear great and great things small; they who express modern ideas in ancient garb, and ancient ones in modern dress; they who have discovered how to argue both concisely and at infinite length about any subject? Actually, when I told Prodicus³⁹ this last, he laughed and said that only he had discovered the art of proper speeches: What we need are speeches that are neither long nor short but of the right length.

PHAEDRUS Brilliantly done, Prodicus!

SOCRATES And what about Hippias?⁴⁰ How can we omit him? I am sure our friend from Elis would cast his vote with Prodicus.

PHAEDRUS Certainly.

c SOCRATES And what shall we say of the whole gallery of terms *Polus*⁴¹ set up—speaking with Reduplication, Speaking in Maxims, Speaking in Images—and of the terms Licymnius gave him as a present to help him explain Good Diction?⁴²

PHAEDRUS But didn't Protagoras actually use similar terms?⁴³

SOCRATES Yes, Correct Diction, my boy, and other wonderful things. As to the art of making speeches bewailing the evils of poverty

PHAEDRUS Without a doubt.

SOCRATES Therefore, if you are to deceive someone else and to avoid deception yourself, you must know precisely the respects in which things are similar and dissimilar to one another.

PHAEDRUS Yes, you must.

SOCRATES And is it really possible for someone who doesn't know what each thing truly is to detect a similarity—whether large or small—between something he doesn't know and anything else?

PHAEDRUS That is impossible.

SOCRATES Clearly, therefore, the state of being deceived and holding beliefs contrary to what is the case comes upon people by reason of certain similarities.

PHAEDRUS That is how it happens.

SOCRATES Could someone, then, who doesn't know what each thing is ever have the art to lead others little by little through similarities away from what is the case on each occasion to its opposite? Or could he escape this being done to himself?

PHAEDRUS Never.

SOCRATES Therefore, my friend, the art of a speaker who doesn't know the truth and chases opinions instead is likely to be a ridiculous thing—not an art at all!

PHAEDRUS So it seems.

SOCRATES So, shall we look for instances of what we called the artful and the artless in the speech of Lysias you carried here and in our own speeches?

PHAEDRUS That's the best thing to do—because, as it is, we are talking quite abstractly, without enough examples.

SOCRATES In fact, by some chance the two speeches do, as it seems, contain an example of the way in which someone who knows the truth can toy with his audience and mislead them. For my part, Phaedrus, I hold the local gods responsible for this—also, perhaps, the messengers

we said that the madness of love is the best. We used a certain sort of image to describe love's passion; perhaps it had a measure of truth in it, though it may also have led us astray. And having whipped up a not altogether implausible speech, we sang playfully, but also appropriately and respectfully, a story-like hymn to my master and yours, Phaedrus—to Love, who watches over beautiful boys.

PHAEDRUS And I listened to it with the greatest pleasure.

SOCRATES Let's take up this point about it right away: How was the speech able to proceed from censure to praise?

PHAEDRUS What exactly do you mean by that?

SOCRATES Well, everything else in it really does appear to me to have been spoken in play. But part of it was given with Fortune's guidance, and there were in it two kinds of things the nature of which it would be quite wonderful to grasp by means of a systematic art.

PHAEDRUS Which things?

SOCRATES The first consists in seeing together things that are scattered about everywhere and collecting them into one kind, so that by defining each thing we can make clear the subject of any instruction we wish to give. Just so with our discussion of love: Whether its definition was or was not correct, at least it allowed the speech to proceed clearly and consistently with itself.

PHAEDRUS And what is the other thing you are talking about, Socrates?

SOCRATES This, in turn, is to be able to cut up each kind according to its species along its natural joints, and to try not to splinter any part, as a bad butcher might do. In just this way, our two speeches placed all mental derangements into one common kind. Then, just as each single body has parts that naturally come in pairs of the same name (one of them being called the right-hand and the other the left-hand one), so the speeches, having considered unsoundness of mind to be by nature one single kind within us, proceeded to cut it up—the first speech cut

rhetoric must first make a systematic division and grasp the particular character of each of these two kinds of thing, both the kind where most people wander in different directions and the kind where they do not.

c PHAEDRUS What a splendid thing, Socrates, he will have understood if he grasps *that*!

SOCRATES Second, I think, he must not be mistaken about his subject, he must have a sharp eye for the class to which whatever he is about to discuss belongs.

PHAEDRUS Of course.

SOCRATES Well, now, what shall we say about love? Does it belong to the class where people differ or to that where they don't?

PHAEDRUS Oh, surely the class where they differ. Otherwise, do you think you could have spoken of it as you did a few minutes ago, first saying that it is harmful both to lover and beloved and then immediately afterward that it is the greatest good?

d SOCRATES Very well put. But now tell me this—I can't remember at all because I was completely possessed by the gods: Did I define love at the beginning of my speech?

PHAEDRUS Oh, absolutely, by Zeus, you most certainly did.

SOCRATES Alas, how much more artful with speeches the Nymphs, daughters of Achelous, and Pan, son of Hermes, are, according to what you say, than Lysias, son of Cephalaus! Or am I wrong? Did Lysias too, at the start of his love-speech, compel us to assume that love is the single thing that he himself wanted it to be? Did he then complete his speech by arranging everything in relation to that? Will you read its opening once again?

PHAEDRUS If you like. But what you are looking for is not there.

SOCRATES Read it, so that I can hear it in his own words.

PHAEDRUS "You understand my situation: I've told you how good it would be for us, in my opinion, if we could work this out. In any

case, I don't think I should lose the chance to get what I am asking for, merely because I don't happen to be in love with you. A man in love will wish he had not done you any favors, once his desire dies down—"

SOCRATES He certainly seems a long way from doing what we wanted. He doesn't even start from the beginning but from the end, making his speech swim upstream on its back. His first words are what a lover would say to his boy as he was concluding his speech. Am I wrong, Phaedrus, dear heart?

PHAEDRUS Well, Socrates, that was the end for which he gave the speech!

SOCRATES And what about the rest? Don't the parts of the speech appear to have been thrown together at random? Is it evident that the second point had to be made second for some compelling reason? Is that so for any of the parts? I at least—of course I know nothing about such matters—thought the author said just whatever came to mind next, though not without a certain noble willfulness. But you, do you know any principle of speech-composition compelling him to place these things one after another in this order?

PHAEDRUS It's very generous of you to think that I can understand his reasons so clearly.

SOCRATES But surely you will admit at least this much: Every speech must be put together like a living creature, with a body of its own; it must be neither without head nor without legs; and it must have a middle and extremities that are fitting both to one another and to the whole work.

PHAEDRUS How could it be otherwise?

SOCRATES But look at your friend's speech: Is it like that or is it otherwise? Actually, you'll find that it's just like the epigram people say is inscribed on the tomb of Midas the Phrygian.

PHAEDRUS What epigram is that? And what's the matter with it?

d

SOCRATES It goes like this:

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