

Just as the artist gives perceptible form to the otherwise intangible nature of the soul, Parmenides and Plato used mythic imagery to explain their concepts of being and the soul. In the proem of his philosophically didactic poem *On Nature*, Parmenides depicts the image of a charioteer who is pulled by two horses and begins a journey to learn the truth about the nature of the universe. Attending to the voices of the past, Parmenides utilizes epic motifs and language to give form to his epistemological ideas. Similarly, in the *Phaedrus* (246a3-4), Plato employs the allegory of a charioteer pulled by two horses to explicate metaphorically his concept of the tripartite division of the soul, first introduced in the *Republic* (435c-441c). In *Phdr.* 246c, Plato also explains the winged quality of the soul, an integral aspect of the soul's function that is bound to its immortal nature. Like Parmenides, Plato fashions a mythical narrative rich with symbolism and imagery to explain his vision of the soul.

While the influence of Parmenides' proem on Plato's construction for the soul has recently been discussed (Palmer 1999, Slaveva-Griffin 2003), other current scholarship considers the effect of the metaphorical and mythical image for Plato in the transmission of his philosophical ideas (Brisson 1998 & 2004, Morgan 2000, Pender 2000). I argue that the image of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus* draws not only upon the design developed by Parmenides, but also upon customary depictions of the horse and chariot motif found in artistic iconography, an idea briefly introduced by de Vries (1969). Recognizing the potency of the mythic image as a "formidably effective" tool (Brisson 1998, 2), Plato draws upon both literary and visual sources in his construction of the soul in order to give it concrete, understandable form.

This paper seeks to reconcile the metaphor of the soul as a charioteer employed by Plato in the *Phaedrus* with mythological, literary, and visual comparanda. It includes an analysis of the motif of the horse and chariot in Greek art, particularly within a funerary context, as well as the appearance of birds and representations for the soul in vase painting and grave stela. I seek to bring to light the prevalence and widespread use, both diachronically and geographically, of these themes in the ancient Mediterranean, and how they provided a "visual language" used by Plato for expressing his philosophical ideas. Furthermore, I consider the language with which Plato develops this image, comparing it to a language of artistic practice, in order to demonstrate Plato's role as an "artist of language" who paints vibrant images in order to elucidate his philosophical concepts, namely, that of the soul as a winged charioteer ensemble. Motifs such as the horse, chariot, and bird, standard within the repertoire of Greek iconography and core elements of Plato's cultural milieu, lent to Plato the visual imagery that he used when constructing his metaphor for the soul, thus giving an intangible entity the qualities of weight, substance, and form.