

PLATO'S *PHAEDRUS* AND THE VISUAL IMAGINATION

The primacy of the visual imagination for the acquisition of Gnostic nobility, and its corresponding suppression by the Puritan tyranny, is a key theme of FF. This is the point, for example, of Hamlet's famous procrastination of the murder of King Claudius. The two are aspects of the same psyche, in which psychosis is waxing (Hamlet), and reason waning (Claudius). The latter's "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;/Words without thoughts, never to heaven go" are an expression of the suppression of the imagination in the incipient schizophrenic, the principal culprit in the aetiology of which disease is named by Bacon as the Puritan world-view. Hamlet's dagger is the anathematised ithyphallos-libido, which will now not be aroused by recreation of the Goddess of Love in the imagination, as described in the printed word (e.g. the seduction of Lucius by Fotis in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*), to invade the Puritan ego and shatter it.

I show also in *UDGCB* that Bacon sourced the FF symbol of the horse or horse-and-rider as the libido in action from the extended Socratic metaphor in Plato's *Phaedrus*; and that he was an inheritor of the Egyptian tradition, via King David, the Jerusalem Church, the Rex Deus line, the Knights Templar, and Freemasonry. In this light, the following passage from *Phaedrus* (trans. Jowett, <http://plato.evansville.edu/texts/jowett/phaedrus14.htm>) assumes the highest significance:

Socrates At the Egyptian city of Naucratis, there was a famous old god, whose name was Theuth [Thoth]; the bird which is called the Ibis is sacred to him, and he was the inventor of many arts such as arithmetic and calculation and geometry and astronomy and draughts and dice; but his great discovery was the use of letters. Now in those days the god Thamus was the king of the whole country of Egypt; and he dwelt in that great city of Upper Egypt which the Hellenes call Egyptian Thebes, and the god himself is called by them Ammon. To him came Theuth and showed his inventions, desiring that the other Egyptians might be allowed to have the benefit of them he enumerated them, and Thamus enquired about their several uses, and praised some of them and censured others, as he approved or disapproved of them. It would take a long time to repeat all that Thamus said to Theuth in praise or blame of the various arts. But when they came to letters, this, said Theuth, will make the Egyptians wiser and give them better memories; it is a specific both for memory and for the wit. Thamus replied: O most ingenious Theuth, the parent or inventor of an art is not always the best judge of the utility or inutility of his own inventions to the users of them. And in this instance, you who are the father of letters, from paternal love of your own children have been led to attribute to them a quality which they cannot have; for this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality.

It is evident that the primacy of the visual imagination, like so much else in Bacon's philosophy, came from a great inherited tradition, as much as from the depth and immediacy of his own experience.

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