

Abstract

In Book XIII of the *Confessions*, Augustine admits to a sin when he is moved by the beauty of songs in church. Yes, the Christian recognizes that the truths found in the Psalms are more valuable than the beauty of singing, but this reaction seems strange for the Platonic Augustine. After all, Plato, particularly in the *Phaedrus*, praises Beauty and its role in the philosophical life. It is easier to see why Augustine reacts the way he does not by looking to Plato, but to Plotinus, who is reluctant to refer to his first hypostasis as “the Beautiful.” For Plotinus, beauty was subordinate to good, not equal to it. A cursory reading of the *Symposium* and its various encomia of Eros (and eventually of the Beautiful) would leave one with the impression that Plato valued beauty just as much as good, but careful reading of Diotima’s lesson to Socrates reveals that Plotinus’s (and Augustine’s) caution of beauty is not so much a departure from Plato’s philosophy, but natural progression of it. This paper explores how Plato’s idea of the forms results from his departure from Heraclitean thought and how Plotinus sought to solve a problem in the Platonic ontological system.

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PLOTINUS'S PROBLEM WITH BEAUTY

by

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ὁκόσων λόγους ἤκουσα οὐδεὶς ἀφικνεῖται ἐς τοῦτο ὥστε γινώσκειν ὅτι σοφόν ἐστι,
πάντων κεχωρισμένον.

– Heraclitus

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Chapter One: A Mathematical Introduction

It is unfortunate that many students of mathematics are poorly educated in liberal disciplines such as history, philosophy, politics, and language. Conversely, it is unfortunate that many students of these latter subjects are poorly educated in mathematics. This is unfortunate because education wasn't always so pigeonholed. Some notable examples of overlaps between philosophy and math are René Descartes and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who respectively deserve much of the credit for the invention of modern analytic geometry and calculus. Further, there was Edmund Husserl – one of the heavyweights in phenomenology – whose PhD was in mathematics. Lastly, most pertinent to this thesis, was Plato. Above the doors to his Academy supposedly were the words “let none who is ignorant of geometry enter.”¹ Study in mathematics was, for Plato and the Platonists, the foundation for a philosophical education, and it was necessary for the education of a good citizen. As this thesis is about Platonism, we will start with the mathematical.

Any reasoning must be based, on the most fundamental level, on some combination of axioms. The most basic starting point is the principle of non-contradiction. Someone who would deny such a principle, or claim that there is a more fundamental axiom, Aristotle says, wittily,

1. Henri-Dominique Saffrey, “Ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδείς εἰσὶτω. Une inscription légendaire,” *Revue des Études Grecques*, tome 81, fascicule 384-385 (January-June 1968): 68, <https://doi.org/10.3406/reg.1968.1013>.

“Ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδείς εἰσὶτω, nul ne doit entrer ici, s'il n'est géomètre : dans cette formule, on peut distinguer la forme et le fond. Pour le fond, elle traduit une doctrine authentiquement platonicienne, celle de la place propédeutique des mathématiques élémentaires dans l'éducation du philosophe. On se souvient que la géométrie plane, après le calcul et avant l'astronomie, la géométrie dans l'espace et l'harmonique, fait partie du programme d'études qui doit préparer à la dialectique le gardien de la République (VII, 526 C - 527 C). C'est encore ce même programme (les nombres, la géométrie, l'astronomie) qui constitue les prolégomènes à la connaissance du Bien, dans la leçon Περὶ τὰγαθοῦ.”

“ὅμοιος γὰρ φυτῷ ὁ τοιοῦτος ἢ τοιοῦτος ἤδη.”² Though there are more fundamental principles in number theory and geometry, we will start with assuming the Fundamental Theorem of Arithmetic³ and the Pythagorean Theorem⁴ along with the normal arithmetic “rules” of integers (multiplication, division, etc.).

Take a right-angled triangle, with one cathetus having a length of three and the other a length of four. From the Pythagorean Theorem we get that the hypotenuse must have a length of five. These are nice, easy, whole numbers – integers – whole in that they are finite. We could take another triangle where the catheti were three-sevenths and four-sevenths and show that its hypotenuse is five-sevenths (called a triangle “similar to” the former). This triangle isn’t as nice, since their sides are not integers, but their lengths are representable as the ratio of integers, i.e., they are rational numbers.

Now take a right-angled triangle, with both catheti having a length of one. Using the Pythagorean Theorem, we get that the hypotenuse has a length such that its square equals two, i.e., the hypotenuse has a length of the square root of two. This number is interesting. It cannot be represented as the ratio of two integers. A common quick proof is with a *reductio ad absurdum*, or, as Aristotle calls it, ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀδύνατον ἀπόδειξις:⁵

Assume that the square root of two is rational. Thus, it is the ratio of two integers α and β which share no common prime factors (using the Fundamental Theorem

2. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV.1006a. “For, such a person, insofar as he actually is such, is like a vegetable.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. Where needed, I add context in parentheses.

3. An integer greater than one is the product of a unique set of prime numbers.

4. The square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the two catheti (non-hypotenuse sides).

5. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, 62b.

of Arithmetic and cancellation of nonzero divisors). From $\sqrt{2} = \frac{\alpha}{\beta}$ we get $2\beta^2 = \alpha^2$.

Thus, from multiplicative closure of integers greater than one, we have that the left side of the equation is an integer with an odd number of twos as its prime factorization, and the right has an even number. So, if the square root of two is rational, then there exists an integer which has two distinct prime factorizations, since two is prime. This violates the uniqueness portion of the Fundamental Theorem of Arithmetic. Thus, the square root of two is not a rational number, *quod erat demonstrandum*.⁶

Various stories have arisen concerning the fates Pythagoreans suffered for having committed mathematical impiety, including revealing the existence of irrational numbers.⁷ Why would the gods drown someone for proving or revealing the existences of irrational numbers? More generally, why are irrational numbers bad?

The finite, the integer, is good, and the infinite is bad. Aristotle tells us that in the Pythagorean tables of opposites the good (ἀγαθόν) and the finite (πέρας) were one group and the bad (κακόν) and infinite (ἄπειρον) in the other.⁸ He also says “ἔτι τὸ μὲν ἀμαρτάνειν πολλαχῶς ἔστιν (τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τοῦ ἀπείρου, ὡς οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι εἵκαζον, τὸ δ’ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ πεπερασμένου)” and “ἔσθλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἀπλῶς, παντοδαπῶς δὲ κακοί.”⁹ The Pythagoreans saw that the world was

6. Such incongruities between particular combinations of catheti with their necessary hypotenuses were well known to Greeks in Plato’s time. See *Theaetetus*, 147d.

7. Pappus of Alexandria in his commentary on the tenth book of Euclid’s *Elements* says that the Pythagorean who revealed the existence of irrational numbers perished by drowning. Iamblicus in the *Vita Pythagorica* says that this Pythagorean was expelled from the order, but that Hippasus of Metapontum drowned at sea as divine punishment for a different act of mathematical impiety. In any case, the Pythagoreans viewed the mathematical and divine as closely related, and Hippasus is often viewed to be the impious or unfortunate Pythagorean.

8. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.986a.

9. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b. “Moreover, to err is manifold (for evil is of the infinite, as the Pythagoreans used to infer, but the good is of the perfected)” and “The good are simple, while the bad manifold.”

mutable and complex. They viewed this as something bad. As mathematical realists, they saw that there was something beyond this visible world. Prescinded from this manifold world under flux were finite and permanent things – finite in that they could not be reduced and permanent in that they are not mutable. It was because these things (*viz.*, integers) were permanent that they were what truly existed in a way more complete than everything visible. Furthermore, because they really did exist, they were what was good. The very existence of a number within this realm of the abstract which cannot be understood as rational (from “ratio”) was not just outside the scope of the Pythagorean worldview – it was blasphemy – the same crime of which Socrates was accused, as Socrates says of his accuser Meletus, “φησὶ γάρ με ποιητὴν εἶναι θεῶν, καὶ ὥς καινοῦς ποιοῦντα θεοὺς τοὺς δ’ ἀρχαίους οὐ νομίζοντα ἐγράψατο τούτων αὐτῶν ἕνεκα, ὥς φησιν.”¹⁰ To make from the rational the irrational was the same kind of impious *ποίησις*.

Plato’s project was to combine the principles of Heraclitus with those of Parmenides and Pythagoras. Lewis Campbell gives a rough summarization of these different philosophers, writing, “Parmenides represents the idea of unity, being, or rest, Heraclitus that of dualism, of a process, or motion, and Pythagoras that of harmony and order, or definite proportions, as intermediate between the other two.”¹¹ Very broadly speaking, Plato thought that Heraclitus was right about the visible world – that it was of flux. Plato thought that Parmenides, who believed in “The complete immobility of the real, the impossibility of *kinesis* in any sense of the word,”¹²

10. Plato, *Euthyphro*, 3b. “For he says that I am a maker of gods, and, as I make new gods and don’t believe in the ancient ones, he indicted me for the sake of these same (old gods), so he says.”

11. Lewis Campbell, *The Theaetetus of Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1883), 242.

12. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy: Volume 2, The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 36.

was at least correct about the immutability of prescinded forms. Pythagoras, in Plato's mind, was correct about the realm of universals, and from the Pythagoreans he learned that existence itself was finite and bounded. Of Plato's synthesis Campbell states,

The main effort of Plato's dialectic, as is well known, is to bring these opposite poles of thought, the Eleatic and Ionian, into organic and well-balance harmony. In its most abstract conception it is the problem of the one and the many (τῶν λόγων ἀγήρων πάθος παρ' ἡμῖν), or of motion and rest. In this effort he was assisted by the Pythagoreans, who had already found a sort of middle term in Number.¹³

This paper is about this synthesis. In this first chapter I outlined the core belief of the Pythagoreans that the limited is good and the unlimited bad. In the next chapter I will show how Plato's metaphysics is largely Heraclitean, and then in the following chapter I will show how it is not. In the penultimate chapter I will introduce a problem passage from the final book of Augustine's *Confessions* concerning beauty and see how it cannot be understood from a purely Platonic perspective. In that chapter I will introduce how Plotinus distinguished himself from Plato on metaphysics as a whole, but particularly on the Beautiful. The Pythagorean (and Platonic) view that the limited is good and the infinite bad is contrary to the usual Christian notion that the *summum bonum*, God, is infinite, but Neoplatonists seem to have found their way back to a Heraclitean spirit in a subtle rejection of Plato's Pythagoreanism.

13. Campbell, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 252.

Chapter Two: The Heraclitean Plato

In a manner similar to the first chapter, I will show here how Plato was Heraclitean, *viz.*, that he was in fact a student of the philosophy of Heraclitus and then in what ways Platonism is Heraclitean. I will also show how Plato developed the philosophy of Heraclitus. Aristotle says, “ἐκ νέου τε γὰρ συνήθης γενόμενος πρῶτον Κρατύλῳ καὶ ταῖς Ἡρακλειτείαις δόξαις, ὥς ἀπάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀεὶ ῥεόντων καὶ ἐπιστήμης περὶ αὐτῶν οὐκ οὔσης, ταῦτα μὲν καὶ ὕστερον οὕτως ὑπέλαβεν.”¹⁴ That all sensible things (or, material) things are in flux is not too controversial a point. The sensible is within time, and within time is change, or flux. Time is the way to measure change, but how the Heracliteans interpreted the mutable nature of the sensible is what is important. Aristotle says that before Plato was the student of Socrates, he was the student of Cratylus the Heraclitean. On the consequences of sensible implying flux, Aristotle goes on to point out how Plato’s first mentor was even more radical than Heraclitus. He says,

ἔτι δὲ πᾶσαν ὁρῶντες ταύτην κινουμένην τὴν φύσιν, κατὰ δὲ τοῦ μεταβάλλοντος οὐθὲν ἀληθεύμενον, περὶ γε τὸ πάντῃ πάντως μεταβάλλον οὐκ ἐνδέχεσθαι ἀληθεύειν. ἐκ γὰρ ταύτης τῆς ὑπολήψεως ἐξήνθησεν ἡ ἀκροτάτη δόξα τῶν εἰρημένων, ἡ τῶν φασκόντων ἡρακλειτίζειν καὶ οἷαν Κρατύλος εἶχεν, ὃς τὸ τελευταῖον οὐθὲν ᾧετο δεῖν λέγειν ἀλλὰ τὸν δάκτυλον ἐκίνει μόνον, καὶ Ἡρακλείτῳ ἐπετίμα εἰπόντι ὅτι δις τῷ αὐτῷ ποταμῷ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμβῆναι: αὐτὸς γὰρ ᾧετο οὐδ’ ἅπαξ.¹⁵

14. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.987a. “For, having first become familiar with Cratylus and the opinions of Heraclitus – that the all sensibles were always in flux and there was no knowledge of them – also later he thus held these opinions.”

15. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV.1010a. “And moreover, seeing that this nature [of an indeterminate substance] was in motion, and that no true statement is made concerning that which is undergoing change, they assume that one does not speak truth concerning that which in every way is entirely undergoing change. For from this assumption there flowered forth the most extreme opinion of those aforementioned – that of those who asserted themselves to be followers of Heraclitus and which Cratylus held, who at the end thought it was necessary to say nothing but only moved his finger, and he censured Heraclitus for saying that it was not possible to enter the same river twice, for he thought that it was possible not even once.”

With “οὐθὲν ἀληθεύομενον” Aristotle is referencing the “vegetables” in *Metaphysics* IV.1006a mentioned above. Specifically, he is referencing the teaching of Protagoras: that of a particular thing both one thing and its negation may be predicated – “ἀληθεῖς αἱ ἀντιφάσεις ἅμα κατὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πᾶσαι” – and then elaborating, “καὶ γίγνεται δὴ τὸ τοῦ Ἀναξαγόρου, ὁμοῦ πάντα χρήματα: ὥστε μὴθὲν ἀληθῶς ὑπάρχειν. τὸ ἀόριστον οὖν ἐοίκασι λέγειν, καὶ οἰόμενοι τὸ ὄν λέγειν περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος λέγουσιν: τὸ γὰρ δυνάμει ὄν καὶ μὴ ἐντελεχείᾳ τὸ ἀόριστόν ἐστιν.”¹⁶ So, if the principle of non-contradiction is discarded, if there’s anything at all, there is only a singular thing, since all distinctions in reality are broken down. Protagoras and Anaximander are somewhat correct in that the world of the mutable – the sensible world for Plato, or for Aristotle τὸ ἀόριστόν – is mixed, or ὁμοῦ, but in the world of being (for Plato) or actuality (for Aristotle) there are genuine, real distinctions.

If there are true statements (and, for Plato, there are), they must be of the eternal, not κατὰ τοῦ μεταβάλλοντος, and we arrive at a dichotomy. Either something is immutable, eternal, and really existing, or it is πάντῃ πάντως μεταβάλλον. It is because of this dichotomy that we have Cratylus’s challenge to Heraclitus and perhaps his most well-known saying: one cannot step in the same river twice. Heraclitus, believing all things sensible to be in flux, states that a river is never “the same.” Of course, a river constantly changes. “Everything is in flux” – “πάντα ῥεῖ” as another famous Heraclitean saying goes. Of all things it is perhaps easiest to see how a river ῥεῖ. Most people when pressed would admit that the Nile is different today than yesterday.

16. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1007b. “All contradictions at the same time concerning the same thing/subject are true,” and “And so arises the saying of Anaxagoras that all things were common, with the result that nothing truly exists. Therefore, they appear to be speaking of the indeterminate, and, supposing that they are stating what exists, they speak concerning what does not exist. For the indeterminate is that which exists in potentiality and not in actuality.”

Sediment is transferred from one spot to another. Some courses might shift or be redirected. At the very least the water that was in a particular spot the day before is probably miles downstream and much more spread out. Cratylus makes a more profound epistemological point than this, though. He focuses the issue not on the fact that the river is changing, but that it is changeable at all. I will let Socrates explain:

πῶς οὖν ἂν εἴη τι ἐκεῖνο ὃ μηδέποτε ὡσαύτως ἔχει; εἰ γὰρ ποτε ὡσαύτως ἴσχει, ἔν γ' ἐκείνῳ τῷ χρόνῳ δῆλον ὅτι οὐδὲν μεταβαίνει: εἰ δὲ ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει καὶ τὸ αὐτό ἐστι, πῶς ἂν τοῦτό γε μεταβάλλοι ἢ κινοῖτο, μηδὲν ἐξιστάμενον τῆς αὐτοῦ ιδέας; ... ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἂν γνωσθεῖη γε ὑπ' οὐδενός. ἅμα γὰρ ἂν ἐπιόντος τοῦ γνωσομένου ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλοιον γίγνοιτο, ὥστε οὐκ ἂν γνωσθεῖη ἔτι ὅποιόν γέ τί ἐστιν ἢ πῶς ἔχον: γνώσις δὲ δήπου οὐδεμία γινώσκει ὃ γινώσκει μηδαμῶς ἔχον.¹⁷

Socrates initial question indicates that unless something is permanent, it doesn't *really* exist and – a notion by now familiar – nor does it even deserve to be called τι - a thing. This is in contrast to things which ποτε ὡσαύτως ἴσχει, i.e., things which teeter on the edge of the Heraclitean dichotomy. That which ποτε ὡσαύτως ἴσχει, since it is at some time not mutable necessarily ἀεὶ

17. Plato, *Cratylus*, 439e-440a. “Then how can that which is never in the same state be anything? For if it holds fast in the same way, in that time it obviously does not undergo any change, but if it is always in the same state and is the same thing how would it undergo some change and motion, since it in no way gives up its own idea?... Nor could it be known by anyone, for when something approaches which is going to know one thing, it would become something else and of a different sort, so that what sort of thing it is or what state it is in could not be known. Surely no knowledge knows what it knows as a thing with no state.”

According to Francesco Ademollo, “Socrates may be talking about the beautiful, characterizing it as never in the same state on the flux hypothesis; or he may be talking generally about what never stands in the same state, sc. like the beautiful on the flux hypothesis. Henceforth I will assume that the latter is the case.” Francesco Ademollo, *The Cratylus of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 475.

Later (478), Ademollo also points out that ἐπιόντος τοῦ γνωσομένου, given *Cratylus* 440b4-5, is best translated as neuter, and I will take his suggestion, but for reasons to be made clear later I prefer to leave ἰδέα translated as something other than “form.”

ὡσαύτως ἴσχει. The alternative is that it be “πάντη πάντως μεταβάλλον.” Something which is in flux is better described as a thing γιγνόμενον – becoming – rather than a thing ὄν – being or existing.¹⁸ Socrates’s next question is an elaboration of the issue at hand. That which is not in flux is something which has a consistent, permanent ἰδέα. After the ellipse we see the connection between ontology and epistemology. What is knowable is what is, not what is becoming. When something (e.g., the Nile) is in the world of particulars, or the world of flux, it is not permanent, so it cannot be an object of knowledge. Even if the Nile froze and didn’t “change” it could still not be the object of knowledge since it *could* change. That which is knowable cannot change. On this passage Sedley says, “The predicative model is still in play here. On the unstated assumption that knowledge is of truth and that truth is propositional, even to know something will require a subject-predicate structure.”¹⁹ Truth, being propositional, requires an immutable subject, because the moment a predicate is applied to a mutating subject that subject no longer exists. Propositions must be of the permanent, or universal.

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18. Cf. David Sedley, *Plato’s Cratylus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 101. “According to the *Timaeus*, the sensible world is a *gignomenon*, something which constantly ‘becomes’ but never ‘is’. It is therefore not an object of knowledge, on the Platonic principle that the contents of knowledge should not, even in theory, admit of being falsified at a later date: items of knowledge are permanent possessions, not subject to revision; their objects must therefore be entities incapable of change, that is, primarily at least, the Forms. The sensible world is, by contrast, the domain of opinion, *doxa*, which shares the instability of its objects and which, even if true now, can be falsified at any time.”
19. Sedley, *Plato’s Cratylus*, 171. Sedley would likely agree with Ademollo, that this passage is more about just Beauty, since both seem to be making a point about the knowability of the forms, not just the knowability of beauty. In this quotation Sedley he makes reference to *Theaetetus*, 186c-d, which I analyze more closely in the next paragraph.

Mutable things are not known because they are not knowable.²⁰ In the *Theaetetus* Socrates asks “οἷόν τε οὖν ἀληθείας τυχεῖν, ὃ μὴδὲ οὐσίας;” (to which Theaetetus responds “ἀδύνατον.”) and “οὗ δὲ ἀληθείας τις ἀτυχήσει, ποτὲ τούτου ἐπιστήμων ἔσται;” (to which Theaetetus responds “καὶ πῶς ἄν, ὃ Σώκρατες;”).²¹ Before knowability is predicated off some thing like Beauty it must at least exist. In other words, it must be true to say that this knowable thing is not a γιγνόμενον. Consequently, if there is some object of knowledge to be found through the particulars (e.g., a beautiful thing leading one to knowledge of an eternal Beauty), the knowable thing must be prescinded from its instantiation in the mutable particular. Of note is one particular fragment of Heraclitus, with several valid interpretations: “ὁκόσων λόγους ἤκουσα οὐδεὶς ἀφικνεῖται ἐς τοῦτο ὥστε γινώσκειν ὅτι σοφὸν ἐστι, πάντων κεχωρισμένον.”²² Both readings anticipate some fundamental Platonic principles. Namely, the wise itself, as something transcendent, perhaps like a form or principle (or, for Heraclitus, *the* principle) by which the Demiurge creates all in the living and rational World Soul which Plato describes in the

20. Replacing the world “mutable” for “particular,” cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 86a to return to the triangle example. Or, replacing Plato’s ὁ ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει or “form/idea” for Aristotle’s “universal/cause,” cf. *Metaphysics* I.981a-b. According to both of these philosophers, knowledge cannot be found in the particular.

21. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 186c-d. “So then, is it possible for someone who doesn’t even get being to get truth?” (“It is not possible”) and “Will someone ever be a knower of this thing, the truth of which he has missed?” (“Well how could he, Socrates?”).

22. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B108. One interpretation is “Of as many people’s discourses I have heard, no one arrives at the point that he knows that the wise has been set apart from all,” while the other is “Of as many people’s discourses I have heard, no one arrives at the point that he knows what is the wise as something set apart from all.” The former translation takes ὅτι as the conjunction introducing indirect discourse/object clause, while the latter takes ὅτι as ὃ + τι, or the indirect interrogative. Additionally, as Charles Kahn points out, the gender of “πάντων” is ambiguous. Perhaps it is masculine and referring to men, or perhaps neuter and referring to things.

Philebus,²³ *Timaeus*,²⁴ and *Statesman*,²⁵ is set apart from all else in the transient world of particulars. Things which really are (*viz.*, eternal and not becoming/decaying away) cannot undergo change. The second interpretation is more epistemologically interesting. While people may come to some knowledge about the wise, or about the λόγος, or about anything else eternal, they can never come to a pure knowledge of such a thing, prescinded from its opposite. A person can “know” what the wise is, but only in the sense that his reasoning, thus his understanding, is discursive. He must also have knowledge of the non-being which is the “not wise.”

23. Plato, *Philebus*, “πόθεν, ὦ φίλε Πρώταρχε, [ψυχὴν] λαβόν, εἴπερ μὴ τό γε τοῦ παντός σῶμα ἔμψυχον ὃν ἐτύγγανε, ταῦτά γε ἔχον τούτῳ καὶ ἔτι πάντῃ καλλίονα;” (“When, dear Protarchus, did we get [our soul], unless the body of the all happened to be animate, since it has the same things as this (our body) and yet in every way finer.”)

24. Plato, *Timaeus*, “λογισάμενος οὖν ἡύρισκεν ἐκ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ὁρατῶν οὐδὲν ἀνόητον τοῦ νοῦν ἔχοντος ὅλον ὅλου κάλλιον ἔσεσθαι ποτε ἔργον, νοῦν δ’ αὖ χωρὶς ψυχῆς ἀδύνατον παραγενέσθαι τῷ. διὰ δὲ τὸν λογισμὸν τόνδε νοῦν μὲν ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴν δ’ ἐν σώματι συνιστάς τὸ πᾶν συνετεκταίετο, ὅπως ὅτι κ’ ἀλλιστον εἶη κατὰ φύσιν ἄριστον τε ἔργον ἀπειργασμένος. οὕτως οὖν δὲ κατὰ λόγον τὸν εἰκότα δεῖ λέγειν τόνδε τὸν κόσμον ζῶον ἔμψυχον ἔνουν τε τῇ ἀληθείᾳ διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι πρόνοιαν.” (“So, having reflected, he found that of those things visible by nature nothing without nous as a whole would be fairer than that which has nous as a whole, and in turn that it would be impossible that nous come about in something outside of soul. Therefore, because of this here reckoning, having framed nous in soul and soul in body, he set up the all, so that his finished work might be most fair and best. Thus, according to the likely account, it is necessary to say that this here cosmos has come into being as an animate, living being and it truly has nous due to the foresight of God.”)

25. Plato, *Statesman*, 269d-e “τὸ κατὰ ταῦτα καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν ἀεὶ καὶ ταῦτὸν εἶναι τοῖς πάντων θειοτάτοις προσήκει μόνοις, σώματος δὲ φύσις οὐ ταύτης τῆς τάξεως. ὃν δὲ οὐρανὸν καὶ κόσμον ἐπωνομάκαμεν, πολλῶν μὲν καὶ μακαρίων παρὰ τοῦ γεννήσαντος μετείληφεν, ἀτὰρ οὖν δὲ κεκοινώνηκε γὰρ καὶ σώματος; ὅθεν αὐτῷ μεταβολῆς ἀμοίρῳ γίγνεσθαι διὰ παντός ἀδύνατον, κατὰ δυνάμιν γὰρ μὴν ὅτι μάλιστα ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κατὰ ταῦτα μίαν φορὰν κινεῖται.” (“To hold to the same state and condition always and to be the same is fitting to the most divine of all alone, and the nature of body is not of this ordering. On the one hand, what we have given the name ‘heaven’ and ‘cosmos’ has its share of many blessed things from that which has generated it, but on the other hand it has partaken also in body, with the result that it is altogether impossible for it to have nothing to do with change, however it, as much as possible in it, it is moved in the same ways in a single motion.”)

Plato carries on a Heraclitean tradition of spurning bodily pleasures not only as insufficient, but also as not real. Heraclitus says, “ἐτέρα γὰρ ἵππου ἡδονὴ καὶ κυνὸς καὶ ἀνθρώπου, ὄνους σύρματ' ἂν ἐλέσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ χρυσόν· ἥδιον γὰρ χρυσοῦ τροπὴ ὄνοις.”²⁶ There is no such thing as the quality “pleasurable” inherit in a physical, transient object. Rather, that or whether such a thing is pleasurable is a relational quality/question – an interaction between the object found pleasurable or sweet and the perceiver who finds it sweet. There is a ἡδονή, yes, but only in the mind of the enjoyer and not independent of it. Socrates says that “ἐπιστήμης μηδὲν εἶναι κρεῖττον, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἀεὶ κρατεῖν, ὅπου ἂν ἐνῇ, καὶ ἡδονῆς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων”²⁷ and that “τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τὸ ἡδονῆς ἥττω εἶναι, ἀμαθία ἢ μεγίστη.”²⁸ A similar manner of reasoning is found in Plato’s *Euthyphro*. Socrates says to Euthyphro,

οὐκ ἄρα ὁ ἡρόμην ἀπεκρίνω, ὃ θαυμάσιε. οὐ γὰρ τοῦτό γε ἡρώτων, ὃ τυγχάνει ταῦτόν ὃν ὁσίον τε καὶ ἀνόσιον· ὁ δ' ἂν θεοφιλὲς ἦ καὶ θεομισέες ἐστίν, ὡς ἔοικεν. ὥστε, ὃ Εὐθύφρων, ὁ σὺ νῦν ποιεῖς τὸν πατέρα κολάζων, οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν εἰ τοῦτο δρῶν τῷ μὲν Διὶ προσφιλεῖς ποιεῖς, τῷ δὲ Κρόνῳ καὶ τῷ Οὐρανῷ ἐχθρόν, καὶ τῷ μὲν Ἥφαιστῳ φίλον, τῇ δὲ Ἥρᾳ ἐχθρόν, καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος τῶν θεῶν ἕτερος ἐτέρῳ διαφέρεται περὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκείνοις κατὰ τὰ αὐτά.²⁹

26. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B9. “Pleasure is different of horse and dog and man – [just as Heraclitus says] that asses would choose straw over gold, for to asses food is sweeter than gold.”

27. Plato, *Protagoras*, 357c, “Nothing is stronger than knowledge, but this (i.e., knowledge) is always in power, wherever it dwells, over both pleasure and all other things.”

28. Plato, *Protagoras*, 357e. “This is being a slave to pleasure: the greatest ignorance.”

29. Plato, *Euthyphro*, 8a-b. “So, you didn’t answer what I asked, marvelous man. For I wasn’t asking this – what same thing happens to be both holy and unholy. Whatever is dear to the gods is also hateful to them, so it seems. The result is, Euthyphro, that the thing which you are now doing in chastising your father, it would not be a shock if in doing this you do something pleasing to Zeus but hateful to Kronos and Ouranos, and dear to Hephaestus, but hateful to Hera, and if some other of the any other of the gods differs with another concerning it for them also in respect to the same things.”

The realness behind something like pleasure cannot be the same as something more “objective” (viz., object-dependent or subject-independent), such as whether things are hotter or colder than one another, or whether a mathematical equation is true or false. In a similar vein, when Heraclitus writes “ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὡυτή,”³⁰ the simplest explanation is that the direction of the way depends on the orientation of the traveler. The “way” is self-similar, and the road is “there” itself whether someone says one way is up or not – whether someone travels on it or not. In any case, appealing to quarreling gods or to the chance interlocutor is poor justification for some universal principle, definition, or characteristic.

There is, however, a fundamental difference between pleasure and the directions on a road. Pleasure is necessarily subjective, so it cannot be an object of knowledge. It is not “real” in the sense that it does not really exist. In the Platonic view, a particular road does not exist, but mathematical objects which can be abstracted from particulars do exist in the world of the intelligible. In Socrates analogy of a divided line, an image or drawing of a road and a particular road itself would be in the world of the sensible, but not a line.³¹ The points on this abstract line can be ordered, meaning that if and only if two points α and β on this line are not equal, then either α precedes β or β precedes α , usually notated $\alpha < \beta$ or $\beta < \alpha$, with the result (due to transitivity³²) that if $\alpha < \beta$ it is not true that $\beta < \alpha$. The particular order, though, is arbitrary. It is just a convention that left to right tends to be first to last, a convention that does not apply as much when reading, for example, a book written in Hebrew or Arabic. There is no real (using the

30. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B60. “The way up and down is one and the same.”

31. See Plato, *Republic*, VI.509d-511e.

32. Transitivity is the property that $\alpha < \beta$ and $\beta < \gamma$ implies $\alpha < \gamma$. If it were possible that both $\alpha < \beta$ and $\beta < \alpha$, then by transitivity $\alpha < \alpha$, which means α does not equal α , an absurdity.

word “real” technically) reason to say that left precedes right or up precedes down, but this distinction is more than just subjective opinion. That the points on a line are orderable is inherent to the line. Adding a second dimension, a curved line has a concave and a convex side, and without one there is not the other, but while the concave is different than the convex, there isn’t one without the other – they are inseparable. Such distinctions – preceding and proceeding, concave and convex – are not “real” distinctions, since they are necessarily tied to the same object, but they’re not entirely subjective like pleasure or opinion. Such an intermediate distinction would be later called by scholastic philosophers a “formal distinction.”³³

Heraclitus seems to be more pious than the Socrates of the *Euthyphro*. Heraclitus invokes the gods often in his fragments, sometimes with enigmatic messages. Most relevant to the discussion between Socrates and Euthyphro is the following: “ἐν τὸ σοφὸν μόνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα.”³⁴ Is “the wise” now not just an abstract form of sorts, but a personal god? Such an interpretation does not lead far. Charles Kahn remarks that this is a play on the word ζῆν – to live.³⁵ To live seems to involve a kind of duality – wishing and not wishing

33. The formal distinction was particularly important with the problem of universals and individuation. See Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, a. 39, q. 4. “*Et quantum ad praesens sufficit, sciendum est quod in creaturis ratio formalis qua fit formae individuation, negation est, non unica sed duplex: una qua negatur plurificatio naturae intra se; alia qua negatur identitas ad consimilem ei extra se, et qua negatur esse alicuius alterius ab illo cuius est.*” (“And this much will suffice for the present, that it be known that the formal reason in creatures by which individuation comes to the form is a negation, not one but twofold: the one by which multiplicity is denied within it; the other that by which identity is denied with something outside of it, and by which something is denied to be otherwise than that which it is.”) See also John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* II d. 3 p. 1, q. 4 (for his refutation of Henry of Ghent) and qq. 5-6 for his own theory.

34. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B32. “One, the wise alone, does not and does desires to be called the name of Zeus.”

35. Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 49.

at the same time – a unity of opposites (and in this case contradictories). There is a further issue, however, as Heraclitus writes, “πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεὺς καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δ’ ἐλευθέρους.”³⁶ Heraclitus identifies “the wise” with a seemingly ambivalent king of the gods (or, in another sense, with living itself), but this wisdom is subordinate to a more chaotic principle: war.

War, strife, and chaos seem to be more primary principles than order and structure in the Heraclitean worldview. Kahn writes,

Thus War figures not merely as a substitute for Zeus but as a kind of super-Zeus, like ‘the divine one’ of XXX (D. 114)... This personification of the chief cosmic principle, in terms of imagery normally associated with the king of the gods, prepares and explains the announcement that ‘the wise one alone is unwilling and willing...’³⁷

Behind the wise god of order, the king over all gods, is something which is appointed and lords over him: πόλεμος, or the “super-Zeus,” the first word of Fragment B53. Even more curious is the structure of the gods and men, slaves and free. Given the two instances of a “μὲν... δέ” construction, one possible reading of *Fragment* B53 is the following: the gods are coordinated, through the same particle μὲν, with slaves, while men are coordinated with the free through the particle δέ. In what sense are men freer than the gods? What kind of experiences are possible within the human condition? If the structure is chiastic and men are slaves, how so? Lastly, if there are some men or gods who are free and others who are slaves, what makes some free and others slaves?

36. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B53. “War is father of all and king of all, and some he has appointed as gods and some as men, some slaves and some free.”

37. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 208.

Men's freedom, as well as his slavery, is, at least according to Heraclitus or Plato, something involving his rational or divine nature. Men are still noetically closed off from a pure knowledge of real things. Of *Fragment B108* Kahn writes,

Heraclitus could easily have specified his meaning by adding the word 'men' or 'things' after 'all'. Since he did not choose to eliminate the ambiguity, it is not up to us to do so: the principle of hermeneutical generosity requires us to keep both options open. In this case there is good evidence to support both readings... (1) that wisdom is inaccessible to men... whereas (2) 'the wise' is asserted as a unique divine principle of the universe.³⁸

Plato would suggest that wisdom, pure knowledge of universal principles, is inaccessible. In the *Euthyphro* Socrates says, “μέμνησαι οὖν ὅτι οὐ τοῦτό σοι διεκελευόμην, ἔν τι ἢ δύο με διδάξαι τῶν πολλῶν ὁσίων, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ᾧ πάντα τὰ ὅσια ὅσια ἐστίν; ἔφησθα γάρ που μιᾷ ἰδέᾳ τὰ τε ἀνόσια ἀνόσια εἶναι καὶ τὰ ὅσια ὅσια: ἢ οὐ μνημονεύεις;”³⁹ Socrates claims that all Euthyphro has done is give him several ἰδέαι, while he is after the εἶδος. Generally, both of these terms are translated as “form,” but Plato's use of εἶδος and ἰδέα in the same sentence with different senses implies a distinction. In this case, the various ἰδέαι come by way of examples which involve simultaneously knowing what something is not as well as what it is. The single εἶδος is the pure thing in and of itself. Of the use of these terms in the *Theaetetus* Campbell suggests, “εἶδος seems earlier to have shaken itself clear of metaphor, and to have settled into an abstract meaning,” while “The word ἰδέα is a fair symbol of the union of reason and imagination in Plato.”⁴⁰ The ἰδέα is in part a product of the human mind – it is formed by the intellect's trying

38. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 115.

39. Plato, *Euthyphro*, 6d-e. “So, do you remember that I did not order you this thing: to teach me some one or two things of all things holy, but to teach me that very form by which all things holy are holy? For you were saying, methinks, that by one idea the unholy are unholy and the holy are holy, or do you not remember?”

40. Campbell, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 267, 269.

to understand the εἶδος. To truly access the form in and of itself, in this case of the holy, seems to be impossible, as the dialogue ends in aporia – specifically, a disgruntled and fleeing Euthyphro.

Though, some forms seem more inaccessible than others. The form of the Beautiful is particularly tied to the senses. It more than other forms is more accessible through and memorable from the aesthetic experience. In his palinode in the *Phaedrus* Socrates says concerning the Beautiful and the philosopher's soul,

ἐξιστάμενος δὲ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων σπουδασμάτων καὶ πρὸς τῷ θείῳ γιγνόμενος, νοουθετεῖται μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν ὡς παρακινῶν, ἐνθουσιάζων δὲ λέληθεν τοὺς πολλούς. ἔστι δὴ οὖν δεῦρο ὁ πᾶς ἥκων λόγος περὶ τῆς τετάρτης μανίας—ἣν ὅταν τὸ τῇδὲ τις ὁρῶν κάλλος, τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἀναμνησκόμενος, πτερῶται τε καὶ ἀναπτερούμενος προθυμούμενος ἀναπτέσθαι, ἀδυνατῶν δέ, ὄρνιθος δίκην βλέπων ἄνω, τῶν κάτω δὲ ἀμελῶν, αἰτίαν ἔχει ὡς μανικῶς διακείμενος⁴¹

The aesthetic experience – the μανία of someone enthralled by the Beautiful – someone leads one to and beyond the forms. People regard him as mad, which he is, but more importantly he is inspired - ἐνθουσιάζων. Distinguishing the Beautiful from other noble things, Socrates says,

δικαιοσύνης μὲν οὖν καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τίμια ψυχαῖς οὐκ ἔνεστι φέγγος οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς τῇδε ὁμοιώμασιν, ἀλλὰ δι' ἀμυδρῶν ὀργάνων μόγις αὐτῶν καὶ ὀλίγοι ἐπὶ τὰς εἰκόνας ἰόντες θεῶνται τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος: κάλλος δὲ τότε ἦν ἰδεῖν λαμπρόν, ὅτε σὺν εὐδαίμονι χορῷ μακαρίαν ὄψιν τε καὶ θέαν, ἐπόμενοι μετὰ μὲν Διὸς ἡμεῖς, ἄλλοι δὲ μετ' ἄλλου θεῶν, εἰδόν τε καὶ ἐτελοῦντο τῶν τελετῶν ἣν θέμις λέγειν μακαριωτάτην,⁴²

41. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 249c-d. “But, standing apart from human concerns and being engaged with the divine, he is admonished by the majority as if he is disturbed, but it has escaped the majority’s notice that he is inspired. Now, all of my speech coming up to this point is about the fourth (kind of) madness, which is the cause of someone being regarded as mad when he, seeing Beauty here, remembering the true (Beauty), grows wings and, raising up his feathers, desiring to fly up, but unable, in the manner of a bird looking up and neglecting the things below.”

42. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250b-c. “Well, of justice and prudence and of as many other things dear to souls there are, there is no light in the likenesses here, but merely a few, approaching images through their dim senses, see the class of that which has been imitated. But at that time there was Beauty, brilliant to behold, when with a blessed chorus, we following along with Zeus and others with another of the gods, we saw the blessed sight and spectacle and were initiated into that which is properly called the most blessed of rites.”

Beauty plays a unique role in a soul's reincarnation. It is the driving force behind the soul's ascent, but it is unique also because it is the most visible of the forms. This is perhaps why so many people confuse particular beautiful things for the abstract, pure Beauty. One example is Hippias in Plato's *Hippias Major*, which is one of Plato's anaporetic dialogues (along with the *Euthyphro*). Socrates sarcastically says to Hippias, “ὦ ἄνθρωπε, ἀγνοεῖς ὅτι τὸ τοῦ Ἡρακλείτου εὖ ἔχει, ὥς ἄρα ‘πιθήκων ὁ κάλλιστος αἰσχροὺς ἀνθρώπων γένει συμβάλλειν,’ καὶ χυτῶν ἢ καλλίστη αἰσχροὺς παρθένων γένει συμβάλλειν, ὥς φησιν Ἰππίας ὁ σοφός.”⁴³ Socrates's goal is “εἰπεῖν τί ἐστὶ τὸ καλόν,”⁴⁴ and specifically (and quite emphatically) “αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν.”⁴⁵ So, what is the beautiful? It probably isn't as subjective as pleasures which enslave the mind (and results in the aforementioned ἀμαθία ἢ μεγίστη), and hopefully it's more than just a formal distinction with no real, independent existence.

A notion similar to this could be seen in Kant's idea of the phenomena *vs.* noumena. The former are “known” via the various categories of understanding built into the human mind, while as of the latter Kant says, “Further, the concept of a noumenon is necessary, to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves, and thus to limit the objective validity of sensible knowledge.”⁴⁶ Much of Heraclitus's philosophy has an emphasis on experience – not

43. Plato, *Hippias Major*, 289a. “You sir, are you unaware that the saying of Heraclitus holds well, that ‘the most beautiful of monkeys is ugly compared to the race of men,’ and the most beautiful of pots ugly compared to the race of maidens, as Hippias the wise says?”

44. Plato, *Hippias Major*, 286d. “To say what is the beautiful.”

45. Plato, *Hippias Major*, 289c. “The beautiful itself – what in the world it is.”

46. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason: The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), A253/B310.

necessarily a rejection of τὸ σοφόν, but an acknowledgement of the human condition and its limitations. The other similarity, or Kahn's second point, is seen rather easily in Plato's *Timaeus*, where, again, the Demiurge/God creates “λογισάμενος” and “διὰ δὴ τὸν λογισμὸν τόνδε.”⁴⁷ In short, the human experience, if there should be something divine about it, fails to achieve the status of the divine reasoning of the creator of the world – hence comes Plato's idea of divine inspiration as madness.

In Lysias's speech and Socrates's first response in Plato's *Phaedrus*, the reader is presented with strange, yet perhaps somewhat compelling, arguments that non-lovers ought to be preferred to lovers in sexual relationships. Soon after giving his speech against the lover, however, Socrates recants. He says, “δεινόν, ὦ Φαῖδρε, δεινὸν λόγον αὐτός τε ἐκόμισας ἐμέ τε ἠνάγκασας εἰπεῖν.”⁴⁸ Nonetheless, both speeches have their place in the dialogue. They show the typical Socratic dialectic within which two interlocutors slowly whittle away at each other's ideas and meander to the truth, but there are some ideas that remain. One of these ideas is that there is something sickening or poisonous about love, i.e., the lover is mad. Curiously, the claim that the lover is mad is transformed from censure into praise. In the Platonic view of things, the divine madness of philosophical love, or, since φιλοσοφία literally just means “love of wisdom,” divine madness is true philosophy. Both speeches are in a sense drugs: φάρμακα. The φάρμακον of speeches is both a salutary and poisonous⁴⁹ deferment to whomever it influences. Plato

47. Plato, *Timaeus*, 30b. “Reasoning,” or “using λόγος,” and “according indeed to this λόγος.”

48. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 242d. “You yourself have brought a dreadful speech, Phaedrus, and a dreadful speech you have forced me to give.”

49. Cf. the maxim of Paracelsus, “*dosis sola facit venenum*.” (“Dose alone makes the poison.”)

portrays the philosopher's quest for wisdom as the super-rational (and thus irrational) and divinely-inspired quest for beauty, and that the dialogue itself is a pharmakon for us the readers.

Prior to analyzing love, which itself is relational (between a lover and a beloved), Socrates asserts that he and Phaedrus must first establish knowledge of the subject alone, i.e., of the person who will love or of the person who will be loved. He says, regarding the myth of Boreas, “οὐ δύναμαί πω κατὰ τὸ Δελφικὸν γράμμα γνῶναι ἑμαυτόν: γελοῖον δὴ μοι φαίνεται τοῦτο ἔτι ἀγνοοῦντα τὰ ἀλλότρια σκοπεῖν.”⁵⁰ Of the individual (*viz.*, himself), Socrates says, “δεῖ αὖ νοῆσαι ὅτι ἡμῶν ἐν ἐκάστῳ δύο τινέ ἐστιν ἰδέα ἄρχοντε καὶ ἄγοντε, οἷν ἐπόμεθα ἢ ἄν ἄγητον, ἡ μὲν ἔμφυτος οὖσα ἐπιθυμία ἡδονῶν, ἄλλη δὲ ἐπικτήτος δόξα, ἐφιεμένη τοῦ ἀρίστου.”⁵¹ Having this characterization of the subject, Socrates is then able to describe relationships between a subject and objects. He gives the name “hubris” (“ὕβρις”) to the state in which “ἐπιθυμίας δὲ ἀλόγως ἐλκούσης ἐπὶ ἡδονᾶς καὶ ἀρξάσης ἐν ἡμῖν τῇ ἀρχῇ,”⁵² followed by unsurprising examples of hubris (gluttony and drunkenness), but also, surprisingly, he calls love a form of hubris.

That Socrates characterizes love as hubris calls into question the philosopher's hierarchy of values. Of love Socrates says, “ἡ γὰρ ἄνευ λόγου δόξης ἐπὶ τὸ ὀρθὸν ὁρμῶσης κρατήσασα

50 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 229e-230a. “I am not yet able, according to the Delphic inscription, to know myself – indeed it seems to me laughable that I, still ignorant of this, look into matters of other things.”

51. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 237d. “In turn we must know that in each of us there are two ruling and leading ideas, which we follow wherever they should lead – the one being the inborn desire for pleasures, and the other acquired opinion which strives for the best.”

52. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 238a. “Desire dragging us illogically down to pleasures and ruling in first place in us.”

ἐπιθυμία πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἀχθεῖσα κάλλους . . . ἔρωσ ἐκλήθη.”⁵³ The enjoyment of beauty is the pleasure sought in the case of love. If irrationality wasn’t generally a vice, there would be no issue. But, after Phaedrus affirms that people say that Love is a god, Socrates retorts,

οὐ τι ὑπὸ γε Λυσίου, οὐδὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ σοῦ λόγου, ὃς διὰ τοῦ ἐμοῦ στόματος
καταφάρμακευθέντος ὑπὸ σοῦ ἐλέχθη. εἰ δ’ ἔστιν, ὥσπερ οὖν ἔστι, θεὸς ἢ τι θεῖον
ὁ Ἔρως, οὐδὲν ἂν κακὸν εἴη, τὸ δὲ λόγῳ τὸ νυνδὴ περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰπέτην ὥς
τοιούτου ὄντος.⁵⁴

The word “καταφάρμακευθέντος,” root of which is “φάρμακον,” is used here negatively, while its root can have either a positive or negative connotation – or both at the same time. Jacques Derrida says,

This *pharmakon*, this “medicine,” this philter, which acts as both remedy and poison, already introduces itself into the body of the discourse with all its ambivalence. This charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be – alternatively or simultaneously – beneficent or maleficent.⁵⁵

What is this *pharmakon*? For Socrates it was Lysias’s speech. Socrates says,

σὺ μέντοι δοκεῖς μοι τῆς ἐμῆς ἐξόδου τὸ φάρμακον ἠύρηκέναι. ὥσπερ γὰρ οἱ τὰ πεινῶντα θρέμματα θαλλὸν ἢ τινα καρπὸν προσείοντες ἄγουσιν, σὺ ἐμοὶ λόγους οὕτω προτείων ἐν βιβλίοις τήν τε Ἀττικὴν φαίνειν περιάξειν ἅπασαν καὶ ὅποι ἂν ἄλλοσε βούλῃ.⁵⁶

53. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 238c-d. “For the desire which, without reason (logos), has control over the opinion which strives towards the right, which is led towards the enjoyment of the beautiful . . . was called ‘love.’”

54. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 242d-e. “But not by Lysias, at least, and not by your speech, which was said through my mouth after it was bewitched/drugged by you. If Love is, as he indeed is, a god or something divine, he would be nothing evil, but the two speeches just now spoke as if he were such.”

55. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 70.

56. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 230d-e. “However, you seem to me to have found the *pharmakon* of my being led out. For just as men lead out hungry animals by displaying a branch or some fruit, you, holding out speeches so in front of me in books appear to be going to lead me around all Attica and wherever else you please.”

Socrates is led out – he is a victim to his intellectual curiosity. The speech, with truth deferred (if even there) and artfully concealed, drags him out of his normal haunt the city, which represents normal and mundane rationality. The speech, a *pharmakon*, also apparently compels him to censure Love. The speech of the Sophist, like Lysias’s, would be a bad *pharmakon*, since it doesn’t take the victim anywhere good or true. A good one might take the victim somewhere the opposite. Other drugs, however, are both good and bad, and, as Derrida points out, simultaneously. Such a dual nature is seen also in love.

Proper philosophical love is both beneficent and maleficent in that it that compels the lover towards a good object and overpowers reason and restraint. See Socrates’s description:

πρότερος ἦν λόγος Φαίδρου τοῦ Πυθοκλέους, Μυρρινουσίου ἀνδρός: ὃν δὲ μέλλω λέγειν, Στησιχόρου τοῦ Εὐφήμου, Ἱμεραίου. λεκτέος δὲ ὧδε, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστ’ ἔτυμος λόγος ὃς ἂν παρόντος ἐραστοῦ τῷ μὴ ἐρῶντι μᾶλλον φῆ δεῖν χαρίζεσθαι, διότι δὴ ὁ μὲν μαίνεται, ὁ δὲ σωφρονεῖ. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν ἀπλοῦν τὸ μανίαν κακὸν εἶναι, καλῶς ἂν ἐλέγετο: νῦν δὲ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἡμῖν γίγνεται διὰ μανίας, θεία μέντοι δόσει διδομένης.⁵⁷

First, Socrates tries to shift the blame. The former speech against love was “τοῦ Πυθοκλέους,” i.e., of inquiring for (πυνθάνομαι) or seeking honor and glory (κλέος), and he claims that his next speech will be “τοῦ Εὐφήμου,” or of a good omen/auspicious (εὐφημος). Lysias was sophistic, while Socrates will be pious and truthful. Secondly, madness is seen not as a pure negative; rather, the best things (“τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἀγαθῶν”) come about through it. Indeed madness, like love, is “ἄνευ λόγου,” but it is also “τι θεῖον,” and therefore something good.

57. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244a. “The former speech was of Phaedrus, son of Pythocles of Myrrhinus; but the one which I am about to speak is of Stesichorus, son of Euphemus of Himera. And it must be said that it is not a true speech which says that it is more necessary to gratify the lover even when the lover is present because the lover is mad and the non-lover is sane. For if it were simply the fact that madness was evil, it would be said well; but now the greatest of good things come to us through madness, indeed when sent as a divine gift.”

The philosopher's life, for Plato, is fundamentally an erotic life, and eroticism has priority over rationalism. It is a state of infatuation with the eternal Beautiful, and in the fact that the Beautiful is beautiful itself, it is by its nature unobtainable. One loves, or seeks, what he does not permanently have, and the embodied human soul at best can only temporarily maintain a state of enthused infatuation with the Beautiful. Similarly, there is a natural and perpetual deferment in writing, where the logos is kept away from the reader or listener, and in this way a speech is itself beautiful in that it has a certain unattainableness. Derrida says,

If speech could be purely present, unveiled, naked, offered up in person in its truth, without the detours of a signifier foreign to it, if at the limit an undeferred logos were possible, it would not seduce anyone. It would not draw Socrates, as if under the effects of a *pharmakon*, out of his way. Let us get ahead of ourselves. Already: writing, the *pharmakon*, the going or leading astray.⁵⁸

Speech and love both are leadings astray as if the lover or listener is under the effects of a *pharmakon*. Plato's criticism of writing demonstrates this. In the Egyptian myth of writing, Thamus says, “τοῦτο γὰρ τῶν μαθόντων λήθην μὲν ἐν ψυχαῖς παρέξει μνήμης ἀμελετησία, ἅτε διὰ πίστιν γραφῆς ἔξωθεν ὑπ’ ἀλλοτρίων τύπων, οὐκ ἔνδοθεν αὐτοὺς ὑφ’ αὐτῶν ἀναμνησκομένους: οὐκ οὖν μνήμης ἀλλὰ ὑπομνήσεως φάρμακον ἦρξες.”⁵⁹ Writing takes the person away from the truth, which for Socrates is found in the mind.⁶⁰

58. Derrida, *Dissemination*, 71.

59. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275a. “For this will furnish forgetfulness in the minds of those who have learned it by neglect of memory, not themselves remembering from themselves from within inasmuch as they are reminded through faith in writing by others’ characters from without; for you have not discovered a *pharmakon* of memory but of reminding.”

60. After all, for Plato, knowledge is just remembering. This is why in *Phaedrus*, 249b, Socrates says, “οὐ γὰρ ἢ γε μήποτε ἰδοῦσα τὴν ἀλήθειαν εἰς τόδε ἦξει τὸ [ἀνθρώπινον] σχῆμα” (“For the soul which has never seen the truth will never come into this human form.”), and so, knowledge is internal, while writing takes someone out of himself and, as Derrida puts, towards truth deferred.

In Socrates's analogy of the charioteer and the two horses, we also see the positive and negative natures of *pharmakon* with the two horses. Socrates says, “καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἡμῶν ὁ ἄρχων συνωρίδος ἡνιοχεῖ, εἴτα τῶν ἵππων ὁ μὲν αὐτῷ καλὸς τε καὶ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐκ τοιούτων, ὁ δ' ἐξ ἐναντίων τε καὶ ἐναντίος: χαλεπὴ δὴ καὶ δύσκολος ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ περὶ ἡμᾶς ἡνιόχησις.”⁶¹ Yes, we are at the reigns of the chariot, and it is said that we are the drivers, but really we are forced to follow. We are driven by the horses – our desires. A *pharmakon* is irresistible. Even in the case of philosophical love that drives us toward a good object, we do not do so willingly. With philosophical love, we are divinely possessed and under compulsion. The soul, though, while its different “parts” can be represented as different creatures, has no real distinctions. The faculties of the soul are only formally distinct. For Plato, there is a real distinction between the soul and the body. First, the soul is “liberated” from the body upon death, and further, the body decays (is a γινόμενον) while the soul is eternal. Upon death, though, the soul is not split apart. The type of reincarnation a soul goes through is determined by which “part” was dominant, but the rational portion of the soul is necessarily tied up with the desirous.

The *Phaedrus* itself as a dialogue represents the themes of the beautiful which Plato wants to get across to his reader. Socrates is led astray, enticed, or carried away, blaming his being drugged by Phaedrus's *pharmakon*. At the same time, we the readers are led astray. We have been drugged by Plato's *pharmakon*, the *Phaedrus*. We are carried off by the wit and humor of Socrates and Phaedrus's interactions. We buy into whatever points seem appealing about favoring the non-lover and are challenged ourselves as Socrates challenges previous points. We are dragged along through the myths, all the while trying to figure out what good or

61. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246b. “And first, the one ruling over us drives a pair of horses, then one of the horses is beautiful and good and of such stock, but the other is of opposite stock and is opposite. Indeed, it is necessary that driving in our case is difficult and troublesome.”

harm love is. For us, truth is deferred both in the fact that we simply reading frozen letters and in the way Plato has designed his dialogue.

That a speech or written work is a drug, both salutary and poisonous, and not one property without the other, and that the spoken or written word is at the same time the very thing by which philosophy takes place and the very limitation on philosophy are very Heraclitean notions. This unity of opposites is intrinsically bound to the erotic quest of the philosopher, but while Heraclitus considers the unity of opposites the explanation of all of existence, Plato rejects this thesis. In the Platonic metaphysic the forms are distinct and only themselves – to the exclusion of all other attributes. Bad cannot be predicated of the Good, and ugly cannot be predicated of the Beautiful. Yet the philosophical mania seems to go beyond the tidy, distinct forms. While the forms are brought into the cosmos through the λόγος, we see that Plato considers the philosopher's desire for the beautiful to be without λόγος. Is the Beautiful even a form then?

Chapter Three: The Non-Heraclitean Plato

Let's return to that Aristotle quote: “ἐκ νέου τε γὰρ συνήθης γενόμενος πρῶτον Κρατύλῳ καὶ ταῖς Ἡρακλειτείσι δόξαις, ὡς πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀεὶ ρεόντων καὶ ἐπιστήμης περὶ αὐτῶν οὐκ οὔσης, ταῦτα μὲν καὶ ὕστερον οὕτως ὑπέλαβεν.”⁶² Aristotle is technically correct – Plato did think there was no knowledge in sensibles – but the followers of Heraclitus had a different position. Plato himself wrote, “λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι ‘πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει,’ καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῇ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς ‘δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης.’”⁶³ One common translation, that of Harold Fowler, renders “τὰ ὄντα” as “the universe.”⁶⁴ At best this translation is vague and open to several interpretations, but at worse it completely misses the mark. What is the universe? The word “κόσμος” can be fairly translated as just “cosmos” which refers to the physical universe, but the English term misses out on the other senses of κόσμος: order and adornment. Phrases such as τὰ πάντα or τὸ πᾶν are better translated as “universe.” Another translation, closer to the Greek and far more preferable, is that of C. D. C. Reeves “the things that are.”⁶⁵

There is a crucial difference for Plato between τὰ αἰσθητά are τὰ οὐκ ὄντα. As for “the universe,” is it the sum of sensibles, the sum of things which exist, or the sum of both? It is necessary to include the sum of both as a third possibility, since, as Aristotle pointed out, Plato

62. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.987a. See footnote 14.

63. Plato, *Cratylus*, 402a. “You see, Heraclitus says that ‘all things flow and nothing remains,’ and, likening the things which are to the stream of a river, he says, ‘you wouldn’t step into the same river twice.’”

64. Plato, “*Cratylus*,” in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 12, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 402a.

65. Plato, “*Cratylus*,” in *Plato: Complete Works*, trans. C. D. C. Reeves (Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1997), 402a.

viewed the sensible as not really existing. I will use the term “universe” to refer to either τὰ πάντα or τὸ πᾶν and avoid its use in other circumstances. Let τὰ πάντα as a set or genus which contains within it forms and particulars. To use Porphyry’s language, what is the εἰδοποιὸς διαφορά⁶⁶ which separates particulars from forms? The specific difference is whether or not something is in flux. τὰ γινόμενα are mutable particulars, while τὰ ὄντα are immutable forms.

Aristotle pointed out that Plato saw the world of flux as a world of non-being, while the Heracliteans viewed all of being, τὰ ὄντα, as flux. The *Cratylus* is Plato’s own account of how he departs from strict Heraclitean philosophy. David Sedley writes,

“In the *Cratylus* the issue of the relation of dialectic to Plato’s own thought becomes crucial for two reasons. First, both styles of dialectic – the co-operative and the adversarial – play their part in it. Second, there is a very particular circumstance that enables Plato’s own thinking to be read off from the flow of the conversation. I mean by this the fact that the two main points of view that, as the dialogue proceeds, come increasingly into conflict, represent two main elements of Plato’s own intellectual background. For the confrontation is between the thinker who was the first major intellectual influence on Plato, namely Cratylus, and Socrates, to whom Plato in due course definitively transferred his allegiance.”⁶⁷

Concerning aspectual flux (*viz.*, what is being beautiful in one aspect but ugly in another), Sedley writes, “When Plato wants to illustrate this broad kind of flux, he typically opts for value terms, most frequently ‘beautiful’ (*Smp.* 211a, *Phd.* 78d-e, *Rep.* V.479a-d).”⁶⁸ The take away is that beautiful is, more than other transcendentals, more dependent on the viewer, i.e., because it is seen more than other forms within the particular it is somehow tied more to the particular.

Socrates describes this relation to the particular, however, as a kind of pull. He says,

66. See Porphyry, *Isagoge*, sec. 3 “Περὶ διαφορᾶς” for use of “specific” or “species-making difference.”

67. Sedley, *Plato’s Cratylus*, 2.

68. Sedley, *Plato’s Cratylus*, 111.

εἰ τῷ ὄντι μὲν οἱ θέμενοι αὐτὰ διανοηθέντες γε ἔθεντο ὡς ἰόντων ἀπάντων ἀεὶ καὶ
ρέόντων—φαίνονται γὰρ ἔμοιγε καὶ αὐτοὶ οὕτω διανοηθῆναι—τὸ δ', εἰ ἔτυχεν,
οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει, ἀλλ' οὗτοι αὐτοὶ τε ὥσπερ εἷς τινα δίνην ἐμπεσόντες κυκῶνται
καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐφελκόμενοι προσεμβάλλουσιν. σκέψαι γάρ, ὃ θαυμάσιε Κρατύλε, ὃ
ἔγωγε πολλάκις ὀνειρώττω. πότερον φῶμέν τι εἶναι αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἐν
ἑκάστων τῶν ὄντων οὕτω, ἢ μή;⁶⁹

To this Cratylus replies the affirmative. Beauty is lumped in with other forms, however. Sedley comments, “Although his dreamlike awareness of them no doubt means that he lacks definitional knowledge of them, he now goes on to show that he nevertheless has some *a priori* understanding of what *kind* of things they must be (439d-440a).”⁷⁰ He says further,

He is securing Cratylus’ agreement, not that the Form is unchanging, but that, if nothing else, it will always be true to say of the Beautiful itself that it is beautiful. This ‘self-predication’ assumption, that any property is truly predicable of itself, is one of the enduringly controversial elements in Plato’s metaphysics, but what does seem clear to me is that Plato considered it the most self-evident of all possible truths.⁷¹

Plato does affirm that forms are necessarily immutable (otherwise they would not exist), but as Sedley points out, Socrates is getting Cratylus to admit that the forms are finite and simple – that they are self-predicating.

69. Plato, *Cratylus*, 439c-d. “If truly those who have posited those (names) posited them with the opinion that all things were always moving and flowing – for it seems to me at least that these too are of this opinion – but perchance this is not the case, but rather that these men themselves, having fallen into some kind of whirlpool, they are stirred about and, dragging us down, they throw us in too. For consider, marvelous Cratylus, what I at least often dream about: whether we should assert that that the Beautiful itself is a thing, and the good, and each one of the things which exist in this manner, or not?”

Some texts have “ἔμοιγε καὶ αὐτῷ,” See Ademollo, *The Cratylus of Plato*, 449 for details and discussion.

70. Sedley, *Plato’s Cratylus*, 168.

71. Sedley, *Plato’s Cratylus*, 169. Sedley notes that the term “self-predication” was introduced by Gregory Vlastos. See Gregory Vlastos, “The Third Man argument in the *Parmenides*,” *Philosophical Review* 63 (1954): 324. I will also be using the language of “self-predication.”

Plato rejects that all things are under the rule of flux. Heraclitus seems to stop at the aforementioned kinds of “formal” differences, since for Heraclitus everything is under the rule of chaos. For Plato this could be no basis for “τὰ ὄντα.” Socrates asks, “τί τὸ ὄν αἰεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον, καὶ τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεί, ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε;”⁷² When faced with the choice of embracing changeable things as real or worthy of believe, Plato chooses to reject them by making a dichotomy between eternal/immutable and transient/mutable. Heraclitus goes the other way. C. J. Emlyn-Jones writes,

The intentions of Heraclitus, as far as they can legitimately be recovered, seem to suggest that the identity of opposites and the consequent paradox are not primarily the result of reflection upon the various ways in which opposites are related... The identity of opposites is presented as a mystery which has objective existence outside men and controls their lives, although it is only dimly grasped by most of them.⁷³

Heraclitus believes there is a legitimacy to the experience of the mutable and all the mystery associated with it. Matthew Colvin writes as well that “The Heracliteans’ refusal to play the dialectical game, and their preferred oracular style, are thus contrasted unfavourably with Socrates’ way of doing philosophy. Plato is playing upon the apothegmatic quality of Heraclitus’ own prose; upon his famed obscurity of expression; and upon the flux doctrine.”⁷⁴ He goes on further to say that Plato misunderstood Heraclitus’ thoughts on flux, saying,

Plato’s Heraclitean flux is not Heraclitus’ flux, but is far more radical and epistemologically upsetting. Further, Plato’s compresence of opposites is not

72. Plato, *Timaeus*, 27d. “What is being always but that which has no beginning, and what is becoming always but that which never is?”

73. C. J. Emlyn-Jones, “Heraclitus and the Identity of Opposites,” *Phronesis* 21, no. 2 (1976): 89-114. Accessed May 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4181981>, 113-4.

74. Matthew Colvin, “Heraclitean Flux and Unity of Opposites in Plato’s ‘Theaetetus’ and ‘Cratylus,’” *The Classical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2007): 765. Accessed May 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27564109>.

Heraclitus' unity of opposites... This altered version of Heraclitus' philosophy seems to have prevented later philosophers from grasping Heraclitus' own intended point about flux: namely, its harmonious unity with stability.⁷⁵

This is the mystery and the marvel: the similarity of things with their opposites in and of themselves, and the concord between unity and flux – unity in flux and flux in unity.

The unity of the opposites – the perplexing and shadowy Heraclitean doctrine of being and flux – is founded upon a marvel at the nature of the world. That the day and night consistently follow one another, that there is not one without the other, is something wonderful, and Plato misses out on the wonder. Heraclitus writes, “διδάσκαλος δὲ πλείστων Ἡσίοδος· τοῦτον ἐπίστανται πλεῖστα εἰδέναι, ὅστις ἡμέρην καὶ εὐφρόνην οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν· ἔστι γὰρ ἓν.”⁷⁶ Normal philosophers who get their start from Hesiod get bogged down in drawing distinction after distinction. They fail to see the unity of the two opposites and how the experience of such is wondrous. On this unity of day and night, William Desmond writes,

And Heraclitus's obscurity... we might now see that this is not as due to a dearth of intelligibility but rather to excess of intelligibility, excess hyperbolic to determinate and self-determining intelligibility. There is a light that blinds us; there is a night that arouses perplexity that is more ultimate than the certainties of determinate day. Heraclitus invites us into that night and into that light.⁷⁷

And behind this blinding light is a fire, as Heraclitus says, “ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός [πάναντία ἅπαντα· οὗτος ὁ νοῦς,] ἀλλοιοῦται δὲ ὅκωσπερ πῦρ,

75. Colvin, “Heraclitean Flux and Unity of Opposites,” 768-9.

76. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B57. “Hesiod is the teacher of most. They are convinced that this man knows the most, who did not recognize day and night – as it they are one.”

77. William Desmond, “Flux-Gibberish: For and Against Heraclitus,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 70, no. 3 (2017): 502. Accessed May 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44806952>.

ὅποταν συμμιγῇ θνώμασιν, ὀνομάζεται καθ' ἡδονὴν ἐκάστου.”⁷⁸ Fire, destructive, marvelous, and consuming – πόλεμος – forms the backbone of all. Of this Thomas Robinson writes, “Fiery in its nature, the real manifests rationality because of the intrinsic rationality, Heraclitus claims, of fire itself. This is nowhere more apparent than in the case of the human soul, which is least rational when wet and at its most rational and good when dry.”⁷⁹ The human soul is rendered damp and torpid by shying away from the fire. Plato, according to Heraclitus, should have stayed in the sun a bit more, rather than talk about it as an analogy to something self-predicating. Plato viewed it as a limitation for men that they can only know things via what they are opposite too, but Heraclitus saw this as a statement about reality. He says, “αἰὼν παῖς ἐστι παίζων, πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη.”⁸⁰ Desmond says, “The child plays with itself, but this seems to be to be an incomplete image if we forget that without the other playing with the child, worlds, like words, do not take on the constancy of form that we do not find in the cosmos that communicates.”⁸¹ For Heraclitus the basis of the real is this experience that Plato rejects as insufficient and unsubstantial. Heraclitus, with his praise of experience, I contend is a “proto-phenomenologist.” As a competitive game has two players, any experience or knowledge of something has along with it the negative experience of what is not and the knowledge of what that thing is not. In this sense, all that which is involves the unity of opposites – and on the same

78. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B67. “The god is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger (all opposite things; this is nous), but he takes various forms, just as <fire>, when it is mixed with incenses, is named according to the savoring of each.

79. Thomas M. Robinson, “Heraclitus and Plato on the Language of the Real,” *The Monist* 74, no. 4 (1991): 486. Accessed May 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27903258>.

80. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B52. “Lifetime is for children playing, playing draughts – the kingdom of a child.”

81. Desmond, “Flux-Gibberish: For and Against Heraclitus,” 505.

foundation of experience is that all things are in flux, and in that is unity. When given the preference of a divine and stagnant wisdom or a divine, Dionysian experience, Heraclitus would go for the latter every time, while Plato can't decide.

In the end, though, Plato did not come to have the same view as the followers of Heraclitus on being and the unity of opposites. Ultimately Heraclitus accepted flux and the unity of opposites as a basis for reality, while Plato rejected it as the applicable to the real. Sedley says,

“Socrates’ final move is a rejection of the flux thesis (440b4-d4), and, along with it, of trust in the name-makers. Assuming that there are enduring subjects and objects of knowledge, and also, as this presupposes, enduring beings such as the Beautiful itself and the Good itself, we would have to reject flux as an adequate account of being. Socrates does not claim to have definitively refuted flux, but he does claim at the very least to have shown how unwise it would be to believe in it merely on the say-so of the original name-makers.”⁸²

Flux is an adequate explanation for the sensible, but not for certain properties seen through sensible things, such as the Beautiful. As in the *Phaedrus*, in which a divine madness drives one towards beauty through love, Agathon brings the focus of his encomium of Eros to beauty. He says,

ὅθεν δὴ καὶ κατεσκευάσθη τῶν θεῶν τὰ πράγματα Ἔρωτος ἐγγενομένου, δῆλον ὅτι κάλλους—αἵσχει γὰρ οὐκ ἐπὶ ἔρωι—πρὸ τοῦ δέ, ὥσπερ ἐν ἀρχῇ εἶπον, πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ θεοῖς ἐγένετο, ὡς λέγεται, διὰ τὴν τῆς ἀνάγκης βασιλείαν: ἐπειδὴ δ' ὁ θεὸς οὗτος ἔφθ, ἐκ τοῦ ἐρᾶν τῶν καλῶν πάντ' ἀγαθὰ γέγονεν καὶ θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις.⁸³

Though Agathon's speech is subsequently corrected by Diotima's, the takeaways are that beauty is tied to love. Diotima says,

82. Sedley, *Plato's Cratylus*, 171.

83. Plato, *Symposium*, 197b. “Hence also those dealings of the gods were arranged when Love came about in them – clearly the (love) of beauty, since love has no concern with the ugly – and in the time before, as I said in the beginning, many terrible things came about for the gods, as is told, because of the rule of necessity. But since this god arose, from the love of the beautiful things many good things have come about for both gods and men.”

μὲν κεφάλαιόν ἐστι πᾶσα ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμία καὶ τοῦ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὁ “μέγιστός τε καὶ δολερὸς ἔρως” παντί: ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν ἄλλῃ τρεπόμενοι πολλαχῇ ἐπ’ αὐτόν, ἢ κατὰ χρηματισμὸν ἢ κατὰ φιλογυμνασίαν ἢ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν, οὔτε ἔρᾶν καλοῦνται οὔτε ἐρασταί, οἱ δὲ κατὰ ἓν τι εἶδος ἰόντες τε καὶ ἐσπουδακότες τὸ τοῦ ὅλου ὄνομα ἰσχυοσιν, ἔρωτά τε καὶ ἐρᾶν καὶ ἐρασταί.⁸⁴

It is easy to see how “μέγιστός τε καὶ δολερὸς ἔρως” refers to the “Pandemic” love of particulars, or that which passes away – the kind of love which causes lovers to commit all kinds of shameful deeds, but madness and divine inspiration are kinds of deception.

Diotima goes on to tell Socrates exactly what the Beautiful is. She says,

πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον, ἔπειτα οὐ τῇ μὲν καλόν, τῇ δ’ αἰσχρόν, οὐδὲ τοτὲ μὲν, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ, οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρόν, οὐδ’ ἔνθα μὲν καλόν, ἔνθα δὲ αἰσχρόν, ὥς τισι μὲν ὄν καλόν, τισι δὲ αἰσχρόν: οὐδ’ αὖ φαντασθήσεται αὐτῷ τὸ καλὸν οἷον πρόσωπόν τι οὐδὲ χεῖρες οὐδὲ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ὧν σῶμα μετέχει, οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη, οὐδέ που ὄν ἐν ἑτέρῳ τινι, οἷον ἐν ζῳῳ ἢ ἐν γῇ ἢ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἢ ἐν τῷ ἄλλῳ, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μεθ’ αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς αἰεὶ ὄν, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα καλὰ ἐκείνου μετέχοντα τρόπον τινὰ τοιοῦτον, οἷον γιγνομένων τε τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἀπολλυμένων μηδὲν ἐκείνο μήτε τι πλεον μήτε ἔλαττον γίνεσθαι μηδὲ πάσχειν μηδέν.⁸⁵

84. Plato, *Symposium*, 205d. “In general, all the eagerness for good things and for being happy is love ‘great and deceptive’ for all. But those who are in many other ways turned towards him, either concerning making money or gymnastics or philosophy, neither are they said to love nor are they called lovers, but those go pursuing and are eager according to some one species keep the name of the whole – both love and loving and being lovers.”

85. Plato, *Symposium*, 210e-211b. “First (you will see) that it always is and neither coming into being or going out of being, nor increasing nor waning, next, not in one way beautiful but in another way ugly, not at some time (beautiful) and at another time not, nor beautiful in relation to one thing but ugly in relation to another, nor beautiful here and ugly there, nor beautiful as if for some but ugly as for others (i.e., in their opinions), nor in turn will the beautiful appear to him like some face or hands or anything else which the body has a share of, nor some description or piece of knowledge, nor existing somewhere in something else, for example in a living thing or in earth or the sky or anything else, but itself by itself with itself always existing as one form, and all the other beautiful things having a share in it in some such way as to, though the rest (of beautiful things) come into being and are destroyed, it (absolute beauty) in no way becomes greater or less or undergoes anything.”

This is all well and good, and this perfectly describes what the form of the Beautiful is. It is permanent, unchanging, and totally beautiful independent of viewers. The form of the Beautiful is self-predicating. The Beautiful is beautiful and only beautiful. It is finite and complete – perfect. But this does not tell us anything more about the form of the beautiful than any other form. The Good is totally good and only good. The Just is just and only just. So, what is the form of the Beautiful *vs.* any other form?

There would not be an issue if Plato did not identify the Beautiful with the Good. Socrates catches Agathon by asking “καὶ μὴν καλῶς γε εἶπες, φάναι, ὃ Ἀγάθων. ἀλλὰ σμικρὸν ἔτι εἰπέ: τὰγαθὰ οὐ καὶ καλὰ δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι;”⁸⁶ By this question Socrates seems to suggest that good implies beautiful. Diotima, who was very careful to not conflate contraries and contradictories, herself conflates the transcendentals. She asks Socrates, “πῶς ἂν οὖν θεὸς εἴη ὃ γε τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἅμοιρος;”⁸⁷ Grube says, “This tendency to identify Good and Beautiful, which is completed in Plato, was a natural result of Greek humanism, and it led to the further identification of Beauty and Usefulness.”⁸⁸ If forms are self-predicating, that good implies beautiful means one of two things: 1) either the form of the Good *is* the form of the Beautiful, and therefore the distinction between the predicates “good” and “beautiful” are not real distinctions, or 2) at least one of the forms of the Good or the Beautiful are not actually forms. This is a problem for the Platonists, since they want to believe that everything good can

86 Plato, Symposium, 201c. “‘And yet you spoke well (that was a beautiful speech), Agathon,’” he said ‘But still, tell me a little: does the good also not seem to you to be beautiful?’”

87. Plato, Symposium, 202d. “So, how would he be a god, who has not share in the beautiful and the good?”

88. G. M. A. Grube, “Plato’s Theory of Beauty,” *The Monist* 37, no. 2 (1927): 270.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27901113>.

be explained by a form. If the Beautiful is good, shouldn't it be able to be prescinded from particulars *and* other forms? If it is necessarily tied up with the Good, and, worse, mundane and "useful" things, there is a problem. Plotinus saw this problem.

Chapter Four: Augustine and Plotinus

Verumtamen cum reminiscor lacrimas meas, quas fudi ad cantus ecclesiae in primordiis recuperatae fidei meae, et nunc ipsum cum moveor non cantu, sed rebus quae cantantur cum liquida voce et convenientissima modulatione cantantur, magnam instituti huius utilitatem rursus agnosco. Ita fluctuo inter periculum voluptatis et experimentum salubritatis magisque adducor non quidem irretractabilem sententiam proferens cantandi consuetudinem approbare in Ecclesia, ut per oblectamenta aurium infirmior animus in affectum pietatis assurgat. Tamen cum mihi accidit, ut me amplius cantus quam res, quae canitur, moveat, poenaliter me peccare confiteor et tunc malletm non audire cantantem. Ecce ubi sum! Flete mecum et pro me flete qui aliquid boni vobiscum intus agitis, unde facta procedunt.⁸⁹

This passage is problematic to someone who recalls Augustine's Platonic philosophical background. Isn't Augustine a through-and-through Platonist, and doesn't Plato laud beauty as something inspirational on the philosopher's path? In the strictly Platonic sense (*viz.*, Plato, specifically), this passage does pose a problem: it seems to conflict with Plato's encomia of Beauty, chief of which is found in his *Symposium*.⁹⁰ Yet, through the Neoplatonic lens, Augustine's concern about beauty makes sense. Plotinus's departure from Plato concerning the Beautiful is the necessary context for this passage. In this chapter I first will go through the necessary Platonic background of Augustine and Plotinus. Then, I will go through the

89. Augustine, *Confessionum Libri XIII*, X.33.50, PL 32. "Nonetheless, when I recall my tears which I shed at the songs of the church at the first beginnings of the recuperation of my faith, and when I myself am not moved by the singing, but by the things which are sung with clear voice and sung with most the harmonious modulation, I in turn acknowledge the great utility of this custom. Thus, I fluctuate between the danger of delight and the experience of salubriousness, and I am more led (though I certainly do not profess this as an unretractable sentiment) to approve of the usage of singing in church, so that through the delights of the ears the weaker mind may rise to the affect of piety. Nevertheless, when it happens to me that the song, rather than the thing sung, moves me more, I confess that I sin in a manner worthy of punishment, and then I would rather not hear the one singing. See where I am! Weep with me, and weep for me, you who conduct something of good with yourselves interiorly, whence deeds proceed."

90. Plato, *Symposium*, 210e-211b. See footnote 85.

fundamentals of Plotinus's three hypostases and his own thoughts on beauty. Finally, I will show how Plotinus is not strictly Platonic – how Neoplatonism is not only a development of, but also a subtle departure from, Classical Platonism.

In his own words, Augustine was inspired by the Platonists. He says, referencing Romans 1:20, “*Sed tunc lectis Platonicorum illis libris posteaquam inde admonitus quaerere incorpoream veritatem invisibilia tua per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspexi.*”⁹¹ Henry Chadwick, though, notes that these were not Platonic dialogues, but rather that “Translated by Marius Victorinus, the texts were of Plotinus and his disciple Porphyry.”⁹² Chadwick states that “Plotinus provided Augustine with a model and a vocabulary for a mystical quest directed to the union of the soul with God in a beatific vision,”⁹³ and that furthermore “when [Augustine] describes the vision at Ostia shared by Monica and himself... the vocabulary is deeply indebted to Plotinus.”⁹⁴

Augustine's transfer to (Neo)platonism was instigated by his disillusionment with Manichaeism. He found much of their philosophy lacking, but held out hope that fellow disciples of Mani were just not equipped to answer his questions. Augustine writes that the other Manichaeans “...[*Faustum*] mihi promittebant, cuius adventu collatoque colloquio facillime mihi

91. Augustine, *Confessionum*, VII.20.26. “But, then, with those books of the Platonists having been read, having been admonished by them to seek the incorporeal truth, I beheld your invisible things, understood through those things which have been made.”

92. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121.

93. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, xxi. Additionally, if inference may be made from Chadwick's abundant footnotes concerning Plotinus, the *Confessions* are replete with references to Plotinus's work and Neoplatonic philosophy.

94. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, xxiii.

haec et si qua forte maiora quaererem enodatissime expedirentur.”⁹⁵ Augustine was nonetheless disappointed, and no small portion of his writing is devoted to pointing out how foolish and self-contradictory he believed their philosophy to be.⁹⁶ In his mind, the Manichaeans were duped by polished and vapid words – the truth of a statement has nothing to do with how beautifully it is stated.⁹⁷

Plotinus, in a similar vein, was anti-Gnostic. Plotinus’s chief disciple, Porphyry, states, “Ὅθεν αὐτὸς μὲν πολλοὺς ἐλέγχους ποιούμενος ἐν ταῖς συνουσίαις, γράψας δὲ καὶ βιβλίον ὅπερ Πρὸς τοὺς Γνωστικούς ἐπεγράψαμεν, ἡμῖν τὰ λοιπὰ κρίνειν καταλέλοιπεν.”⁹⁸ Paul Kalligas summarizes Plotinus’s position as follows:

Plotinus’s stance towards Gnosticism is one of deep concern not for the doctrinal differences it presented in respect with his own philosophical system, but for the effects its world-view could have on people who might possibly lose their confidence in the unlimited and uncompromised goodness of the origin of all. The derivation of the whole of reality from a single source, identified as the Good itself, necessitates the emergence of deficiencies and imperfections as the complexity of the total structure and the distance from its source increase. But for

95. Augustine, *Confessionum*, V.6.10. “...assured me of [Faustus], at whose arrival and whose conversation, once it came together, these things and any greater things if I sought them, would be most clearly explained to me.”

96. The *Patrologia Latina* contains ten works of Augustine whose titles contain “Against the Manichees” in some form or another.

97. Augustine, *Confessionum*, V.6.10. “*Iam ergo abs te didiceram nec eo debere videri aliquid verum dici, quia eloquenter dicitur, nec eo falsum, quia incomposite sonant signa labiorum... sed perinde esse sapientiam et stultitiam sicut sunt cibi utiles et inutiles.*” (“For I have now learned from you that something ought not to seem to be said as true due to the fact that it was said eloquently, nor false for the fact that signs from lips make sounds clumsily... but that wisdom and stupidity are equally as food profitable or useless.”)

98. Porphyry, *Περὶ τοῦ Πλωτίνου βίου καὶ τῆς Τάξεως τῶν Βιβλίων Αὐτοῦ* (*On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books*), 16. “He hence, making many reproaches against them in our conferences, and having written a book also which we have given the title “Against the Gnostics,” left it to us so that we can examine the rest (i.e., what he left out).”

him this should not blind us to the fact that the unlimited power of this ultimate source of Being encompasses even the remotest reflections of it and provides them with an, ever dimmer perhaps, but nevertheless redeeming aspiration towards itself.⁹⁹

The Gnostics (Manichaeans included), with their over-obsession on evil, fail to recognize that there is a single source of all. Both Plotinus and Augustine fight against the Gnostic notion that there is a positive reality to evil. Evil is a privation and corruption. The forms, and wherever they come from, are solely good things.

For Plato, one of the chief forms, and thus sources of goodness, is the Beautiful.

Particular instances of beauty compel the person who contemplates them to consider beauty as an abstract. Socrates's Diotima says of the man who has seen many beautiful things, i.e., Beauty in many things, "ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαιος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ θεωρῶν πολλοὺς καὶ καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τίκτηι καὶ διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ."¹⁰⁰ At the end of this man's ascent, past the particulars and imperfection in the world of appearances, is pure and simple Beauty. This Beauty is described by Diotima as perfectly, simply, and totally beautiful.¹⁰¹

The form Beauty is self-predicating. The Beautiful is beautiful, and in no way is it not, and it simply is beautiful. In fact, all forms are such: the Good is good, the True is true, the Just just, *etc.*¹⁰² Furthermore, these forms are what truly exist, as they are eternal. Particular things

99. Paul Kalligas. "Plotinus against the Gnostics." *Hermathena*, no. 169 (2000): 128. Accessed January 8, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23041324>.

100. Plato, *Symposium*, 210d. "But being turned towards and contemplating the vast sea of the Beautiful, he may beget many, beautiful, and marvelous discourses and the objects of thought in philosophy without want."

101. Plato, *Symposium*, 210e-211b. See footnote 85.

102. See Plato's *Parmenides* for his most delicate treatment of the matter (and problem) of self-predication.

which participate in the forms, such as particular good or beautiful things, don't *really* exist – rather, using Diotima's language, they are γιγνόμενα and ἀπολλύμενα – coming into being and passing away. Their transience keeps them from really being.

Beauty, while the most conspicuous of forms in Plato,¹⁰³ is not the greatest form in Plato's philosophy. For Plato, the highest good was, well, the Good: τἀγαθόν. Raphael Demos writes, "The Good is desired by all rational things; by all human beings; by all living things, animals, and plants; finally, by the universe... implicitly he conceives of the Good as desired by *all* created things. The good is the object of all nature."¹⁰⁴ The Good, i.e., the form of good, is indeed a form, but it seems to have a certain preeminence over all other forms. The form of "chair" certainly doesn't seem nearly as universal or transcendental as the Good; but furthermore, the Good seems to have preeminence over the other common transcendentals of

103. See Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250b-c and footnote 42.

104. Raphael Demos, "Plato's Idea of the Good," *The Philosophical Review* 46, no. 3 (1937): 248. Accessed January 11, 2021. doi:10.2307/2181085. Demos cites sections 20d, 11d, 22b, and 64a of Plato's *Philebus* for the respective desirers of the Good.

The first three sections are, respectively, "ὥς πᾶν τὸ γινῶσκον αὐτὸ θηρεύει καὶ ἐφίεται βουλούμενον ἐλεῖν καὶ περὶ αὐτὸ κτήσασθαι, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων οὐδὲν φροντίζει πλὴν τῶν ἀποτελουμένων ἅμα ἀγαθοῖς" ("that every knowing being hunts and reaches for it, desiring to catch and possess it, and he worries about nothing else save for those things which bring have their completion in good things"); "ὥς νῦν ἡμῶν ἑκάτερος ἕξις ψυχῆς καὶ διάθεσιν ἀποφαίνειν τινὰ ἐπιχειρήσει τὴν δυναμένην ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι τὸν βίον εὐδαίμονα παρέχειν" ("that now each of us will attempt to show that it is a state and some arrangement of the soul to furnish life as happy for all"); and "ἦν γὰρ ἂν ἰκανὸς καὶ τέλος καὶ πᾶσι φυτοῖς καὶ ζώοις αἰρετός, οἷσπερ δυνατόν ἦν οὕτως αἰεὶ διὰ βίου ζῆν" ("for it would be sufficient and perfect and desired by all plants and living beings which would be able to always thus live through their lifespan"). Of the fourth citation, supplying the necessary text from section 63e, the relevant sentence is "τὰς δ' αἰεὶ μετ' ἀφροσύνης καὶ τῆς ἄλλης κακίας ἐπομένας πολλή που ἄλογία... ἐν ταύτῃ μαθεῖν πειρᾶσθαι τί ποτε ἐν τ' ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ τῷ παντὶ πέφυκεν ἀγαθόν" ("But as for the pleasures on any given occasion which follow with senselessness and any evil, it is doubtless all absurdity... to attempt to learn what in the world is the good by nature in man and in the all").

Truth, One, and Beauty. This is not a surprising notion. Aristotle, famously, begins his *Nicomachean Ethics* by saying that “πᾶσα τέχνη καὶ πᾶσα μέθοδος, ὁμοίως δὲ πρᾶξις τε καὶ προαίρεσις, ἀγαθοῦ τινὸς ἐφίεσθαι δοκεῖ: διὸ καλῶς ἀπεφώνησαντο τὰγαθόν, οὗ πάντ’ ἐφίεται.”¹⁰⁵ This is not to say that One, Beauty, and Truth are any less transcendental, but that there is something special about the Good.

Plato has adopted a very limited notion of what “good” means – both in the sense that few things are truly “good” and that the Good is itself limited. In fact, all the forms are finite. John Rist writes, “The Platonic forms are not universals; they are real existent finite ‘bits of being’... Beauty is nothing but beauty; it is Beauty itself, as Gilson says, for Plato had learned from the Pythagoreans that the limited and Limit are good, and that the unlimited is bad.”¹⁰⁶ For the Pythagoreans and for Plato, “being” applies only to beings which truly are, i.e., things which are not becoming (like particulars). They are the measures of being, and there really is no “being” outside of the forms.

Plato was still conscious, however, of something utterly transcendent and beyond the realm of the forms. He says in the sixth book of the *Republic*,

τὸν ἥλιον τοῖς ὁρωμένοις οὐ μόνον οἶμαι τὴν τοῦ ὁρᾶσθαι δύναμιν παρέχειν φήσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν γένεσιν καὶ αὐξὴν καὶ τροφήν, οὐ γένεσιν αὐτὸν ὄντα... καὶ τοῖς γινωσκομένοις τοίνυν μὴ μόνον τὸ γινώσκεισθαι φάναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ παρεῖναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ὑπ’ ἐκείνου αὐτοῖς προσεῖναι, οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἔτι ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας πρεσβεῖα καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος.¹⁰⁷

105. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a. “Every art and every pursuit, and likewise (every) activity and resolution, seems to aim at some good; hence they have said it well: the good (is that) at which all things aim.”

106. John Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 22.

107. Plato, *Republic*, VI.509b. “The sun, I think you will say, not only furnishes the power of being seen to the things which are seen, but also their generation and growth and nourishment, though it itself is not generation... and, then, you are to say that not only is

This proves to be a problematic passage. Is it not the case that the realm of forms is the realm of good and being, and that the things in this realm truly are and are truly finite? Does τὰγαθόν not reside in this realm and instead reside, as Plato seems to suggest here, ἔτι ἐπέκεινα? As shall be seen, this is the beginning of what Plotinus describes as the One, or the Being beyond Being.

Though Plato recognizes that there is the One as something special among the forms, he cannot escape the language of “forms.” He says of the One, “ὁμολογητέον ἔν μὲν εἶναι τὸ κατὰ ταῦτὰ εἶδος ἔχον, ἀγέννητον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον, οὔτε εἰς ἑαυτὸ εἰσδεχόμενον ἄλλο ἄλλοθεν οὔτε αὐτὸ εἰς ἄλλο ποιῖον, ἀόρατον δὲ καὶ ἄλλως ἀναίσθητον, τοῦτο δὲ νόησις εἴληχεν ἐπισκοπεῖν.”¹⁰⁸ Plato was, nonetheless, careful in his choice of words for “form.” The εἶδος, as opposed to the ἰδέα, is the form, but specifically the form in and of itself and beyond comparative (*viz.*, “human”) reasoning. Therefore, it is beyond human reasoning to truly grasp the “εἶδος” of the One. It would not be too much of a stretch to say that this is similar to Kant’s claim that people cannot know *noumena*, as all thought is through categories. More contemporaneous with Plato than Kant, Heraclitus stated “ὁκόσων λόγους ἤκουσα οὐδεὶς ἀφικνεῖται ἐς τοῦτο ὥστε γινώσκειν ὃ τι σοφόν ἐστι, πάντων κεχωρισμένον.”¹⁰⁹ The forms are only knowable, then, as ἰδέαι to men who can only reason through categories and comparison.

the property of their being known present from the good for the things known, but also that their existence and essence come from it, though the good is not essence, but still is further beyond in dignity and power.”

108. Plato, *Timaeus*, 52a. “It must be agreed that the thing which holds self-same form is One, unable to be generated or destroyed, neither receiving something to itself from somewhere nor itself passing somewhere into another, invisible and, especially, imperceptible – as it is that which Mind has obtained by lot to gaze upon.”

109. Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B108. See footnote 22.

There is an intermediary between One and the cosmos – an intermediary which can properly grasp Plato’s “εἶδος” of the One. Plato writes that “νοῦν δ’ αὖ χωρὶς ψυχῆς ἀδύνατον παραγενέσθαι τῷ. διὰ δὲ τὸν λογισμὸν τόνδε νοῦν μὲν ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴν δ’ ἐν σώματι συνιστάς τὸ πᾶν συνετεκταίνετο,” and also that “οὕτως οὖν δὴ κατὰ λόγον τὸν εἰκότα δεῖ λέγειν τόνδε τὸν κόσμον ζῶον ἔμψυχον ἔννουν τε τῇ ἀληθείᾳ διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι πρόνοιαν.”¹¹⁰ According to Plato it seems that there is Mind, Soul, and Body in the cosmos, which is generated by God. The question remains: What is God? Rist tells us that the forms are bits of being. Being, referring to true beings, are the forms. The Mind, as it comprehends the form of the One, comprehends the forms. Mind understands the εἶδη. It is linked with the living Soul which contains all the transient particulars which reflect the forms. Since Plato talks about the good as beyond being – specifically, beyond both εἶναι (the fact of existence) and οὐσία (essence) – it seems like God is the Good which Plato discusses in the *Republic*.

Plotinus was sensitive to Plato’s cosmology as outlined in the *Timaeus*, and his attention to the problem of a “form” beyond Being led to his development of the doctrine of the three hypostases: the One, the Mind, and the Soul. To summarize, “For Plotinus, Soul is an hypostasis quite distinct from Intellect, whose relation with it is analogous to that of Intellect with the One.”¹¹¹ The contemplation that the Mind has of the One is like the Soul’s contemplation of the

110. Plato, *Timaeus*, 30b-c. “Mind, in turn, cannot belong to any outside of Soul. So, because of this reasoning, he framed Mind in Soul and Soul in Body, establishing the All” and “Therefore, it is thus necessary, according to the likely account, to say that this cosmos is in truth a living creature, with soul and mind, according to the forethought of God to generate.”

111. John Dillon, “Plotinus at Work on Platonism,” *Greece & Rome* 39, no. 2 (1992): 198. Accessed January 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/643267>. When discussing Plotinus’s second hypostasis the terms “Mind,” “Intellect,” and “Nous” are interchangeable translations of “νοῦς.”

Mind, and the emanation of the Mind from the One is like that of the Soul from the Mind. The first hypostasis, the One, is called such because it is beyond distinctions, so unity, or oneness, is the best thing which something ineffable may be called. It, like the forms, is beyond the particulars, which have no real existence, but it is also beyond the forms. The problem in the *Republic* with the Good *causing* there to be being is solved by relegating all the forms to the second hypostasis, Mind. Plotinus describes the One as “τὸ οὐ μετέχει, ὃ ποιεῖ αὐτὸ καὶ εἶναι καὶ ὁμοῦ τὰ πάντα.”¹¹² The One is not, in an Aristotelian sense, pure being or pure actualization. Rather, it is the author of being.

Thus, the One is beyond all forms – beyond beings and beyond Being. Plotinus would say that this totally transcendent Good is not a form and that Plato’s language was limited. Plotinus writes, “Πρῶτον γὰρ δεῖ τὸ ἐνεργεῖα εἶναι, τὰ δ’ ὕστερα εἶναι δυνάμει τὰ πρὸ αὐτῶν: καὶ τὸ πρῶτον δὲ ἐπέκεινα τῶν δευτέρων καὶ τοῦ διδομένου τὸ διδόν ἐπέκεινα ἦν: κρεῖττον γάρ. Εἴ τι τοίνυν ἐνεργείας πρότερον, ἐπέκεινα ἐνεργείας, ὥστε καὶ ἐπέκεινα ζωῆς.”¹¹³ If the forms, to which being and act are attributed, belong to the Mind, then potency, becoming and unbecoming, belong to the living World Soul described in the *Timaeus*. By simple transitivity, then, the One as beyond Being and act is also beyond potency, becoming, unbecoming. Therefore, in the Neoplatonic sense, it is reasonable to say that the One does not exist, as existence would limit it.

112. Plotinus, *Enneads*, V.3.17. “That in which (all things) participate, which itself makes both being and likewise all things.”

113. Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI.7.17. “For, first it is necessary that something exist in activity and that the things after it exist potentially as to its priors; and the first is beyond the latter things, and the giver was beyond that which was given, for it is superior. If, then, something should be prior to activity, it would be beyond activity, with the result that it is also beyond life.”

In addition to “not existing,” the One has no proper knowledge of self or of anything else.

Rist writes,

Consciousness of self, like intellection, is a secondary and demands a subject and object... The One has no need even of consciousness of itself; it is superior to self-consciousness as to intellection... [it] is greater than to exist in such a manner as to have knowledge of itself (γνῶσις), intellection of itself (νόησις), or consciousness of itself (συναίσθησις).¹¹⁴

Since the One is called such because there are no distinctions in it, how can there be distinctions if distinctions are made in reality, which the One transcends? A distinction, or definition, applies to the second and third hypostases. It is distinctions which allow people to form ἰδέαι and approach knowledge within the Mind. It is impossible for something truly infinite (viz., beyond the finite forms) to limit itself by objectifying itself with some kind of self-consciousness or self-intellection. According to Rist, the best term Plotinus could come up with is that the One has an “ἐπιβολὴ ἀθρόα.”¹¹⁵ For the Epicureans, the term “ἐπιβολή” referred to an “act of direct apprehension,” while to the Stoics it meant an “impulse” of sorts.¹¹⁶ So, this “apprehension on the whole,” for Plotinus, avoided the subject-object implications of γνῶσις or νόησις. Plotinus seemed to recognize, in any case, the futile nature of attempting to describe the knowledge, whatever its nature, of something that is beyond Nous itself.

Though Plotinus does not call the One a form and certainly would not state that it is the “form of the Good,” he nonetheless calls the One “good” and “the Good.” The One out of an overabundance and necessity emanates forth the Mind, in which lies the form of the Good and all other “good” forms like the Beautiful, the Just, etc. He compares the One to a spring which never

114. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, 40.

115. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, 49-52.

116. See the LSJ.

ceases pouring forth water but is itself not changed by this pouring.¹¹⁷ To the Platonist, to be good is to do good, and all good things have their ultimate origin in the One. Furthermore, the desire for the good is universal. Just as Plato stated in the *Philebus*, the Good incessantly drives all things which experience this desirer beyond the world of becoming and to itself, with varied rates of success. Therefore, it would not be unfitting to call the One “good” just as it would not be unfitting to claim that the Beautiful or the Just are “good,” even though these forms are, necessarily, completely distinct from the form of Good. Plotinus himself often refers to the One as “τἀγαθόν,” but the context of such usages leaves little ambiguity as to whether he is referring to the One or to some form held in the Mind.

While Plotinus frequently refers to the One as “τἀγαθόν,” he is hesitant to refer to it as “τὸ καλόν,” instead referring to it often as “καλλονή.”¹¹⁸ Just as his usage of “ἐπιβολή” is less problematic than γνῶσις or νόησις when discussing the One’s knowledge, so too his usage of “καλλονή” has fewer problematic implications than “τὸ κάλλος” or “αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν.” Both τὸ κάλλος and αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν refer to the well-defined forms within the Mind which the One generates – the One which is technically (and necessarily) undefined and undefinable. The One is most definitely not αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, as this refers to the form of Beauty. Also, “the Good itself” refers simply to the form of the Good that is nothing but itself. Nonetheless, the One is still a “good” thing, to use the term analogously.

The word “καλλονή” has less baggage: it admits for a broader, less well-defined interpretation. For an often-ambiguous philosopher who likes to repeat himself, this clarity is a refreshing change from the often-mystical descriptions of the One and its nature. There is a

117. See Plotinus, *Enneads*, III.8.10.

118. See Plotinus, *Enneads*, I.6.7, V.5.12, VI.7.32, and VI.7.33.

problem, though. Why is Plotinus fine with referring to the One as “the Good” but not as “the Beautiful?” As seen from the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, Beauty is something which inspires people to contemplate the forms. It seems integral to the philosopher’s path.

For Plotinus beautifulness falls short of goodness. It is not the case that Beauty is a bad thing – it is a transcendental – but there can be varying degrees of “goodness” among good things. Plotinus writes,

Καὶ τοῦ μὲν καλοῦ ἤδη οἷον εἰδόσι καὶ ἐγρηγορόσιν ἢ ἀντίληψι καὶ τὸ θάμβος, καὶ τοῦ ἔρωτος ἢ ἔγερσις: τὸ δ’ ἀγαθόν, ἅτε πάλαι παρὸν εἰς ἔφεσιν σύμφυτον, καὶ κοιμωμένοις πάρεστι καὶ οὐ θαμβεῖ ποτε ἰδόντας, ὅτι σύνεστιν αἰεὶ καὶ οὐ ποτὲ ἢ ἀνάμνησις: οὐ μὴν ὁρῶσιν αὐτό, ὅτι κοιμωμένοις πάρεστι. Τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ ὁ ἔρωτος, ὅταν παρῇ, ὁδύνας δίδωσιν, ὅτι δεῖ ἰδόντας ἐφίεσθαι. Δεύτερος ὢν οὗτος ὁ ἔρωτος καὶ ἤδη συνιέντων μᾶλλον δεύτερον μηνύει τὸ καλὸν εἶναι: ἡ δὲ ἀρχαιοτέρα τούτου καὶ ἀναίσθητος ἔφεσις ἀρχαιότερόν φησι καὶ τὰγαθὸν εἶναι καὶ πρότερον τούτου.¹¹⁹

As was seen in the *Philebus*, the desire for the Good is universal and incessant, and it applies to all life – not just rational creatures. The desire for beauty, on the other hand, is only for those who have already had some unique experience of it, and that desire is not constant. Socrates is right when he claims in his palinode in the *Phaedrus* that the Beautiful is most visible form, but men like Hippias, who in the *Hippias Major* only gave three examples of beauty and not a definition of the Beautiful itself, show how most people cannot truly recognize the universal Beauty behind the particular. Further, no one, according to Plotinus, desires beauty when he is

119. Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI.7.17. “The apprehension of the Beautiful, the fascination with it, and the arousal of love for it is for those who in some degree already have knowledge of it and have awoken, while the Good, as naturally present for desire long ago [and now], is present even to those who are asleep and sometimes brings them no amazement when they see it, since it is linked with them on every given occasion and not a happenstance reminiscence, since it is present to those who are asleep, though indeed they do not see it. But the love of the Beautiful, whenever it is present, causes pains, since it is necessary for those who see it to reach for it. This love, as it is later and belongs to those who already have understanding, reveals, rather, that it is secondary as to the Good. The desire which is prior to this and without sense asserts that the Good is both prior to and before this.”

asleep, but even while asleep he desires the Good. The desire for the Good is prior to the desire for the Beautiful. *Ennead* VI.7.17 is the anti-Diotima. Aristotle introduces his *Nicomachean Ethics* with a similar principle: that all actions and activities point towards the good.¹²⁰ While an aesthetic experience indeed takes one out of oneself and causes him to turn towards the forms, this experience is not sufficient for the philosopher who wants to get beyond the forms themselves. So, Plotinus would take issue with Socrates's palinode. To use the analogy of the cave, it is not a desire for beauty when the philosopher strives to see the sun which gives existence and essence to all things, as this sun is beyond Beauty itself (αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν). It is the Beauty beyond Beauty.

Much scholarship on Plotinus's aesthetic philosophy fails to make the aforementioned distinctions between goodness and beautifulness. The immediate reasons are as follows: that the sixth tractate of the first *Ennead*, in which these distinctions are generally implicit in Plotinus's choice of terms, is titled "On Beauty" and also that people take Plotinus to be, by default, the faithful Platonist that he presents himself to be. As for the first reason, the treatise titled "On Beauty" (which title was given not by Plotinus, but by his disciple Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus*) is not the exhaustive outline of Plotinus's aesthetic philosophy, nor should it be treated as such. Similarly, no one book of the *Republic* or even the *Republic* as a whole contains Plato's exhaustive treatment of justice. The *Euthyphro* also deals with justice and page-per-page Plato is more focused on justice in the *Euthyphro* than in the *Republic*.¹²¹ As for the second reason, there was not an independent identity for the Neoplatonists as divergent from Plato, and Plotinus

120. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a. See footnote 105.

121. See also footnotes 39 and 40. The *Euthyphro*, much like *Ennead* I.6, makes distinctions between "forms" very subtly by the juxtaposition of terms, revealing subtle differences in meaning.

viewed himself as a student of Plato. This does not mean, however, that there is no originality of thought in Plotinus or divergence from Plato. It is improper to read a traditional position of Plato into a tractate of Plotinus by using a strictly Platonic lens when another tractate specifically contradicts this Platonic position. For example, if one did not realize Plotinus's independence, he might say, "Like Plato, Plotinus holds that beauty and goodness should be equated (I. 6. 9, 34)." ¹²² Such carelessness leaves Plotinus as not a serious philosopher but a vague mystic. Just as it does no justice to Plato's subtlety and literary mastery to conflate the terms "εἶδος" and "ἰδέα," which is too common a practice, so too does it do Plotinus no justice to treat his work a discrete set of summaries on Platonic thought. In any case, to summarize Plotinus's thoughts, the aesthetic experience fails to be a permanent and universal experience which would be required to have any experience of the source of all goodness.

The path to ἑνωσις, or unification with Τὸ Ἔν, is a super-noetic, and thus irrational experience. There are two issues. First, how does ἑνωσις differ from the aesthetic experience? Second, what is λόγος? Plotinus did not utterly dismiss the aesthetic experience. Beauty was

122. Jure Zovko, "Mimēsis in Plotinus's Philosophy of Art," in *The Many Faces of Mimesis: Selected Essays from the 2017 Symposium on the Hellenic Heritage of Western Greece*, edited by Reid Heather L. and DeLong Jeremy C., 156. Sioux City, Iowa: Parnassos Press – Fonte Aretusa, 2018. Accessed January 9, 2021. doi:10.2307/j.ctvbj7g5b.15.

To his credit, Zovko does immediately follow this sentence with the correct assertion that "However, Plotinus describes transcendent Beauty as "Beauty beyond Beauty" (κάλλος ὑπὲρ κάλλος, VI. 7. 32, 29), and 'fullness of beauty' (περιουσία τοῦ κάλλους)." Plotinus's identification of the Good with the Beautiful in the referenced passage from "On Beauty" describes Beauty as existence-affirming and Ugliness as contrary to existence. Such language on existence, then, tells us that Plotinus is referring to the second hypostasis, not the first.

It seems that much scholarship on Plotinus lacks the care and attentiveness that scholars such as John Rist bring to their writing.

something which purified, and when one's interior – his soul – was cleansed, he could experience Mind by looking inward. Brendan Thomas Sammon writes,

Beauty is the “reaching out” as it were of the divine formative power into that which is not yet completed in its unity. As an entity receives this unifying form, it becomes more and more beautiful. “So then the beautiful body comes into being,” concludes Plotinus, “by sharing in a formative power which comes from the divine forms.” All of this points to the way in which *nous*, as the proper locus of beauty, is a plenitude of formative power and intelligibility.¹²³

Sammon realizes that, for Plotinus, the aesthetic experience was one among the highest possible intellectual activities for a human being. This activity is often begun with the pains and desires that Plotinus describes in 6.7.17, and it culminates with a turning inward. Ultimately, the conclusion of the aesthetic experience is the Mind. The λόγος is what functions as the mediator between particulars and the real. For Plato, Soul governed the world (the lower part of itself). He writes, “ψυχὴ πᾶσα παντὸς ἐπιμελεῖται τοῦ ἀψύχου, πάντα δὲ οὐρανὸν περιπολεῖ, ἄλλοι ἄλλοις εἶδεσι γιγνομένη. Τελέα μὲν οὖν οὕσα καὶ ἐπτερωμένη μετεωροπορεῖ τε καὶ πάντα τὸν κόσμον διοικεῖ.”¹²⁴ Plotinus interprets this governance to be through λόγος.¹²⁵ Rist writes,

We are to gather from what follows that the *logos* is again thought of as a regulative principle (apart from the providential ‘soul above’) and furthermore that it is in a sense connected with Νοῦς as well as with the higher soul... *Logos*, then, ‘conveys’ the Forms into the particulars which it creates, thus giving order as well as being.¹²⁶

123. Brendan Thomas Sammon, *The God Who Is Beauty: Beauty as a Divine Name in Thomas Aquinas and Dionysius the Areopagite*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2013, 60. Sammon is citing and translating a passage from 1.6.2: “Οὕτω μὲν δὴ τὸ καλὸν σῶμα γίγνεται λόγου ἀπὸ θεῶν ἐλθόντος κοινωνία.”

124. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246b-c. “All soul has care of all which is without soul, and it travels around the entire heavens, occurring at some times in some forms and other time in other forms. So, when it is perfect and furnished with feathers, it travels through the air and governs all the cosmos.”

125. See Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV.3.9.

126. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, 94.

So, then, any experience of the One has to go beyond this height of intellectual activity. As the aesthetic experience only gets one to the Mind, and since the λόγος is only an interplay between the third and second hypostasis, any encounter with the One is beyond the λόγος, and thus irrational.

Plato was not unaware of an irrational kind of experience of the divine. In the *Phaedrus*, as in the *Symposium*, Plato describes the philosopher as a lover. Unlike in the *Symposium*, however, this love is something contrary to reason – it is maniacal and without λόγος.¹²⁷ Strangely, Plato here describes the aesthetic experience as something without reason, which seems to contradict what Plotinus has to say about the form of the Beautiful. The resolution is this: Plato means that the beginning of wisdom is love, and for most philosophers, that starts with a sense of wonder. This wonder can perhaps begin with a *why* or a *what if*. “Why is something the way it is?” “What if it were not the case?” But, just as often, this wonder is at the beauty of something. The philosopher can attempt to describe what makes something beautiful, but this description detracts from the initial experience. The definition of the Beautiful, the *what* it is, is the form, and indeed it is a good and noble thing (at least in an analogous sense); however, as has been seen, this only brings the definer to the second hypostasis. If one can retain this initial impulse, irrational though it be, for the transcendent, without eliminating the wonder, then one can go beyond reason. Plato writes in the *Phaedrus* that the lover is mad, that the greatest of good things come through madness, and that madness is a divine gift.¹²⁸ Appetite for lower things – created and temporary things – is detrimental, but appetite from the source of all, while

127. See *Phaedrus*, 238c-d in footnote 53.

128. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244a. See footnote 57.

similar in nature, is superior to the self-denying analysis of forms. Similarly, madness comes in two forms: brutish and divine. The insane brute has no reason, but the inspired and enthused philosopher goes beyond reason. When the philosopher is able to experience the divine directly, employing reason would be beneath him. The key difference is that the philosopher can of course still reason, while the brute cannot. In the *Life of Plotinus*, Porphyry states that Plotinus himself achieved ἔνωσις several times. These experiences cannot be described, since description at best describes the realm of the forms.

Again, the noetic experience is not bad. The Good itself, αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν, is an object of νόησις. However, the Good beyond Good, Beauty beyond Beauty, and Being beyond Being is necessarily beyond νόησις. Plato's writings contain descriptions of both kinds of pursuits, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The very dialectical nature of the dialogues themselves demonstrate that the works are propaedeutic. From error a philosopher-to-be can dialectically discover truth. But the dialogue itself is a limited medium. Words can only describe what is describable. To continue the path upward towards the transcendent a philosopher needs to get past the words, i.e., past the second hypostasis. Continuing upward, the philosopher, having purified himself, can reembrace the Dionysian. He is no longer a slave to passions for the particular, so he can have a properly divine passion. For this reason, Plato ends many of his works with myths – theological attempts, doomed to fail, of describing what one has experienced but cannot explain. The path to an experience of the transcendent beyond Being is arduous. This path requires someone to know how to think, and then when not to think. Similarly, Augustine's *Confessions*, as an autobiography of this quest, begins with his enslavement to his passions. This enslavement persists, however, despite his discovery of philosophy. A catharsis is needed – that of an overwhelming and aesthetic experience in the garden – to finally purify himself. Then, and

only then, was he able to have a transcendent experience with his mother. It should not be an issue that the *Confessions* ends with theology. The biography of Augustine is not a mere third-hypostasis story, but a description of what it means and what it takes to experience God, only appropriate description of which (or of whom) is theology.

For Augustine, then, to be caught up with the beauty of a psalm instead of the theology within is dangerous. The work he has put into his growth might be undone should he reduce what is divinely revealed to what he himself can know: the Beautiful found within the Mind, the second hypostasis. The problem of the Manichaeans and other Gnostics (in addition to claiming there is a positive reality to evil which can compete with good), is that they skip the necessary νόησις and try to be mystical. In brief, they act the fool before they have the right.

Chapter Five: What is Beauty?

Plotinus says, “Καὶ Ἡράκλειτος δὲ τὸ ἐν οἶδεν αἰδῖον καὶ νοητόν· τὰ γὰρ σώματα γίγνεται ἀεὶ καὶ ρέοντα. Τῷ δὲ Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ τὸ <νεῖκος> μὲν διαιρεῖ, ἡ δὲ <φιλία> τὸ ἐν — ἀσώματον δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦτο — τὰ δὲ στοιχεῖα ὡς ὕλη.”¹²⁹ Yet, for Heraclitus, πόλεμος was the “super-Zeus” – always conflict. We have seen how the ontological principles for Plato, the forms, belong to Plotinus’s second hypostasis. The One is beyond this realm. The “bits of being” that are the forms, and consequently being itself, are subordinate to the One. Distinctions which the human intellect makes break down beyond the forms, since discrete existence starts with the Nous.¹³⁰

In a way, then, both a Heraclitean and a Parmenidean ontology apply to the first hypostasis. In a vacuously true sense, there is a unity of opposites in the One because there are no things there to be opposed. As distinctions do not exist in something beyond existence, there are no distinctions in the One, which is why that Plotinus gives his first principle the name “One” through apophatic reasoning.

Plotinus’s problem with the aesthetic experience is ultimately that Beauty is not the source of all. The aesthetic experience is, again, an infatuation with Beauty. Beautiful things are somehow noble, and there is something good about the Beautiful, but the self-predicating form

129. Plotinus, *Enneads*, V.1.9. “And Heraclitus knows that the One is eternal and noetic, for bodies are always coming into being and are in flux. And, in Empedocles, on the one hand strife divides, and on the other friendship is the One, and the latter principle (friendship) is itself too without body, and the elements function as matter.”

130. See also Ignacio Yarza, “Plotino y la Trascendencia del Uno,” in *Dios y la Filosofía* (Mexico City: Tirant Humanidades, 2022), 133.

“Si el ser es idea, esencia, límite, que mide y configura el pensamiento, hasta identificarse con él — en Plotino en el Nous-Ser —, el principio necesariamente deberá estar más allá del límite, de la esencia y del pensamiento.”

of the Beautiful is merely beautiful. Further, Beauty, the most conspicuous form, but specifically the experience of this form, functions as the anti-logos. It is through λόγος that the Mind instantiates the forms in the Soul. The contemplation of the form of the Beautiful, then, only gets the person contemplating back to the second hypostasis. The One, the source of everything, is beyond the forms and thus beyond being and distinction.¹³¹ Rightfully Socrates criticizes Hippias for giving examples of beautiful things instead of a definition of the Beautiful, but a definition is necessarily accessible to the λόγος. So, in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates tells us there is a third kind of Beauty when calls the desire ἄνευ λόγου for the enjoyment of the Beautiful “love.”¹³² The kind of μανία he describes, then, is most similar to Plotinus’s ἔνωσις.

Plato and Plotinus are often difficult to interpret. Both, but Plotinus especially, often use the same terms to describe different things. The form of the Beautiful can be seen in physical things, but because it is the most visible form, people often confuse the pleasant, useful, or enticing with the Beautiful. This is in part why Augustine was so upset over finding singing in church too beautiful. More fundamentally, though, Augustine recognized that an ultimately transcendent “καλλονή” is not found in creation, but in the uncreated God. As Plotinus before him did not refuse to sometimes describe his first hypostasis as “beautiful” (though Plotinus was more critical of the aesthetic experience than his own predecessor Plato) since the One is the Beauty beyond Beauty, so too did Augustine not refuse to call God “Beauty.” This is why he,

131. “Sin embargo, será un más allá que no podrá liberarse completamente del ser y del pensar, de este modo de pensar el ser y el pensar. Y este es, en mi opinión, el motivo que obliga a Plotino a pensar el Uno, necesariamente, como potencia de todo, nada de todo, superior a todo, a la vida y al pensamiento y, en consecuencia, siempre relativo al todo, al ser y al pensar.” Ignacio Yarza, “Plotino y la Trascendencia del Uno,” 133.

132. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 238c-d. See footnote 53.

having found the Beauty beyond Beauty, prays, “*Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova, sero te amavi!*”¹³³

133. Augustine, *Confessionum*, X.27.38. “Late have I loved you, beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved you!”

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