A COMPANION TO ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY
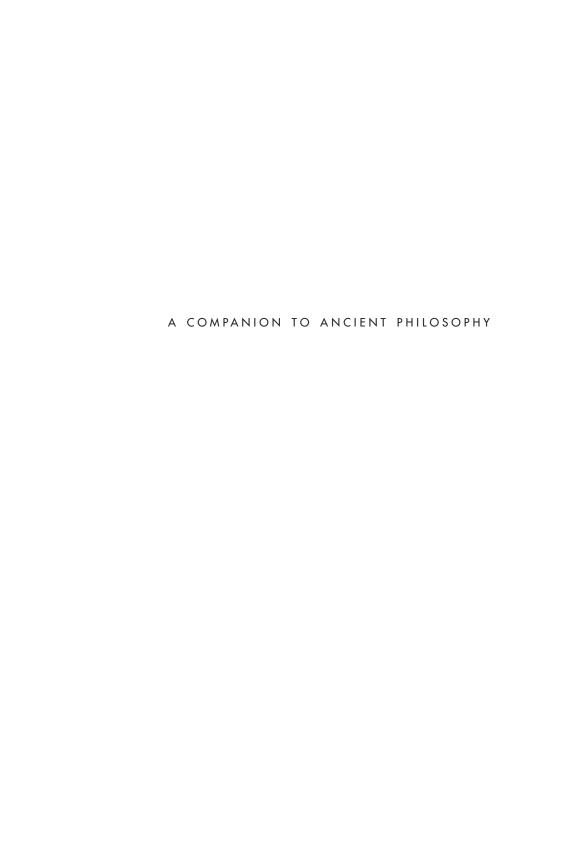
EDITED AND WITH AN
INTRODUCTION BY
SEAN D. KIRKLAND
AND ERIC SANDAY

A COMPANION TO ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

REREADING ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

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CONTENTS

The Hellenistic Schools

Sean D. Kirkland and Eric Sanday

The essays collected in this volume are intended to grant the reader a certain entrée into ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, from the Pre-Socratics (sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E.) through Plato (429–347 B.C.E.) and Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) up to and including the Hellenistic period (322 B.C.E. to third century C.E.).[1] This broad coverage and this introductory function are precisely what one expects from a 'companion' volume. However, the specific approach taken here to the performance of this function departs in significant and self-conscious ways from that of ostensibly similar collections. Indeed, we editors see the volume's unorthodox character as a radicalization of the notion of *companionship* itself.

Companionship as Hermeneutic

From the very earliest stages of planning this collection, it seemed to us that any 'companion' to ancient philosophy worthy of its name would have to, in a sense, situate itself between its historically distant subject matter and its audience, having as its organizing aim that of bringing together reader and text. In this, its hermeneutic task seemed to us twofold. On the one hand, and first and foremost, such a volume must accompany its readers back toward the ancients, bringing the reader face to face with the concerns, concepts, terminology, and arguments at work in these highly complex ancient philosophical texts, as well as allowing the reader to appreciate the ways in which each of these texts reflects its specific historical context. On the other hand, this volume must in a sense accompany ancient works into the present, insofar as it should allow the text, to the extent that the texts' own form and content permit, to speak meaningfully to us today, addressing and relating to living philosophical questions and issues.

The task represented by such a double companionship entails, then, that the authors of these essays maintain what we think of as a rigorous openness, in two senses. First, in approaching the ancient texts our authors read them closely and comprehensively. This task sounds easy enough, but it requires remaining open and attentive especially to the unexpected and

unfamiliar ways in which the ancients might address themselves to us. Indeed, our authors seek to avoid anachronistic (even if widely accepted) scholarly presuppositions as well as any premature projection of meaning, allowing meaning instead to manifest itself as the individual elements of the text, the discrete words, arguments, and passages, merge into a whole in the very process of reading itself. This goal demands that one not begin with a list of isms and long-established philosophical positions, then set out to determine where on that list a given ancient thinker belongs. Instead, one confronts the ancient text on its own terms, attending to the directives and constraints it offers the interpreter, but also opening oneself up to its strangeness, its complexity as a whole, even at times its irresolvability. Second, our authors attempt to allow just that interpretive experience to come to the fore in their own essays. That is, they invest their own texts with a certain openness vis-à-vis the volume's reader, allowing the interpretive work to show itself, explicitly confronting ambiguities, multiple meanings, variations, and tensions inherent in the ancient works, thereby providing the reader with the space to make up his or her own mind about the interpretive and deeper philosophical questions at stake there.

This general 'rigorously open' attitude takes multiple forms throughout these chapters, from a analysis of argument and terminology in one essay that unveils tensions and even inconsistencies in the text to a phenomenological interpretive posture in another essay that attends to the ways in which the ancients move from initial murky appearances to the clarity of a defined essence, from one author's method of situating an ancient work in light of its complicating philosophical precursors and within its specific historical context to another author's thoughtful consideration of the way an ancient work already resonates with and becomes retroactively illuminated by the subsequent history of philosophy, up to and including some of today's most important thinkers. These methods and approaches, and many others, are brought to bear on ancient works presented, always with an eye toward staying as true as possible to the texts and revealing them in their extraordinary richness.

As a result of its commitment to this mode of companionship, this collection departs from other guides, primers, and introductions, primarily insofar as the authors of the essays collected here make a habit of submerging themselves and their readers in cited passages and in the concrete and complex dynamics of specific ancient philosophical texts, grappling with the actual questions, arguments, vocabulary, and images. As will no doubt become clear, this presents a stark contrast to the usually panoptic, summary, and detached perspective of other primers. Indeed, this collection means to relate to other

introductory volumes in the way that a tour led by an experienced guide through some wild and beautiful terrain relates to a printed map of that same region.

Finally, this volume possesses one particular virtue that all similar volumes lack, insofar as they are not 'companions' in our sense. In addition to providing a fundamental and encompassing introduction to the content of ancient philosophy, these essays also offer various models of how to read and interpret ancient texts. Companionship becomes, thereby, a kind of apprenticeship, a training in the practice of close and open reading, encouraging and ultimately enabling the readers of our volume to go on and engage directly with ancient texts they had not yet read or to return to those texts with which they were already familiar, seeing them anew, illuminated and rejuvenated by the probing and foundational treatments offered by our authors. By focusing again and again on the most central and the most basic themes in the works addressed here, and by pursuing those themes with our authors through passages that are especially rich and complex in their implications, we hope that the readers of this volume, novice and expert alike, will find themselves freshly oriented in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy.

Companionship and 'Continental' Readings of the Ancients

Although the companionship we see being enacted by our contributors is not to be identified exclusively with the 'continental' side of an 'analytic-continental' divide, it is nonetheless true that the close readings offered throughout this collection resonate deeply with much of the work done by figures associated more with the continental than with the analytic tradition. To be sure, the attempt to draw a fixed and thoroughgoing distinction between these two modes or schools or traditions of philosophizing has been frequently criticized and exposed as problematic, such that the very distinction itself has been pronounced unhelpful or even obscuring. Nevertheless, it appears to us that, whatever the value of such a distinction generally, there are indeed two distinct scholarly families working on ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, and within those families the members share in some striking and fundamental resemblances. Surely readers of the ancients such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Foucault, Derrida, Irigaray, and Butler can be seen to be engaged in related and overlapping projects, even as all of them seem to depart quite dramatically from the various approaches and methods of contemporary analytic readers of ancient philosophy.

No features or tendencies can be ascribed to every continental-leaning reader of the ancients, and indeed even among the authors collected here

we will find a broad spectrum of interpretive presuppositions and methods. Nonetheless, it might be helpful to set out what we see as two very common elements that many continental readers, including many of our authors, do seem to share, elements that at the very least seem to distinguish them from most analytic scholars of ancient philosophy:

1. Whether employing a phenomenological, hermeneutic, structuralist, poststructuralist, psychoanalytic, Marxist, or some other methodology, continental interpreters of the Greeks, generally speaking, are not *exclusively* interested in arguments. Rather than extracting a given argument and formalizing it in order to better assess its validity (in purportedly universal and ahistorical terms), a continental reader will usually wish to place the reasoning moments within the text as a whole, and thus in relation to that which is other than reason: for example, poetry, drama, myth, rhetoric, history, or everyday prephilosophical experience. A reader of Heraclitus will want to take very seriously the philosophical significance of paradoxical and even contradictory utterances, entertaining the possibility that this disruption of conventional logic or reason might be intended by Heraclitus to reveal a feature of reality itself. A reader of Plato will insist we include in our assessment of 'Platonic philosophy' a consideration of the dramatic or literary elements in Plato's work, even beginning from the significance of the simple fact that Plato chose to communicate his philosophy in the mode of dialogues, thus presenting not doctrines but the activity of philosophy itself situated always in a specific setting and on a specific occasion, and undertaken always by characters with specific perspectives. Again and again, continental readers will want to include in their interpretations a consideration of what is excluded or dismissed by the more strictly argument-focused approach. In sum, continentals generally seem to recognize the boundary between reasoning and all of these 'others of reason' as more fluid, less absolute, and this recognition requires of them a kind of attentiveness to other elements of the text and a flexibility of interpretation.

2. Whereas scholars associated more with an analytic approach, as well as those working in a more traditional 'history of ideas' mode, tend to see the history of ancient philosophy as an object to be studied in as scientific a mode as possible, continentals will often view as philosophically suspect any such unquestioning faith in the truth-securing capacity of 'science' and as hermeneutically naive any such belief in the virtue (or even possibility) of an interpreter's stepping outside his or her own culturally and historically situated perspective. Scholars working in this vein, then, tend to engage not in a straightforward historiographical study of the past, but rather in something like what Foucault calls a "history of the present."[2] That is, they approach

the past as what is always already informing and participating in our present historical moment. For this project, the past is not something to which we must secure access by the deployment of scientific method; instead it is *our past*, a phenomenal or an appearing historical past that is presenting itself to us, even if that initial prephilosophical or prereflective appearance requires interpretation and clarification. With respect to a past thus understood, not the objective past but the phenomenal past, the interpreter's task cannot be to erase him or herself from the interpretive equation. Rather, in the herme-neutic and genealogical modes formulated most powerfully in the work of Schleiermacher, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Foucault, the task of the interpreter would be to clarify to the extent possible what these ancient texts are saying *to us*.

And the hermeneutic or genealogical relation in which we find ourselves vis-à-vis ancient Greek and Roman philosophy proves to be especially com-plex. For, at least to the editors of this volume, it seems that any inheritor of Western culture, indeed anyone at all who feels the influence today of the European tradition, can and perhaps even should view the philosophy of the ancient Greeks and Romans as something more than a mere historical curi-osity. The Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenistic thinkers present themselves not simply as one group of sophisticated minds existing on a long list of others, from other regions of the world and other historical periods, all of whom on examination may or may not prove to pique our interest. Instead, we would suggest that the reading and reanimating of these think-ers presents itself today as a task of peculiar urgency and importance, not because they accessed some universal and timeless truths about our world and our human condition, but simply because, from the sixth century B.C.E. to the third century C.E. in the northern and central to eastern Mediter-ranean, many of our own most fundamental concepts and values first came on the scene and received some of their most decisive formulations. Indeed, these concepts and values, as well as the arguments, images, and associa-tions through which they were articulated, came to delimit and direct the subsequent historical development of Western thought, a development that leads from those ancients all the way down to us. We therefore find ourselves bound to them in a fundamental way.

This task is of course complicated by more or less inscrutable dynamics of historical transmission and translation, according to which the content of these ancient philosophies has been refined, revised, and radically reformu-lated over the centuries. And it is also true that, existing as it does in a more and more thoroughly globalized planetary context, the tradition arising from these ancient Greeks and Romans represents only one among many rich

cultural historical strands that weave together to constitute our own contemporary worldviews. Nonetheless, these thinkers' original insights into such fundamental philosophical themes as being, nature, reason, language, truth, ethics, and human community remain vital and profoundly influential in our experience of our world and of ourselves today. Indeed, William Faulkner's words seem especially true of Greek and Roman thought: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Pushing even further, we might read these thinkers not simply in an attempt to better understand and more fully immerse ourselves in our own historically determined present moment, but even in the hopes of beginning to think beyond its current limits. This suggestion may be paradoxical, but it will seem less so if we notice that any origin or source, any historical beginning at all, always seems to hold more within it than what is recuperated and transmitted in the tradition that follows from it. There are always tensions, associations, and accidental influences at work as contributing elements of any beginning, all of which tend to be eliminated or lost as an emergent idea or value is streamlined and transferred to other historical and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the long-celebrated thinkers of the ancient world seem to us to have been incomparably sensitive to the subtle dynamics of such initiating moments, confronting their world and generating the very structures of intelligibility according to which something philosophically graspable appears for the first time. Their textual records document the nexus of forces at work in that original and originating experience—what Nietzsche refers to as an *Entstehungsherd*, or 'threshold of emergence.'[3] Thus, precisely at this moment in history, when our own concepts have become constraining, when our hierarchical valuations, our binary oppositions, and even our most fundamental rational principles and rules of inference, are meeting with fundamental critiques and calls for emendation, it may well be the case that we find within the tensions and conflicts of their own historical origins precisely the resources that are necessary to think beyond the territory mapped by our inherited ideas, logic, and values.[4] On this model, interpretive treatments of Greek and Roman texts may aspire to be "untimely" in the Nietzschean sense, and thereby "work counter to our time and thereby on our time and hopefully for the benefit of a time to come."[5]

In sum, our volume has two primary aims and two secondary aims. First, as indicated above, the essays collected here are directed at introducing their readers to the central questions, concepts, and arguments of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, even as they seek to model for those readers how to approach these difficult texts by reading closely and responsibly. Second, insofar as these ancient works constitute what Gadamer would call our

Überlieferung, that is, insofar as they are 'traditionary texts' that our readers might receive as housing and conveying a tradition those readers understand to be importantly *their own*,[6] we the editors also imagine this collection might aid readers in immersing themselves more thoughtfully in their historically determined present. And they will do so, perhaps, even as they go on to engage in some untimely reading of their own, extending or expanding their thinking through a confrontation with its complex Greek and Roman origins and thereby pushing beyond the limits of their present, beginning to philosophize in ways that are as yet unanticipatable.

All of this requires that our readers receive the claims, observations, and interpretations presented here *actively*. That is to say, our authors are to be understood not as making authoritative pronouncements to be merely understood, accepted, and internalized. Rather, they should be seen as extending invitations to the reader to think along with them in confronting ancient texts, and even as providing means of access to begin thinking along with the ancients themselves as they confront the phenomena in which the world presents itself. We might well learn from the ancients (and from the authors here reading them, mirroring them) that irrefutability and mastery are not always the proper aims of philosophical thinking. Rather, the sources of meaning in our world, the roots or grounds from which meaning and value arise in our experience, may well be most truthfully grasped not when torn out of their concealment and subjected to the demands of exhaustive intelligibility, but perhaps when that concealment, that abiding uncertainty and questionworthiness, is respected and even nurtured.

The Ancient Textual Remains

As should be clear by now, the essays here assembled are fulfilled only when readers, having been empowered and enriched by them, set this book aside and take up the writings of the ancients directly. The reader will do so, ideally, not in the belief that the apprenticeship is over, but rather having recognized the virtues of a kind of perpetual mode of apprenticeship and companionship. That is, the reader will have come to respect the abiding vitality and pertinence of the ancient philosophical text and will continue to take it up in the spirit of openness and shared inquiry that this volume hopes to inculcate in its audience. Given this, we might in closing remark on the condition of the ancient philosophical textual remains that our readers will hopefully be called by these essays to confront directly and wrestle with on their own.

As we move through the ancient period from the Pre-Socratics to Plato and then from Aristotle to the Hellenistic thinkers, we have at each stage a

very different set of textual challenges. What remains of the writings of the
Pre-Socratics is fragmentary and exceedingly sparse, more or less so depend-
ing on the thinker in question. From some of these early thinkers we have
extended passages, while from others we seem to have only a line or a few
lines of their own writing, and from still others we may well have no direct
quotations at all, but only summary remarks by later adherents, chroniclers,
and historians.[7] By contrast, we can with relative certainty claim to have
the entire *corpus platonicum*; every single one of the dialogues of Plato (and
except for a lecture or two he seems only to have made his thought public in
dialogue form) and perhaps even a few of his letters have been handed down
to us, even if not all of the fifty-some texts attributed to him are authentic
and even if it is a matter of some scholarly dispute which of these remains are
Plato's own and which are not. In any case, with Plato we are quite certain
that no texts are lacking. When we move to Aristotle, we have yet another
situation: we have fragments of dialogues that he published, and some of
these are of decent length; and then we have what seem to be lecture notes
for courses given at his school, the Lyceum, which were sometimes revised
and edited along the way (presumably by Aristotle) and which were subse-
quently assembled by a editor into the collections with which we are now
familiar: the *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, and so on.
Finally, with respect to many of the Hellenistic thinkers here discussed, we
have once again mostly fragmentary textual evidence, a few letters, and many
secondhand accounts, but the fragmentary texts we have are quite copious, in
contrast to those of the Pre-Socratics. Plotinus represents yet another situa-
tion, insofar as we seem to have everything he wrote, which ended up being a
series of loosely connected problem-specific essays that he only began com-
posing quite late in life.

     Given the challenging condition of many of the ancient texts, we encourage
readers of this volume to consider and question again and again for them-
selves the inevitably mediated relation we have to ancient thought today. This
is surely obvious and undeniable if one is reading a translation, and when this
is the case the reader must learn about the varying quality and approaches
of the different translators, looking especially for those who include with
their work a thoughtful and sophisticated statement of the translator's theory
and practice of translation.[8] But even when one is dealing with texts in their
original language, one's relation to the object of interpretation is still subject
to mediating distance. Indeed, even in the most scholarly and most respon-
sible editions of the Greek or Latin texts, it is important to realize that one
always confronts an object constituted by an editor after a certain amount
of interpretative labor. A great many decisions and judgments have already

been made in the processes of transmission and transformation according to which an original written document, one generally lacking luxuries such as word separation, diacritical marks, or punctuation, becomes the authoritative (and apparently indisputable) version one finds on the page of the modern scholarly edition. Philologists generally bring to these decisions a deep understanding of the ancient language in question, its vocabulary, grammar, morphology, and development, as well as a vast familiarity with the existing contemporary literature in that language and with the relevant cultural history. Nonetheless, these are decisions, and real decision-making always occurs in the face of what is less than certain. The process of deliberation is preserved and indicated in the *apparatus criticus*, that record of the scholarly conversation involving generations of classicists that is situated below the thin line at the bottom of the page in most scholarly editions of Greek and Latin texts. Here one finds reported evidence of divergences in manuscript traditions and past scholarly opinions, and we encourage our readers eventually to make use of this resource.

   In the end, our hope is that, after perusing this volume and then confronting the texts themselves, our readers will be well-practiced not in the elimination of questioning, wonder, and the work of interpretation, but rather, quite to the contrary, in the sustaining of just these activities as the responses proper to what we find most of all present in the ancient philosophical text—a seemingly infinite power to resist any final and totalizing interpretation and, precisely thereby, to remain abidingly relevant.

Notes

1. It is not uncommon in the periodization of ancient philosophy to locate the closing of the Hellenistic period with the emergence of the Roman Empire at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E. We have chosen to extend the period covered by our volume to include Stoic thinkers such as Epictetus (first to second century C.E.) and Marcus Aurelius (121–180 C.E.) and even the pagan Neo-Platonist, Plotinus (204/205–270 C.E.). We have done so because it seems to us that these later Hellenistic thinkers are working very much in the vein of their Classical precursors, while the more decisive break occurs after them with the emergence of the age of medieval theology.

2. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 31.

3. See for example Nietzsche's genealogical critique of the value of selflessness or self-denial in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, in *Kritische Studiean Ausgabe,* Bd. V, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (1967–1977; reprint, Berlin: Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag/Walter de Gruyter, 1988), I.2.

4. Although continentals often deploy methods that depart from his more traditional approach to the history of ideas, W. K. C. Guthrie begins his magisterial multivolume study *A History of Greek Philosophy* by remarking on precisely those two aspects of Greek philosophy that we have emphasized here: (1) the dramatic emergence with the Greeks

of fundamental concepts from conditions that precede and exceed those concepts, and (2) the abiding pertinence today of those emergent ancient concepts. Guthrie opens his general introduction thus: "To write a history of Greek philosophy is to describe the formative period of our own thought, the making of the framework which supported it until at least the latter part of the nineteenth century . . . It is this fundamental and dateless character of much Greek thought which makes it worth while to attempt a fresh presentation of it for the contemporary reader. There is another side to the coin. With the Greeks we stand at the beginning of rational thought in Europe. It follows that we shall not only be concerned with the reasoned explanation or scientific observation, but shall be watching the emergence of these activities from the mists of a pre-scientific age." W. K. C. Gu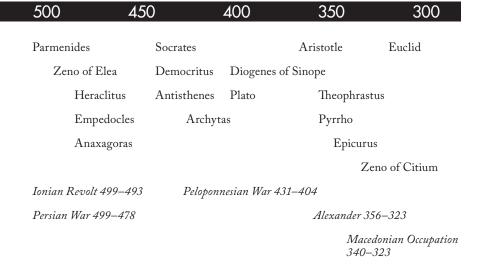thrie, *A History of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1: *The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1.

5. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie," in *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*: *Kritische Studiean Ausgabe,* Bd. I, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (1967–1977; reprint, Berlin: Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag/Walter de Gruyter, 1988), foreword, 247.

6. The term 'traditionary text' is often used to translate the term *Überlieferung*, when it appears in the work of H.-G. Gadamer. A 'traditionary text' is not simply a work that is judged to be part of this or that tradition. Rather, it is a text that presents itself to us, i.e. that we receive and experience, *as bearing our own tradition.* Tradition is an *Überlieferung* or literally a 'delivering over,' an active passing on and receiving of a meaningful cultural past.

7. The standard way of referring to the fragments of the Pre-Socratics is by their DK number, a reference to the authoritative collection of actual fragments, summaries, and testimonia by H. Diels and W. Kranz. These numbers convey a good deal of information when cited in full. For example, with DK 22B1, the first number indicates the thinker in question according to the order of presentation by Diels and Kranz ("22" refers to Heraclitus), the letter refers to the type of fragment ("B" refers to *ipsissima verba* or passages taken to be actual citations, while "A" refers to *testimonia* or biographical and summary accounts and "C" refers to later *imitations* that take the author as their model), and the last number refers to the fragment in question, again in the editors' order of presentation ("1" is the first fragment they list, and it is also likely the opening of Heraclitus's book). See Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 vols., 6th rev. ed. (Berlin: Weidman, 1952).

8. See for instance the translations by Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, and Joe Sachs.

B.C.E.	800	750	700	650	600	550

Homer Hesiod Thales

Xenophanes

Anaximander

Anaximenes

Pythagoras

Greek Dark Ages c. 1100–850

B.C.E.	250	200	150	100	50	0

Cleanthes Carneades Cicero Antiochus Seneca

Archimedes Lucretius

Chrysippus Philo

Arcesilaus

Dissolution of Roman Republic 27

C.E.	350	400	450	500	550	→

Augustine Boethius

Closure of the Academy in Athens 529

500	450	400	350	300

Parmenides   Socrates   Aristotle   Euclid

Zeno of Elea   Democritus   Diogenes of Sinope

Heraclitus   Antisthenes   Plato   Theophrastus

Empedocles   Archytas   Pyrrho

Anaxagoras   Epicurus

Zeno of Citium

Ionian Revolt 499–493   *Peloponnesian War 431–404*

Persian War 499–478   *Alexander 356–323*

Macedonian Occupation 340–323

C.E.	50	100	150	200	250	300

Epictetus   Sextus Empiricus   Plotinus

Marcus Aurelius   Diogenes Laertius

Iamblichus

Edict of Milan 313

Aeschylus
Choe.   *Choephori* (*Libation Bearers*)
Prom.   *Prometheus Bound*
Suppl.   *Suppliants*

Aetius
Plac.   *Placita*

Andronicus
Pass.   *On Passions*

Aristotle
An. post.   *Posterior Analytics*
An. pr.   *Prior Analytics*
Cat.   *Categories*
De an.   *On the Soul* (*De anima*)
De cael.   *On the Heavens* (*De caelo*)
De int.   *On Interpretation* (*De interpretatione*)
EE   *Eudemian Ethics*
EN   *Nicomachean Ethics*
GA   *Generation of Animals*
GC   *On Coming-to-Be and Passing Away*
HA   *History of Animals*
MA   *Movement of Animals*
Met.   *Metaphysics*
Meteor.   *Meteorology*
PA   *Parts of Animals*
Phys.   *Physics*
Poet.   *Poetics*
Pol.   *Politics*
Resp.   *On Respiration*
Rhet.   *Rhetoric*
Sens.   *Sense and Sensibilia* (*On Sense and Sensibles*)
S&W   *On Sleep and Waking*

Soph. Ref.	*Sophistic Refutations*
Spir.	*On Breath*
Top.	*Topics*

Aristotle (Spurious)

De aud.	*De audibilibus* (*On Things Heard*)
Prob.	*Problemata* (*Problems*)

Aristophanes

Brd.	*Birds*
Cl.	*Clouds*
Fr.	*Frogs*
Num.	*Numes*

Aulus Gellius

AN	*Attic Nights*

Marcus Aurelius

Med.	*Meditations*

Chalcides

Ch. Tim.	*On the Timaeus*

Cicero

Acad.	*On the Academy* (*Academica*)
CLaws	*On the Laws*
Dut.	*On Duties*
Fin.	*On the Ends of Good and Evil* (*De finibus bonorum et malorum*)
Luc.	*Lucullus*
ND	*On the Nature of the Gods* (*De natura deorum*)
Tusc.	*Tusculan Disputations*

Clement

Misc.	*Miscellanies*

Epictetus

Disc.	*Discourses*
Ench.	*Enchieridion*

Epicurus
    Ep. Id.   *Letter to Idomeneus*
    Ep. Men.   *Letter to Menoeceus*

Euclid
    El.   *Elements*

Euripides
    Alc.   *Alcestis*
    Androm.   *Andromache*
    Bacch.   *Bacchae*
    Hel.   *Helen*
    Her.   *Heracles*
    Med.   *Medea*
    Phoen.   *Phoenician Women*
    Thy.   *Thyestes*

Galen
    DPH   *Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates*

Herodotus
    Hist.   *Histories*

Hesiod
    Op.   *Works and Days*
    Theog.   *Theogony*

Hippolytus
    Haer.   *Refutatio omnium haeresium*

Homer
    Il.   *Iliad*
    Od.   *Odyssey*

Homeric Hymns
    Apoll.   *To Apollo*
    Herm.   *To Hermes*

Hyppolytus
    Ref.   *Refutatio*

Diogenes Laertius
   Lives   *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*

Origin
   Princ.   *On Principles*

Philo of Alexandria
   Alleg.   *Allegories of the Laws*

Plato
   Ap.   *Apology of Socrates*
   Chrm.   *Charmides*
   Cra.   *Cratylus*
   Cri.   *Crito*
   Ep.VII   *Epistle VII*
   Euthd.   *Euthydemus*
   Euthphr.   *Euthyphro*
   Grg.   *Gorgias*
   Hp. Ma.   *Hippias Major*
   Hp. Mi.   *Hippias Minor*
   Ion   *Ion*
   La.   *Laches*
   Lg.   *Laws (Leges)*
   Ly.   *Lysis*
   Men.   *Meno*
   Mx.   *Menexenus*
   Phd.   *Phaedo*
   Phdr.   *Phaedrus*
   Phlb.   *Philebus*
   Plt.   *Statesman (Politicus)*
   Prm.   *Parmenides*
   Prt.   *Protagoras*
   R.   *Republic*
   Smp.   *Symposium*
   Sph.   *Sophist*
   Tht.   *Theaetetus*
   Ti.   *Timaeus*

Plato (Disputed or Spurious Works)
   Alc. I   *Alcibiades I*

Ax.   *Axiochus*
Cleit.   *Cleitophon*
Hipparch. *Hipparchus*

Pindar
Isth.   *Isthmian Odes*
Ol.   *Olympian Odes*
Pythian   *Pythian Odes*

Pliny the Elder
Nat. Hist. *The Natural History*

Plotinus
Enn.   *Ennead*

Plutarch
Adv. col.   *Adversus Colotem*
Pleas. Life *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*
SSR   *Stoic Self-Refutations*

Porphyry
Ep. Marc.   *Letter to His Wife, Marcella*

Seneca
Ep.   *Epistles* (*Epistulae*)
Ira   *On Anger* (*De ira*)
Tranq.   *Of Peace of Mind* (*De tranquillitate animil*)

Sextus Empiricus
Adv. math. *Adversus Mathematicos*
Outlines   *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*

Simplicius
in Phys.   *in Aristotelis de Physica Commentarii*

Sophocles
Ant.   *Antigone*
OC   *Oedipus at Colonus*
OT   *Oedipus the King*

Stobaeus

Sel. *Selections*

Thucydides

PW *Peloponnesian War*

Virgil

Georg. *Georgics*

Xenophon

HG *Historia Graeca* (*Hellenica*)
Mem. *Memorabilia*
XAp. *Apology of Socrates*
X. Smp. *Symposium*

A COMPANION TO ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Early Greek Thinking:
The Emergence of Philosophy

Physis in Pre-Socratic Thought: Seeking with Xenophanes

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That Pre-Socratic philosophy was principally a matter of investigating *physis* is something widely agreed on by ancient authors, even while they disagree as to whether Socrates himself had engaged in such investigation. Most provocative among these ancient accounts is the absurd caricature of Pre-Socratic thinking in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, where Socrates is presented as investigating what might be called 'natural causes' for phenomena traditionally attributed to the will of the gods, and as rejecting the traditional gods in favor of novel, quasi-materialistic deities.[1] In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates recalls this comedic portrait of him as a philosopher and emphatically denies having ever "investigated into things below the earth and in the heavens [ζητῶν τά τε ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια]" (*Ap*. 19b5). Xenophon, too, echoes this denial in his *Memorabilia*, and in doing so underscores a widely held view of Pre-Socratic philosophy: "No one ever saw Socrates doing anything impious or irreverent, nor did anyone ever hear him utter such things. For he did not discuss the nature of all things [περὶ τῆς τῶν πάντων φύσεως]—that which was the focus of investigation for most of the others, what the Sophists call the *kosmos*, and by what determinants each part of the heavens comes to be" (*Mem*. I.1.11).[2] In light of these denials about Socrates in the *Apology* and in the *Memorabilia*, it is striking that in Plato's *Phaedo* Socrates claims that, in his youth, he was "wondrously desirous of this wisdom which they call the study of nature [νέος ὢν θαυμαστῶς ὡς ἐπεθύμησα ταύτης τῆς σοφίας ἣν δὴ καλοῦσι περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίαν] . . . to know the causes of each thing [εἰδέναι τὰς αἰτίας ἑκάστου], why each thing comes to be and why it perishes and why it is" (*Phd*. 96a7–9). Indeed, he says that he "was always unsettling himself by examining such things [καὶ πολλάκις ἐμαυτὸν ἄνω κάτω μετέβαλλον σκοπῶν πρῶτον τὰ τοιάδε]" until finally he made up his mind that he was "naturally unfit for this examination [πρὸς ταύτην τὴν σκέψιν ἀφυὴς εἶναι]" (*Phd*. 96b1–c2).[3]

The great irony of this passage (and irony is, of course, a core feature of Plato's writings) lies in the reversals suffered by Socrates: whereas he had set out to acquire wisdom about *physis* as a whole, he ends up concluding something about his own *physis*—namely, that he is, by nature, not cut out for such wisdom. Although this passage alters our view of Socrates's possible involvement with philosophizing about *physis*, it does agree very generally with Plato's *Apology* and Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, and even with Aristophanes's *Clouds*, on one specific point: namely, that each text presents the type of philosophy before or concurrent with Socrates as being altogether audacious in its aspiration to know the nature of all things, of those things below the earth and in the heavens.[4] However fitting it may or may not be to describe Pre-Socratic philosophy as a whole according to the characteristics noted above—investigating things below the earth and in the heavens, studying the *physis* of all things in order to know the causes of coming to be and passing away, jettisoning traditional religious beliefs as they pertain to *physis*, and so on—these characteristics do apply fairly well to the spirit and letter of Xenophanes's writings. Xenophanes addresses, as explicitly as any Pre-Socratic thinker, "those things below the earth and in the heavens" (most clearly in B28 and A41a); he addresses the source, or *archē*, of all coming-to-be/passing-away (most famously in fragments B27, B29, and B33); and in one text he dismisses the traditional belief that identifies the rainbow with the goddess Iris:

> And she whom they call Iris, this too is by nature a cloud, / purple and red and greenish-yellow to behold [ἥν τ' Ἶριν καλέουσι, νέφος καὶ τοῦτο πέφυκε / πορφύρεον καὶ φοινίκεον καὶ χλωρὸν ἰδέσθαι]. (B32)[5]

Thus, we should ask ourselves how, in particular, Xenophanes approached *physis* in such a way as to address the central concerns of Pre-Socratic philosophy as a whole while, at the same time, marking the limits of human knowledge in a way that anticipates the Socrates portrayed in Plato's dialogues. Let us begin by attending to the details of Xenophanes's fragmentary texts.

One text that gives us a good initial sense of the range of Xenophanes's thinking about *physis* is the following testimonium:

> Xenophanes thinks that a mixture of the earth with the sea comes about [μῖξιν τῆς γῆς πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν γίνεσθαι], but that in time [the earth] becomes freed from the moisture [καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ ὑπὸ

τοῦ ὑγροῦ λύεσθαι], and he asserts that there are proofs for these ideas [τοιαύτας ἔχειν ἀποδείξεις]: that shells are found inland and in mountains, and he says that in quarries in Syracuse imprints of fish and seals were found; and in Paros the imprint of coral in the deep of the marble and on Malta slabs of rock containing all sorts of sea creatures. He says that these things came about when long ago everything was covered with mud, and then the imprint dried in the clay. And he says that all men will perish when the earth is brought down into the sea and becomes mud, at which time generation begins again and this foundation (or: transformation) happens for all orders-of-the-world [ἀναιρεῖσθαι δὲ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους πάντας, ὅταν ἡ γῆ κατενεχθεῖσα εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν πηλὸς γένηται· εἶτα πάλιν ἄρχεσθαι τῆς γενέσεως, καὶ ταύτην πᾶσι τοῖς κόσμοις γίνεσθαι καταβολήν (or: μεταβολήν)]. (A33)

In this passage, Xenophanes offers "demonstrations" (*apodeixeis*) that long ago the order-of-the-world (*kosmos*) was very different from its present order. To explain this difference, Xenophanes speculates that there is a mixing of earth and sea at work over time, resulting in the cataclysm whereby the earth is brought down into the sea entirely and turns to mud, thus killing off all the human beings as well as, presumably, many other animal and plant species. Most interesting for our purposes is the final sentence of this passage, where Xenophanes addresses most directly the relation between 'beginning' (*archē*), 'coming-to-be' (*genesis*), and 'order-of-the-world' (*kosmos*). Given his use of the plural *kosmoi*, it is clear that Xenophanes understands *kosmos* as something temporal: it lasts from one cataclysmic foundation or transformation to the next, and *genesis*—the coming-to-be of humans and other life-forms—begins again once the earth reemerges from the sea and can again sustain life.

This cataclysmic cosmogeny can be read in conjunction with Xenophanes's famous lines about earth and water:

> For all things are from the earth and to the earth all things come in the end [ἐκ γαίης γὰρ πάντα, καὶ εἰς γῆν πάντα τελευτᾷ]. (B27)[6]

> All things which come into being and grow are earth and water [γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ πάντ' ἔσθ' ὅσα γίνοντ' ἠδὲ φύονται]. (B29)

> For we all come into being from earth and water [πάντες γὰρ γαίης τε καὶ ὕδατος ἐκγενόμεσθα]. (B33)

Given the influence of Aristotle's interpretation of the 'earliest philosophers,' it is difficult not to read these fragments as identifying what Aristotle called the *archē*: namely, that material source "out of which all things are, and from which they first come to be, and into which they perish in the end [ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἔστιν ἅπαντα τὰ ὄντα καὶ ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται πρώτου καὶ εἰς ὃ φθείρεται τελευταῖον] . . . This they say is the element and source of things [τοῦτο στοιχεῖον καὶ ταύτην ἀρχήν φασιν εἶναι τῶν ὄντων]" (*Met*. I.983b8–11). On such a reading, whereas Thales identified the *archē* with water, and Anaximenes identified it with air, Xenophanes proposes earth—or, alternatively, earth/water—as the *archē*.[7] While it is possible that Xenophanes understands earth or earth/water as an *archē* in this Aristotelian sense, and such a reading is compatible with the cataclysmic cosmogeny of A33, we must keep certain points in mind. One is the curious fact that Aristotle does not credit Xenophanes with the view that earth or earth/water is the *archē*, and, furthermore what Aristotle says about Empedocles's innovation in adding earth to the plural *archai* (along with water, air, and fire) strongly suggests that Aristotle did not understand Xenophanes to be offering a theory of some material *archē*.[8] More importantly, even if Xenophanes does propose earth or earth/water as an alternative to Thales's water and Anaximenes's air, we should notice that the Aristotelian interpretation of these concepts requires that we understand them in the very limited capacity of material cause, distinct from and excluding other kinds of 'cause.' This is a complicated issue requiring further elaboration.

To be sure, Aristotle's influential but limiting interpretation of the Pre-Socratics occurs from the perspective of his own developed theory of the four causes as part of the study of *physis*, and carries with it a definite agenda. In *Metaphysics* Book I Aristotle surveys those contributions of the Pre-Socratics that strike him as relevant to his own philosophical achievement for the express purpose of confirming his own theory or identifying something in their thought that might contribute to it.[9] But this agenda-driven approach to interpreting the Pre-Socratics comes with the risk of reading the basic concepts of the earliest philosophers (water, air, earth, and so on) as signifying nothing more than what Aristotle means by 'matter [ὕλη]' or 'substrate [ὑποκείμενον],' rather than what the Pre-Socratic thinkers mean by these basic concepts. Indeed, in discussing the way in which "the thing itself at issue opened the way for [the earliest Greek thinkers] and contributed in forcing them to inquire [αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα ὡδοποίησεν αὐτοῖς καὶ συνηνάγκασε ζητεῖν]" (*Met*. I.984a17), Aristotle writes:

> However true it may be that all generation and destruction proceed
> from some one principle, or even more than one, why does this

happen and what is the cause? For, indeed, the substrate itself does
not cause itself to change [οὐ γὰρ δὴ τό γε ὑποκείμενον αὐτὸ ποιεῖ
μεταβάλλειν ἑαυτό]. What I mean, for example, is this: neither the
wood nor the bronze causes itself to change; the wood does not
make a bed, nor the bronze a statue, but some other thing is the
cause of the change [ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερόν τι τῆς μεταβολῆς αἴτιον]. Now
to seek this is to seek another source, namely, as we might say, the
source of change/motion [τὸ δὲ τοῦτο ζητεῖν ἐστι τὸ τὴν ἑτέραν
ἀρχὴν ζητεῖν, ὡς ἂν ἡμεῖς φαίημεν, ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως].
(*Met*. I.984a17–27)

What is especially telling in this passage are the examples that Aristotle
uses for the material substrate: the wood to be used in building the bed, the
bronze to be used in sculpting the statue. In both cases, we have an inert
material that does not issue from itself the requisite change in becoming a
bed or statue. What is required in these specific cases is some other cause or
source of change to bring the material substrate into its intended form. By
interpreting the sixth-century philosophers in this particular way, Aristotle is
able to criticize them by contrast with the fifth-century 'pluralists,' Anaxago-
ras and Empedocles. He writes:

Following these thinkers and their *archai* [τὰς τοιαύτας ἀρχάς],
since such *archai* were not sufficient to generate the nature of
what is [ὡς οὐχ ἱκανῶν οὐσῶν γεννῆσαι τὴν τῶν ὄντων φύσιν],
later thinkers, forced once more by truth itself as we said, sought
the next principle [πάλιν ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας, ὥσπερ εἴπομεν,
ἀναγκαζόμενοι τὴν ἐχομένην ἐζήτησαν ἀρχήν]. When someone
said that intelligence exists in nature [νοῦν . . . ἐνεῖναι], as in ani-
mals, and that it is the cause of the arrangement and of every kind
of order in nature [ἐν τῇ φύσει τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς
τάξεως], he appeared like a sober man in contrast to his predeces-
sors who talked erratically. (*Met*. I.984b8–18)

However, the critical interpretive question for us is whether Xenophanes or
the other sixth-century thinkers mean 'water,' 'earth,' 'air,' and so on to sig-
nify inert material substrates like the wood or bronze in Aristotle's examples.
It is far from evident that when Xenophanes writes, "For we all come into
being from earth and water" and "All things which come into being and grow
are earth and water," he means earth and water as inert material substrates
requiring some other source of change. Unless Xenophanes does mean earth

and water in the narrow sense of Aristotle's material substrate, the argument Aristotle presents as to the insufficiency of material cause is a rather misleading vantage point from which to assess Pre-Socratic thinking about *physis*.

Here we might reflect on the fact that there are meanings for the Pre-Socratics' basic concepts, like 'earth and water,' beyond the Aristotelian sense of inert material substrates. For example, 'earth and water' is used in Homer to refer to the elements (in the nontechnical sense) from which we mortals come to be and into which, ultimately, we will waste away, without conveying the Aristotelian sense of *archē*. For example, in Book VII of Homer's *Iliad*, after Hektor challenges any one of the Achaeans to come forward and fight him man-to-man, Menelaus observes that his fellow warriors are hesitant to face Hektor and he says to them:

> May you one and all turn to earth and water [ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν πάντες ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα γένοισθε], / You who sit there each man with no heart in him, utterly inglorious [ἕκαστοι ἀκήριοι ἀκλεὲς]. / Against this man will I myself arm; but from on high are the issues of victory held by the immortal gods [νίκης πείρατ' ἔχονται ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν]. (*Il.* VII.96–102)[10]

The remark about turning to earth and water here has contrastive force in relation to the prospect of winning undying glory in battle—indeed, Hektor himself asserted that his glory will never die if he slays the best of the Achaeans on the battlefield (*Il.* VII.91). Failing to win such glory, even failing to face this challenge on the battlefield, is tantamount to allowing oneself to fade back into the elements from which one came to be. Thus, the sense of 'earth and water' in Homer signifies perishability, the unavoidable mortality to which all human beings are condemned save the exceptional figure, like Hektor or Achilles, whose glory will not die with him. It is fitting that Menelaus's words here close with his resolve to take up arms himself while drawing their attention to the immortal gods. The gods' immortality brings into sharp relief the fact that human beings come to be from earth and water and return to these elements, once dead.[11] A reading of Xenophanes's fragments on earth/water along these lines highlights his significance as a theorist of mortality—something captured by Diogenes Laertius when he writes: "[Xenophanes] was the first person to proclaim that everything which comes to be is perishable [πρῶτός τε ἀπεφήνατο ὅτι πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον φθαρτόν ἐστι], and that the soul is breath [καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πνεῦμα]" (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* IX.2.19).

Still another possibility for understanding these fragments is what we might call the 'phenomenological' reading, as found, for example, in Martin Heidegger's interpretation of Pre-Socratic basic concepts—for example, earth, sky, and the so-called elements—as "essential modes of disclosure and concealment [*wesenhafte Weisen der Entbergung und Verbergung*]."[12] A more recent phenomenological approach to Pre-Socratic thinking on *physis* can be found in John Sallis's work, particularly on Anaximenes of Miletus, but more generally on the so-called elements as they figure into early Greek thought.[13] For our purposes, what is most important in Sallis's approach is the way that he calls into question Aristotle's predetermination, in *Metaphysics* I, that the 'elements' in Pre-Socratic thought are to be understood as the "from-which of composition." Instead, Sallis proposes that we think of the elements as *the from-which of manifestation*, or, as he puts it, "the elements as they bound and articulate the expanse of the self-showing of things themselves."[14]

One indication that Xenophanes thinks of earth and water as the 'elemental' in Sallis's sense is the fact that the phenomenal character of earth and water figures prominently in Xenophanes's extant fragments. Consider, first of all, a famous fragment on the so-called roots of the earth:

> This upper limit of the earth is seen here at our feet [γαίης μὲν τόδε πεῖρας ἄνω παρὰ ποσσὶν ὁρᾶται], / pushing up against the air, but that below goes on without limit [ἠέρι προσπλάζον, τὸ κάτω δ' ἐς ἄπειρον ἱκνεῖται]. (B28)

Aristotle interpreted this fragment as an attempt to explain the stability of the earth by asserting that the earth goes down ad infinitum without bothering to offer a reason for this assertion. However, the fragment itself allows for a phenomenological reading: namely, that when we speak of 'earth,' what we see of it here at our feet is but the upper limit—what is in contact with air—but the 'below' part of the earth stretches out "without limit [ἐς ἄπειρον]."[15] Arguably, this phenomenological reading does more justice to the poetic structure of the fragment, according to which the first line ends with the verb, *horatai*, the 'seeing' that we do when we look upon the earth here at our feet, and the second line ends with the verb, *hikneitai*—the 'reaching' that the earth herself does in reaching out into that without limit. In other words, Xenophanes has written this fragment in such a way as to juxtapose our human attitude toward the elemental earth—we see one limit of the earth in contacting another element (air)—with the operation of the elemental itself in extending beyond the reach of human apprehension. Heidegger's remark, in his *Parmenides* lecture course, that "earth is the in-between,

namely, between the concealment of what is below the earth and the lumi-
nosity, the disclosiveness, of what is above the earth"[16] fits Xenophanes's B28
better than any other fragment of Pre-Socratic thinking.[17] The earth herself
is 'monstrous' in the phenomenological sense articulated by Sallis—that is,
its "exceeding the things of nature while also . . . belonging to nature"—
precisely in the way that earth exceeds the limits that belong to 'things.'[18]

Yet earth is not the only elemental that Xenophanes understands to be
'without limit' in the relevant sense. Consider the following fragment on the
source of water:

> Sea is the source of water, and the source of wind [πηγὴ δ' ἐστὶ
> θάλασσ' ὕδατος, πηγὴ δ' ἀνέμοιο·], / for without the great sea there
> would be no wind [οὔτε γὰρ ἐν νέφεσιν <πνοιαί κ' ἀνέμοιο φύοιντο
> ἐκπνείοντος> ἔσωθεν ἄνευ πόντου μεγάλοιο] / nor streams of riv-
> ers nor rainwater from on high [οὔτε ῥοαὶ ποταμῶν οὔτ' αἰθέρος
> ὄμβριον ὕδωρ]; / but the great sea is the begetter of clouds, winds
> and rivers [ἀλλὰ μέγας πόντος γενέτωρ νεφέων ἀνέμων τε καὶ
> ποταμῶν]. (B30)[19]

Although Xenophanes does not specify in this fragment that water is
apeiron, it would seem to follow as a clear implication. In arguing that sea is
the source of water, Xenophanes lays out that sea is the source of wind, riv-
ers, rainwater, clouds, and so on, which suggests that he understands water
not as something delimited—a thing among other things—but rather as
that world-order, or *kosmos*, which gathers together sea, rivers, wind, clouds,
and rain in their interrelations. It would thus seem to follow that one could
say of water exactly what Xenophanes says of earth: namely, that while one
limit of it is something seen (say, the surface of water on the sea or river),
as elemental it stretches away from human apprehension, into that without
limit. Indeed, more generally we see that Xenophanes uses the expression *eis
apeiron* not in the sense of 'ad infinitum' (as the expression is used most com-
monly in Aristotle's texts), but rather as signifying what exceeds the limits of
human apprehension. Consider, for example, how *eis apeiron* is used in the
following testimonium:

> Xenophanes (said that) there were many suns and moons through-
> out the regions, sections, and zones of the earth [πολλοὺς εἶναι
> ἡλίους καὶ σελήνας κατὰ τὰ κλίματα τῆς γῆς καὶ ἀποτομὰς καὶ
> ζώνας], and at a certain time the disk drops into some section of
> the earth not inhabited by us [κατὰ δέ τινα καιρὸν ἐκπίπτειν τὸν

δίσκον εἴς τινα ἀποτομὴν τῆς γῆς οὐκ οἰκουμένην ὑφ' ἡμῶν] and so, like stepping into a hole, makes the eclipse (or sunset) appear [καὶ οὕτως ὥσπερ εἰ κενεμβατοῦντα ἔκλειψιν ὑποφαίνειν]. He also says that the sun goes onward without limit [ὁ δ' αὐτὸς τὸν ἥλιόν εἴς ἄπειρον μὲν προιέναι], but appears to go in a circle because of the distance [δοκεῖν δὲ κυκλεῖσθαι διὰ τὴν ἀπόστασιν]. (A41a)

The 'descent' of the sun—as though it were stepping into a hole—is what gives rise to the appearance of an eclipse or sunset, but it is a phenomenon relative to human apprehension. Similarly, the sun appearing to circle is itself relative to the human observer, since the sun's movement is into a space without limit.

The fact that Xenophanes uses *eis apeiron* (in B28 and A41a) in the sense of what, phenomenologically, is at the very limit of manifestation suggests that his formulation of the 'from which,' *ek . . .* (in B27 and B33) is to be construed in terms of what Sallis calls the "from-which of manifestation."[20] Arguably, these latter fragments offer us a phenomenology of earth and water as the from-which of manifestation not unlike the account of *physis* developed by Martin Heidegger, when he writes:

> *Phusis*, *phuein . . .* is said of the earth, *hē gē phuei*—the earth lets come forth [*die Rede läßt hervorgehen*] . . . a coming-forth out of concealedness, of the germ and the root from the darkness of the earth into the light of day . . . The *phuein* of *phusis*, the letting come forth and the emergence, lets what emerges appear in the unconcealed [*Das* phuein *der* phusis, *das Aufgehenlassen und Aufgehen, läßt das Aufgehende in das Unverborgene erscheinen*].[21]

There are a number of critical points in Heidegger's remarks that invite comparison with Xenophanes's fragments. Most obviously, we find here the connection already noted in B28 between *phyein* and the earth as its source. But there is also a point that merits further examination in Xenophanes: namely, that time is key for understanding earth and the other elements as the from-which of manifestation, since the self-manifestation that is *physis* occurs over time. Heidegger addresses time on the same page of the *Parmenides* lecture-course when he writes: "For primordial Greek thinking . . . time, always as dispensing and dispensed time, takes man and all beings essentially into its ordering and in every case orders the appearance and disappearance of beings. Time discloses and conceals [*Die Zeit entbirgt und verbirgt*]."

That final point on time is crucial for understanding what is undoubtedly one of Xenophanes's most important texts:

> By no means did the gods reveal all things to mortals from the beginning [οὔτοι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖσ' ὑπέδειξαν], / but over time, by searching, they discover better [ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον]. (B18)

B18 is both a magnificent bit of poetry and one that conveys philosophical meaning in a remarkably concise way.[22] At the same time, the form is such that it allows for varied interpretations; not surprisingly, this has resulted in ongoing scholarly debate. Its structure is simple: a negative claim in the first line, followed by a positive claim in the second. But its force turns on the multiple oppositions playing off one another: gods/mortals—this opposition heightened by the immediate juxtaposition of the words θεοὶ θνητοῖσ, in the Greek; "reveal/discover [ὑπέδειξαν/ ἐφευρίσκουσιν]"—the first verb taking the gods as its subject, the second implying mortals as its subject; "from the beginning" or "from the outset [ἀπ' ἀρχῆς]" or "over time [χρόνῳ]"—an opposition that underscores the very different temporal character of the gods vis-à-vis the temporal character of mortals (B18).[23] Thus, if mortals are to discover, ἐφευρίσκουσιν (a verb that suggests suddenness of discovery), they must attempt to do this over time through the work of seeking, χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες. Finally there is the opposition "all things"/"better": what the gods are able to reveal, were they revealing it to mortals, is 'all things,' πάντα, the entirety of what is, whereas mortals are left to scratch out a discovery of something better, ἄμεινον.[24] Of course, the implication of this latter opposition is that the discoveries made through mortal *zētein* are by their very nature ongoing, incomplete. To discover, over time, something better than what was discovered previously is not to discover or 'reveal' everything in its complete truth.[25]

B18 would therefore seem to fit well the thought expressed, most famously, in the following fragment:

> No man knows, or ever will know [καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔτις ἀνὴρ γένετ' οὐδέ τις ἔσται], / the truth about the gods and about everything I speak of [εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·]: / for even if one chanced to say what is absolutely the case [εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών], / still he would not *know*, as seeming is wrought over all things [αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ᾽ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται]. (B34)

To work, through *zētein*, toward further discoveries within the insurmountable context of seeming is the portion, *moira*, that is allotted to us as mortals. B34 does not explicitly state that knowledge belongs to the gods alone, but when read in conjunction with B18, it would seem to imply this. The gods may have the power to reveal the truth about "the gods and all things (of which Xenophanes speaks)," but they have not done so. Instead, the allotment for human beings is "seeming wrought over all things [δόκος δ᾽ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται]" (B34), and to work through *zētein* toward some better discovery. Thus, even if knowledge is not explicitly reserved for the divine, Xenophanes's claim as to the allotment that befalls mortals is intensified by this implicit contrast with the divine. Xenophanes's other extant texts about the gods, and particularly about the one god who "is greatest among gods and men" (B23), make this intensification all the more vivid.[26]

The sharp difference between the temporal character of human life and that of the divine comes through in a famous example of Xenophanean theology, as preserved for us by Aristotle:

> Xenophanes used to say that those who say the gods are born are just as impious as those who say that they die [ὁμοίως ἀσεβοῦσιν οἱ γενέσθαι φάσκοντες τοὺς θεοὺς τοῖς ἀποθανεῖν λέγουσιν·], since in both ways it follows that there is a time when the gods do not exist [ἀμφοτέρως γὰρ συμβαίνει μὴ εἶναι τοὺς θεούς ποτε]. (A12)[27]

On one reading of this passage, it would appear that Xenophanes's God is removed from the ever-changing/moving realm of *physis*, since it would be impious to think that there is ever a time in which the gods are not (μὴ εἶναι). Accordingly, the gods' remove from *physis* renders more vivid the temporal character of human activity—including, most important, the human activity of seeking for causes, and the discovering of something better over time.[28] However, as an alternative interpretation, there is the view, derived from Aristotle, that Xenophanes identifies God with *physis*. In *Metaphysics* Book I, Aristotle refers to Xenophanes as "the first of the unifiers [πρῶτος τούτων ἑνίσας]" (a group that includes Parmenides and the Eleatics), and then writes: "[Xenophanes] made nothing clear [οὐθὲν διεσαφήνισεν] . . . but, looking at the heaven/sky as a whole, he says that the one is God [ἀλλ᾽ εἰς τὸν ὅλον οὐρανὸν ἀποβλέψας τὸ ἓν εἶναί φησι τὸν θεόν]" (986b21–25). On the issue of whether, in fact, Xenophanes identifies God and *physis* there is ongoing scholarly controversy.[29] Nonetheless, if we take B18 seriously, it may well be that the question of whether God is identical with *physis* remains, necessarily, an open question for Xenophanes—that it awaits

further 'discovery,' so to speak. Indeed, just as A12 may be read as a heuristic argument ("If it is impious to say that there is a time when the gods do not exist, it is therefore impious to say that the gods are born"), so B26 presents an *apodeixis* for getting at theological truth—or, if not 'truth,' exactly, at least something better than what was thought before:[30]

> He remains for ever in the same place, entirely motionless [αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταὐτῷ μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν], / nor is it proper for him to move from one place to another [οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλλῃ]. (B26)

In this way, we can see how *apodeixis* as practiced by Xenophanes is heuristic: it facilitates discovery by revealing the implications of what is already set forth, and there is no reason a priori to think that these conclusions could not be revised or rejected in light of subsequent 'discovery.'[31]

    In conclusion, Xenophanes's extant fragments allow us to call into question the received interpretation of Pre-Socratic thinking with regard to both its 'Socratic' and 'Aristotelian' layers. Against the 'Socratic' interpretation, it is not true that the Pre-Socratics were concerned with *physis* without heeding the limitations of human knowing—for Xenophanes does mark these limitations even while he seeks to understand *physis* better than it was understood previously. Against the 'Aristotelian' interpretation, it is far from evident that the earliest Greek thinkers tried to explain all coming-to-be / passing-away by appeal to an inert material substrate that would then stand in need of an external source of movement. Certainly, Xenophanes's pregnant lines about earth and water do not fit Aristotle's pattern for interpreting the Pre-Socratics, perhaps because they lend themselves more to a phenomenological reading of earth/water as the from-which of manifestation. Further, however Xenophanes understands the relation between God and *physis*, we can infer at least the following: if God is identified with *physis*, then what Xenophanes says about earth/water must itself have theological significance, and, conversely, the apodeictic arguments that Xenophanes presents concerning God have significance for his understanding of *physis*. If, on the other hand, Xenophanes does not identify God and *physis*, then, at the very least, Xenophanes's theology intensifies the contrast between the human and the divine, such that we can better appreciate the limitations placed on our human-all-too-human efforts at seeking knowledge. On the reading that I have sketched out here, Xenophanes's provisional, incomplete, open-ended, and experimental thinking models for us a kind of philosophical inquiry (*zētein*) into *physis* that can be appropriated anew in our own time.

Notes

1. See, in particular, his argument that Zeus does not exist, but only clouds exist—"everything else is drivel" (Aristophanes, *Clouds*, ll. 365–371). He admonishes Strepsiades to "believe in no god but ours: this Chaos, and the Clouds, and the Tongue, these three" (ll. 422–423). Finally, at the end, Strepsiades laments having "tossed out the gods on account of Socrates" (ll. 1476–1477).

2. On the problematic character of translating the Greek *physis* as 'nature,' see Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 15–16.

3. The passage gives some specificity to the sort of questions under examination in such a study: e.g., "whether heat and cold, by a sort of fermentation, bring about the organization of living things, as some people say. And whether blood is that by which we think, or is it air or fire? Or is it none of these, but the brain is what produces the sensations of hearing and seeing and smell, from which arise memory and opinion, and from memory and opinion—once at rest—arises knowledge?" (*Phd*. 96b1–7).

4. The audacious, revolutionary aspirations of Pre-Socratic philosophy is reflected in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, where the Thinkery (φροντιστήριον) is presented as a place where young men go to learn a form of persuasion that is informed by the ongoing study of *physis*: e.g., the heavens are a stove, and we are charcoal, etc. (see, for example, *Clouds*, ll. 94–99). On the view of Pre-Socratic *historia peri tēs physeōs* from the vantage of Plato's *Phaedo*, see André Laks, *Introduction à la "philosophie présocratique"* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), 8–9.

5. For the numbering of Xenophanes's fragments and testimonia, see Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 9th ed. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1960). See James H. Lesher, "Xenophanes' Scepticism," *Phronesis* 23, no. 1 (1978): 9–10, for a list of the phenomena traditionally viewed as divine 'signs' that Xenophanes accounts for in naturalistic terms: (1) sun and stars coming from clouds, (2) eclipses, (3) comets, (4) lightning, (5) evaporation/rain.

6. Translation by Lesher, in James H. Lesher, *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

7. See Lesher's dual-*archē* reading of earth and water in Lesher, *Xenophanes of Colophon*, 133. Against the idea that Xenophanes holds such a theory, see Christian Schäfer, *Xenophanes von Kolophon: Ein Vorsokratiker zwischen Mythos und Philosophie* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1996), 142.

8. See Aristotle, *Met*. I.3.984a6–11, and Jaap Mansfeld, "Aristotle and Others on Thales, or the Beginnings of Natural Philosophy: With Some Remarks on Xenophanes," *Mnemosyne* 38 (1985): 110n4. Michael Stokes comments: "The fragments of Xenophanes prove false Aristotle's generalization that none of the *physikoi* made earth the arche." See Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 1971), 49.

9. Harold Cherniss makes this point with a sharper edge in "The History of Ideas and Ancient Greek Philosophy," in Cherniss, *Selected Papers*, ed. Leonardo Tarán (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 41–42.

10. Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

11. To say that earth and water evoke perishability is not identical to saying that these elements are the 'material principles' of living things. Christian Schäfer reaches the latter conclusion from considering the Homeric meaning of these terms in Schäfer, *Xenophanes von Kolophon*, 135.

12. Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 70 (GA 54: 104).

13. See, in particular, John Sallis's interpretation of Anaximenes in "Doubles of Anaximenes," in *The Presocratics after Heidegger*, ed. David C. Jacobs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999): "Presumably Anaximenes was setting forth air as the source or origin from which all things somehow come forth into their presence, their manifestness. But how, precisely, is one to understand *archē* without merely assuming for it the sense that was later to be explicitly determined for it by Aristotle?" (147).

14. John Sallis, *Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 154–155. See also Sallis, *Platonic Legacies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 142.

15. Various interpreters have sided with reading *es apeiron* here as 'into that without limit' rather than as 'ad infinitum'—for example, Schäfer, *Xenophanes von Kolophon*, 141.

16. Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 60 (GA 54: 88). I have altered the translation by Schuwer and Rojcewicz.

17. Admittedly, Heidegger does not include Xenophanes among the select company of 'primordial thinkers.' That designation was reserved for Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus. See Heidegger, *Parmenides*, §1a.

18. Sallis, *Force of Imagination*, 158.

19. Compare Xenophanes's other relevant testimonia: A32, A40, and A39.

20. See also Michael Stokes's argument against Gregory Vlastos's view that, for the Milesians, something just *is* whatever it comes *from*, in Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy*, 40–41.

21. Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 142 (GA 54: 211–212). See also Heidegger's association of earth with sheltering/concealing, in his reading of Homer's *Iliad* XXIII, 244, in *Parmenides*, 60 (GA 54: 88).

22. On this, see Karl Popper, "The Unknown Xenophanes," in *The World of Parmenides: Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment*, ed. Arne F. Petersen, with the assistance of Jørgen Mejer (London: Routledge, 1998), 39.

23. On the difference between the human and the divine, see Bruno Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, 4th ed. (updated) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 129.

24. On *ameinon* in fragment 18, Lesher writes: "Since the neuter accusative singular of the comparative form of an adjective serves also as the comparative of the adverb, *ameinon* is ambiguous between 'find a better (thing)' and 'find out better.'" See Lesher, *Xenophanes of Colophon*, 150.

25. Christian Schäfer notes that the contrast between the aorist *hypedeixan* and the present *epheuriskousin* intensifies the temporal character of the human seeking, over against the absent divine revelation. See Schäfer, *Xenophanes von Kolophon*, 123.

26. B23 reads: "One God is greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in body or in thought [εἰς θεός, ἐν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος / οὔτε δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίιος οὔτε νόημα]."

27. From Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1399b6–10.

28. Lesher also notes this specifically theological ground for Xenophanes's thinking about human seeking in B18: see James H. Lesher, "Xenophanes on Inquiry and Discovery: An Alternative to the 'Hymn to Progress' Reading of Fr. 18," *Ancient Philosophy* 11 (1991): 242.

29. For opposing views on this issue, see Aryeh Finkelberg, "Studies in Xenophanes," *Harvard Studies in Philology* 93 (1990): 111; Lesher, *Xenophanes of Colophon*, 101.

30. The fact that both demonstrative arguments turn on ethical concepts—namely, what is 'proper' (*epiprepei*) for God, and what is 'impious' (*asebēs*) to say about God—supports Nietzsche's claim that Xenophanes "sublates the identification of God and man in order to equate God and nature. In this regard he leads a *heightened ethical consciousness* that seeks to hold at a distance all things human and unworthy of the gods." See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, trans. Greg Whitlock (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

31. On apodeictic argumentation in Xenophanes, see Michael Papazian, "Gods and Fossils: Inference and Scientific Method in Xenophanes' Philosophy," in *Philosopher Kings and Tragic Heroes*, ed. Heather L. Reid and Davide Tanasi (Sioux City, Iowa: Parnassos, 2016).

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Going with the Flow: Soul and Truth in Heraclitus

Drew A. Hyland

One can hardly begin a study of the thought of Heraclitus without an orienting reflection on the unique style in which he writes, his famed but enigmatic aphoristic style. That unorthodox style must first be placed in historical context. Although Heraclitus was from ancient times given the epithet 'the obscure,' his style may have been somewhat less jolting to his contemporaries than to us. Among the many reasons for this, one stands out immediately. Today there is a 'default' writing style that verges on being mandatory for philosophic writing: the essay format, exemplified by this essay and all of the others in this volume. So pervasive is the assumption that this is the 'proper' way to write philosophically that today one hardly has to make a conscious *decision* to write in essay format when one decides to write philosophically. This was by no means the case when Heraclitus wrote, presumably around the turn from the sixth to the fifth century B.C.E. No such default format had been established; indeed, in that time there was a rich palette of styles to choose from. There were, of course, the "Concerning Nature" treatises of the early Milesian philosophers, of which we have at most one-sentence fragments. But thinkers soon to follow Heraclitus, such as Parmenides and Empedocles, would present their philosophic thinking in poetic verse. And not long after that, a philosopher named Plato came along with a style of presentation that more closely resembled the great Greek tragedies and especially comedies than previous philosophic works. All this must have meant that in that epoch, thinkers who decided to write philosophically had a much more conscious *decision* to make about just *how* they would write: A prose treatise? Poetic verse? The format of the theater? To this array Heraclitus added one uniquely his own: the aphoristic style for which he is famous—or infamous.

Why might he have chosen this format? I offer the following suggestion: suppose that you held a 'doctrine' that there was a changeless, eternally stable truth, accessible by a rigorous process of reasoning, and you wanted to make that truth available to your readers. In that situation, might not the

most appropriate writing style be the essay format, in which you set out that reasoning process as clearly and persuasively as possible?[1] This assumption no doubt informs most philosophic 'essays,' then and now.

But suppose you held a very different sort of view? Suppose you experienced the world as a constantly changing flux of oppositions, struggles, even contradictions, which over the course of time had a certain *logos*,[2] a certain ordered way of 'making sense' that, though indeed ordered, nevertheless *itself* flowed and changed over the coursing of time? How would you best express that experience? If you did so in a way that was thoroughly consistent, a step-by-step progress to an eternally stable conclusion—in short, if you wrote in the essay format—wouldn't the very way you present your experience, imposing the pretense of stability on the very flux you are trying to articulate, be misleading? What will it even mean to *articulate* such a position? Won't that bring it to a linguistic halt in an eternally stable proposition? Won't that be inherently misleading, if not contradictory? Perhaps, then, Heraclitus wrote in his aphoristic style because he wanted to *exhibit* the tensions, the oppositions, even the contradictions, yet also the flowing, ever-changing *logos* that he experienced, and, above all, because he wanted the *reader* to experience, to be challenged by, that ever-changing and sometimes oppositional *logos*. One thing is for sure: Heraclitus challenges every reader to make sense of— to find the *logos* in—the often-oppositional, often-hidden, often-enigmatic meaning of his sentences. Understanding Heraclitus is *practice* for understanding the flux of things.[3]

My reflection on Heraclitus's enigmatic sentences on the soul begins in this spirit.[4] Those reflections then lead to a consideration of how the notion of truth, *alētheia*, plays out in his writings, which in turn leads to a reflection on the metaphors for knowing that Heraclitus engages. This will be not a comprehensive account of Heraclitus's fragments but a highly selective one, one that will hopefully shed some light on (or, to anticipate an important Heraclitean motif, be in attunement with) *part* of Heraclitus's larger *logos*.

I begin with perhaps the two decisive fragments that refer explicitly to the soul, fragments 115 and 45.[5]

Fragment 115: The soul has a *logos* which increases itself.

Fragment 45: One could not discover the limits of the soul, even if one traveled every path, so deep is its *logos*.

The soul *has* a *logos*: immediately we see a multiplicity of possible senses of *logos* come into play. Does this mean that there is an *account* of the soul?

A *rational* account? Does it say that the soul *contains reason?* Does it invoke the intimacy of the soul with the *word*, and so with *language*? Or, invoking Charles Kahn's notion of 'linguistic density,' might all of the above be in play in this sentence of Heraclitus, and perhaps even more? However we interpret it, the invocation of the intimacy of soul and *logos* already points to the genuinely revolutionary understanding of the soul in Heraclitus compared to what had come before in Greek literature and thought. As Martha Nussbaum has convincingly argued, the notion of 'soul' prior to Heraclitus, and especially in the great Greek epics, was a much more amorphous and simple phenomenon that remained close to the early meaning of ψύχη as 'breath.'[6] With Heraclitus, however, and with this sentence in particular, the soul now begins to take on those qualities associated with *logos*, and as other fragments will show, even more qualities of ethical responsibility and unity. In sum, the soul begins to become the *unity* of the individual *person*.[7] We are suddenly on the way to the soul as the locus of selfhood.

We can see this if we think this first fragment not in terms of its revolutionary step from the past but in terms of what it points toward in our understanding of the soul: "The soul has a *logos*, which increases itself." It is as if Heraclitus is already anticipating two future understandings of the soul, each of which he wants to avoid and between which he wants to navigate. The soul has a *logos*: taken in a stronger, more static way than Heraclitus seems to intend, this phrase becomes in later thinkers (and not very later) the notion that the soul is somehow something permanent, even immortal, that whatever the soul is, it is that set of qualities permanently. This view will also entail a certain epistemological optimism: the soul can be known, known definitively in its essence and structure, once and for all, eternally. Plato is often taken as an exemplar of this doctrine regarding the soul, though I will call that opinion into question toward the end of this essay.

However, this is evidently not the understanding of the soul that Heraclitus seems to have in mind, as the concluding phrase of the sentence makes clear: "The soul has a *λόγος, which increases itself.*" The *logos* of the soul is not something permanent, unchangeable, known once and for all; instead, it *increases itself*; it changes, advances, or recedes; in any case it does *not* remain the same, always. But this points immediately to the second polar understanding of the soul that Heraclitus also seems to want to avoid. For often, the view that the soul is in constant flux is accompanied by the conviction that this constantly changing soul is thus something fundamentally *irrational, unknowable*. In this conception, the soul lacks the basic element of stability that is a first requirement for intelligibility and rationality. This view usually carries with it, conversely to the earlier one, a certain epistemological

pessimism: the soul, in constant flux as it is, cannot be known; self-knowledge is impossible.

But the first phrase of Heraclitus's sentence denies this polar interpretation as well: the soul *has* a *logos*. It *is* intelligible, knowable, at least in a certain way, as Heraclitus makes clear enough in another fragment, fragment 116: "All people can partake in knowing themselves and thinking soundly."

If Heraclitus's sentence is denying these two polar understandings, what more precisely is being said here? Perhaps it is something like this: yes, the soul *does* have a *logos*: there *is* a rational account to be given of it; it is in a way knowable. But the soul, and therefore the *logos* thereof, is *not* something permanent, stable, 'what it is and not another thing.' There is a *logos* of the soul, but it is a *logos that flows*, like the soul itself and like Heraclitus's larger *logos* of the whole. The soul, which now means something like the self, or who we are, develops, changes, as time goes on, but it changes in such a way that one can get into an *attunement* with that development, and so know it as it develops. Self-knowledge, then, cannot be a once-and-for-all attainment, a "Now I know myself, and can move on to other things" affair. Neither is self-knowledge simply impossible. Rather, self-knowledge is an *ongoing project*, a challenge to each of us to stay aware of, stay in attunement with, our own developing character, our souls. As the Heraclitean metaphor of 'attunement' suggests, we might be helped in understanding what Heraclitus has in mind here by thinking of the process of listening to, and so in a sense 'knowing,' a musical composition. Our comprehension 'flows' with the music.

This understanding is confirmed, I would argue, by the second fragment cited above, fragment 45: "One could not discover the limits of the soul even if one traveled every path, so deep is its λόγος." The soul's 'limits' are inaccessible to us; we can thus never hope to 'define' the soul, articulate its permanent being once and for all. But not because it is simply unintelligible! The soul *has* a *logos*; it is just so deep—which I take to mean so ongoing, so ever-developing—that its limits can never be attained. Self-knowledge, understood as knowledge of the soul, is a viable project, but an *ongoing* project, one whose limits we will never reach. I thus take Heraclitus to be saying here that the soul has no 'limits' because it is not the sort of thing to *have* fixed, stable boundaries; rather, the soul is a flow, something developing, changing, but in an ordered way to which one can, with work, become attuned. The soul, we might say, is a constant movement not unlike the breath that is its original meaning. This would seem to be explicitly confirmed by the substance of fragments 12 and A15, if indeed they are authentic: "The soul is an exhalation that perceives; it is different from the body, and always flowing."[8]

Perhaps this view implies something about the question that seems inevitably to arise whenever the issue of the soul comes to the fore: Does the soul live on after death?—is it immortal? Heraclitus is characteristically ambiguous if not contradictory on this issue. Defenders of the view that Heraclitus did believe the soul lives on after death usually cite first fragment 98: "Souls smell in Hades" (that is, "Souls have the sense of smell in Hades"). Does this not at very least take us back to the Homeric notion of 'shades' in Hades, and is it not consistent with the understanding of the soul as essentially 'breath'? If so, it would point toward two important claims: first, Heraclitus seems to hold to at least a quasi-materialistic understanding of the soul: it is some sort of amorphous 'breath,' an 'exhalation that perceives.' And second, in at least some sense the soul *lives on* after the body dies, even if in a very reduced state, with only the faintest traces of anything like personality.

The first view, that the soul is in some sense physical, is supported by a number of other fragments on the soul. Fragment 36 reads, "For souls it is death to become water, and for water death to become earth. Water comes to be out of earth, and the soul out of water." The basic thought is reiterated in fragment 77: "It is delight or death for souls to become moist."[9] To which Heraclitus adds in fragment 118, "A gleam of light is a dry soul, wisest and best."

Just what is Heraclitus saying here about the soul? On the one hand, it is difficult if not impossible to read these fragments plausibly without attributing to Heraclitus the view that the soul is at least in some sense physical: either fire, as some scholars have interpreted it, or, more plausibly in my opinion, analogous to 'breath.'[10] Either way, this will bear directly on the second question regarding immortality, to which we will soon turn. But it is important to remember that with Heraclitus, meanings are rarely univocal; yes, it is surely plausible to understand him as asserting, as *part* of the meaning of soul, that it is physical. It is death for it to become moist, it is best when dry, and so on. At the same time, it is no less clear that Heraclitus means by these sentences more than *just* asserting the physicality of soul.[11] The image of 'dry' souls invokes the notion of fire, which on the one hand seems to be Heraclitus's foundational 'element,' and on the other is his crucial image for the constant flux and change that he finds in the world. And in our souls! So the closer our souls are to the dryness of fire, the 'purer' they are (the Greek word for 'fire' is *pur*), the 'wiser and better' they are. Another, more prosaic meaning no doubt refers to the dangers of drunkenness, as in fragment 117: "When a man is drunk, he is led by a beardless boy, stumbling, not aware of where he is going, having his soul moist." In a way, then, we can understand Heraclitus as beginning the project that is still the project of

many today, to give a 'materialist' account of the human self that somehow can still make sense of the emotional, moral, and intellectual experience of conscious selfhood.

Heraclitus may indeed be an important precursor of modernity, but we need not make such a long leap to appreciate his powerful influence on his fellow Greeks—on Plato, for example. In a way this claim is surprising, since when Heraclitus is addressed by characters in the Platonic dialogues, it is often in a critical vein, as in the *Theaetetus* (180a ff.), where Socrates reduces Heraclitus's position to one of the most radical flux imaginable, forgetting almost entirely the presence of *logos*, and so rendering the position virtually incoherent. It is surely hardly recognizable as Heraclitus's position. And when it comes to the question of the soul, the Platonic Socrates would seem to be as far as possible from Heraclitus, arguing, as he does famously in the *Phaedo*, for example, for an immaterial soul, one that lives on after death, and one that is at least 'more like' the eternal and changeless than like the changeable. But this is not always the case: in the *Symposium*, for example, the same Socrates, speaking in agreement with the priestess Diotima, presents an understanding of the soul strikingly similar to that of Heraclitus. The passage is worth quoting at some length. Having developed a recognition that the *body* changes and develops constantly as one grows older, Diotima continues,

> This is so not only with regard to one's body, but also with regard to one's soul. One's habits, characteristic traits, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, fears, none of these ever stays the same in anybody; some are coming into being while others are passing away . . . Everything that is mortal is preserved in this way, not by being the same in every way forever, like what is divine, but by having what is old and departing leave behind another like itself that is new. By this means, Socrates, she continued, a mortal thing participates in immortality, both in terms of the body and in all other regards. An immortal thing operates in a different way. (*Smp*. 207e ff.)[12]

Like Heraclitus, Socrates/Diotima here present an understanding of the soul as by no means stable or permanent but constantly developing, yet with hardly a hint that such a situation falls into incoherence. To the contrary, they are setting this out as precisely the *logos* of the soul. One could thus say of at least this account of soul in the Platonic dialogues that "the soul has a *logos*, which increases itself." And it is perhaps no accident that in this very dialogue, contrary to the apparent teaching of certain other dialogues and especially the *Phaedo*, personal immortality is straightforwardly denied. Only

the gods live forever and are immortal in that sense, says Diotima; the only immortality possible for humans is that of leaving behind something of ourselves. This leads us directly to the second question raised above.

What does this imply regarding the second question, that of the possible immortality of the soul? Notwithstanding fragment 98 discussed above ("Souls smell in Hades"), the predominance of Heraclitus's fragments clearly point to a denial at least of anything like *personal* immortality. When Heraclitus says in fragments 36 and 77 that it is *death* for souls to become water or moist, the point seems straightforward enough: the *soul* dies, not just the body. And when, in the wonderfully enigmatic fragment 27 he says, "What awaits humans at death they neither expect nor imagine," perhaps the most plausible reading of this is that nothing at all awaits them![13] Of course, it is possible, given Heraclitus's predilection for multiple meanings, that there is a *sense* in which souls continue on after death, namely, that since soul participates in the constant movement between water, air, and fire, forever becoming now one and now the other, that, for example, the dead soul, as water, continues *as water*. But this is obviously not the same thing as remaining a conscious soul.[14]

For Heraclitus, then, there would seem to be no personal immortality of the soul. If that is not our fate, what is? He may hint at an answer in fragment 119: "Man's character is his fate [or 'destiny']." Even though our 'destiny' may not be personal immortality, we do have one, but it is here and now, and is determined by our *character* (*ethos*). His is a fundamentally 'this-worldly' understanding of our fate and destiny, and moreover, that fate is largely in our hands. Wisdom, in a certain way, is attainable, but it is attainable by *living* in a certain way. Thus the importance of this crucial fragment of Heraclitus, fragment 112: "To think soundly is the greatest virtue, and wisdom is speaking and acting the truth, paying heed to the nature of things."[15]

This remarkable fragment raises many thought-provoking issues, but we will concentrate only on the understanding of truth implied therein, for it is remarkable indeed. The first striking thing we are told is that wisdom is speaking *and acting* the truth. If Heraclitus had said simply that wisdom is *speaking* the truth, this would have been interesting but hardly surprising, especially in the still largely oral culture in which Heraclitus lived. Presumably his predecessors, such as the Milesian philosophers, were making a claim to *speak* the truth—when Thales called the *archē* of all things water, or Anaximander *apeiron*, or Anaximenes air. In understanding truth as fundamentally *spoken*, we are already on the way toward an understanding of truth, and so wisdom, as 'theoretical,' and eventually even as 'propositional.' Truth, that is, is something that gets *articulated*, spoken in an oral culture,

eventually both spoken and written. But Heraclitus refuses to limit truth to this sense, indeed radically transforms what truth must be by insisting as well that truth must also literally be *enacted*. Truth in some sense is something done, something lived. Truth, then, can never be merely 'theoretical,' merely an affair of speaking (or writing). Even before the understanding of truth and wisdom as a matter of theory can become predominant, Heraclitus calls it into question with this sentence.

Nor is he saying that truth/wisdom is instead a matter only of 'praxis.' Prior to the dawn of the theory/practice distinction, Heraclitus would seem to destabilize any such distinction. Truth, and so wisdom, is spoken, yes, but not merely spoken. It is acted out as well; truth is lived. When, a bit later, the Platonic Socrates speaks of philosophy not as a 'position' or set of opinions but as a *way of life*,[16] he is a true follower of Heraclitus.

What would truth be, that it could be something both spoken and enacted? Perhaps no one has shed as much light on the Greek notion of truth as Martin Heidegger.[17] Beginning with the etymological meaning of the Greek *alētheia*, 'unhiddenness,' Heidegger emphasizes at various times a number of important features of the Greek notion of truth. First, it means that for the Greeks, *alētheia* is not a 'theory' in the vein of the 'correspondence theory of truth' or the 'coherence theory of truth'; rather, *alētheia* is an *experience* of truth, the experience of something that had been hidden being brought to unhiddenness. This difference is more important than it may at first appear, for if truth is a 'theory,' then of course its primary if not exclusive manifestation will be in *logos*, in speech. Truth would then be 'speaking the truth, paying heed to the nature of things,' but surely not 'acting the truth.' But if we think truth as an experience, then we are already prepared to think of it as something lived, and so as a kind of enactment. Second, truth so understood is a certain *movement*: something that was hidden is brought out of hiddenness into unhiddenness, into the open, into a clearing/lighting (German *Lichtung*). At times Heidegger will speak of this movement as our "wresting" truth from the hiddenness of things in the spirit of Heraclitean πόλεμος (struggle, war); at times he will emphasize instead the way the movement is "vouchsafed" to humans as a "gift," granted by the happening of truth itself. Third and decisively, every bringing to unhiddenness, every "event" of truth, leaves something that remains hidden precisely in the manner in which it reveals. All "truth" is therefore *finite*; there is no complete, unmitigated, or absolute truth granted to finite humans. Or as Heidegger dramatically puts it in *Being and Time*, "Truth is always in the untruth."[18]

Is there anything of this understanding of truth in play in Heraclitus's text? In fragment after fragment, Heraclitus seems to be 'paying heed' to

something like this experience of truth. To begin with fragment 112 which I have already cited, if we think of truth not just as a 'theory' or as primarily 'propositional,' but as the experience of something hidden being brought from time to time to unhiddenness, then it will make sense for Heraclitus to speak of it not only as spoken (although certainly as spoken) but as something 'acted,' that is enacted, participated in, by the one to whom truth 'happens.' By taking the etymological meaning of *alētheia* literally, we can thus make sense of this most important of Heraclitean fragments. Truth will indeed be 'spoken and acted,' if truth is something like the movement from hiddenness to unhiddenness.

There are other fragments that even more directly are spoken under the sway of this understanding of truth. Among the most striking are these, which I list together before discussing each:

> Fragment 18: "If one does not expect the unexpected (or "hope for the unhoped for"), one will not discover it, for it is difficult to discover, and without a path."

> Fragment 54: "An unapparent attunement is better (or "stronger") than an apparent one."

> Fragment 93: "The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither says nor conceals, but gives a sign."

> Fragment 123: "Nature loves to hide."

In fragment 18, Heraclitus asks us to be attuned to a world in which we should orient ourselves appropriately toward "the unexpected." That is, what is going to happen, often, perhaps even typically, is "hidden" from us until the unexpected is revealed as what happens. Moreover, the attunement he clearly recommends is that we *expect* the unexpected, that is, orient ourselves toward the world with the expectation (or even "hope") that what is hidden is not what we are counting on, not what we consider ordinary in the coursing of things. Our attunement should thus be, first, *toward* what is hidden, but toward it in a way that is open to the event that what we might "expect" to reveal itself, to come into unhiddenness, will *not* be what happens. Our attunement should be that of a certain responsive openness toward things, ready and attuned to the possibility that it will be the new, the unexpected, that emerges into unhiddenness. Only with such an attunement, Heraclitus suggests, will we *discover* the unexpected even when it emerges into

unhiddenness. As he somewhat sarcastically suggests in other fragments, most of us, unattuned to the event of unhiddenness and so failing to discover it, are like those "not comprehending, they hear like the deaf. The saying is their witness: absent while present."[19] Our world is a world of the constant and often surprising movement from hiddenness to unhiddenness, to which we must be appropriately attuned or we will be oblivious to its happenings. In this sense, our world is a world of *truth*.

This helps us to make sense of fragment 54: "An unapparent attunement is better (or stronger) than an apparent one."[20] 'Apparent attunements' are the ordinary, the everyday, what we are aware of if we just 'go along' with things. Only the proper, listening attunement opens us to those stronger/better attunements that are hidden to most, but will show themselves to the properly attuned. The happening of things, that is, is already in Heraclitus a double happening, the happening of what is hidden and revealed, or as in this fragment, the apparent and the unapparent, and the happening of the particular attunement of the 'listener,' who is either openly attuned to these happenings or oblivious to them.

This same world-happening is true of the divine as well, as fragment 93 attests. "The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither says nor conceals, but gives a sign." The divine, like the happening of things, is neither obvious and straightforwardly apparent nor entirely hidden from human comprehension. It "gives a sign," that is, will be available to those who are properly attuned. The unhiddenness of the divine, like that of things, again, *needs humans* since it must in every case be *interpreted*, and the manner of interpretation, better or worse, stronger or weaker, will be a function of the attunement of the one who experiences the event.

Finally and perhaps most explicitly and decisively, fragment 123 reads, "Nature loves to hide." In paying heed to this fragment, it is important to recall that the Greek φύσις, 'nature,' preserves its etymological sense of 'that which emerges, that which grows.' 'Nature' thus should be taken not in the modern mechanistic sense, but rather in the Greek sense of 'the emergence of things.' So we might understand this fragment as "The emergence of things loves to hide." The fragment thus points to the very ground-experience out of which the Greek word for 'truth,' *alētheia* (ἀλήθεια), might have arisen. Nature, the emergence of things into unhiddenness, "loves," that is, has a natural tendency toward, hiddenness. The truth will thus not be apparent to all, but only to the properly attuned, to whom truth, unhiddenness, can happen.[21] And even to them, the revealing will be always and only partial, finite. There is thus in Heraclitus, as in so many of the Greeks, a double source of the finitude of human knowledge. One source is the finitude of human

capacity; our own finitude will always limit the extent to which we can comprehend (in the literal sense: take all together) our experience. The other is nature itself, which "loves to hide," which therefore will always contain, in the midst of the deepest revelations, a remainder of ineluctable mystery.

Throughout the discussion so far, the reader may have noticed that I have vacillated between visual and auditory metaphors for 'understanding' or 'knowing,' with a certain predominance of auditory metaphors. In doing so, I have tried to be true to Heraclitus's own language. The Greek word for 'truth,' *alētheia*, might seem most naturally to call forth metaphors for sight. The movement from hiddenness to unhiddenness thus might seem most naturally to be something that we *see*, and indeed, Heraclitus understandably often does use sight metaphors for knowing or understanding. More often, however, his preferred metaphor for such understanding is that of hearing, and we should consider the significance of that choice. But first we must reflect on the fact that it *was* a choice, reflect, that is, on the significance of the Greek—and our—metaphors for understanding.

Like the Greeks, we tend to employ three sense metaphors for understanding and knowing: sight, touch, and hearing. We say often, "Do you see what I mean?" or, almost as often, "Do you grasp my meaning?" or again sometimes, "Do you hear what I'm saying, does that sound right to you?" In the vast majority of cases, we take these different metaphors as more or less synonymous, and rarely do we consider the very different nuances in play in each of the sense-metaphors. But I believe there is good evidence that the Greeks in general and Heraclitus in particular were much more self-conscious about their choice of these metaphors, much more attuned—to employ a hearing metaphor loved by Heraclitus—to the different nuances of each metaphor. Let us briefly consider some of those nuances.

Begin with the sight metaphor, probably the predominant metaphor for understanding for both the Greeks and us. Note first that for us to see something, it must have a certain amount of stability, motionlessness. If something is moving at a high speed, it becomes increasingly difficult to see. The sight metaphor, that is, is most appropriate when we assume that the objects of our understanding are stable, in the best cases even permanent and unchangeable. Little wonder, then, that the sight metaphor is Plato's preferred metaphor for his 'forms,' the primary words for which, εἶδος and ἰδέα, are derived from words for 'seeing.' A second important feature of the sight metaphor, especially by contrast to the other two, is distance. For someone to see something, there must a certain distance from the observer (if I bring something right up against my eyes, I can no longer see it), and with that distance goes a certain presumption of independence between object and seer.

When I 'see' something (at least in the everyday sense), it preserves a certain independence from me. My 'seeing' it does not change it. In general, then, the sight metaphor is perhaps the most appropriate metaphor to use when we want to claim that our knowledge is 'objective,' a more or less pure 'vision' of stable objects.

Things are very different with the metaphor for touch, which historically has usually taken the form of 'grasping,' as in "I grasp your meaning." In grasping, the distance in the sight metaphor is obliterated. To say that I grasp something thus can imply that I have it in my power. In early modernity, as the notion that 'knowledge is power' became predominant, it is hardly surprising that the grasping metaphor for knowing also rose to prominence. It should be added, however, that more recently some philosophers, and particularly some feminist philosophers, have decisively transformed the metaphor of touch from the notion of power and control to the much more intimate sense of the caress.[22]

To 'hear' something entails some very different nuances. For one, in seeing and touching, the object seen or touched stops at the surface of our bodies, but in hearing, the sound actually enters into our bodies and is experienced as such.[23] There is therefore something much more intimate about the hearing metaphor. Perhaps even more important for Heraclitus, the 'object' we hear, the sound, is *itself in motion*. Unlike the object of sight and touch, sound is continually, constantly moving. The symphony *flows*, the notes disappear as I hear them, and this is no less true of the words in the sentences we utter. Hearing, that is, is the metaphor for understanding that reminds us that things need not be stable for us to have intellectual access to them, that that which is constantly moving can nonetheless be intelligible to us—*if we listen in the right way*.

Can it be surprising, then, that Heraclitus would choose as his predominant metaphor for understanding that of hearing and listening? "*Listening* not to me but to the λόγος, it is wise to agree that one (is) all," says fragment 50. To cite just a few of the many other fragments that engage the metaphor for hearing: what nearly everyone agrees is the first of Heraclitus's fragments, which opens his text, begins, "Of the λόγος which is forever, people are uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when they have heard it." Fragment 19 reads, "(People) do not know how to listen or how to speak." Fragment 34 reads, "Not comprehending, they hear like the deaf. The saying is their witness: absent while present." And speaking of the divine, in fragment 92, Heraclitus says, "The Sibyl, with raving mouth utters things mirthless and unadorned and unperfumed, and her voice carries through a thousand years, because of the god."

   Why might Heraclitus privilege the somewhat less typical metaphor of hearing? First of all, he speaks again and again, as we have seen with reference to the soul, but also with reference to the cosmos, of the λόγος, and it must be remembered that in the still largely oral culture that is Heraclitus's, λόγος meant first and primarily *spoken* λόγος. As fragment 50 quoted above well attests, the λόγος is first and fundamentally that which we must *listen to*. Even further, we must recall that the λόγος of the soul is not something permanent and stable (which might make the sight metaphor more appropriate) but *increases itself*, like the ongoing flow of music, or the flow of our speech.[24] And the larger λόγος of the cosmos, the λόγος which is the ever-flowing yet ordered harmony of oppositions and struggles that constitutes the happening of things, that λόγος also is best comprehended as *heard*. As my own language in trying to understand Heraclitus has tried to intone, the proper way of understanding for us is not to stand still or try to 'halt' the λόγος, but to get into an *attunement* with the happening of things, move along in accord with its flow. To harmonize with this sense of the way the world is, Heraclitus would seem to have privileged just the right metaphor, unusual as it may be. To understand the world is to *listen* to the λόγος, *harking* (ἐπαΐοντας), as Heraclitus tells us, to the nature of things. For those of us who have ears, let us hear!

Notes

   1. *Pace* Parmenides! This of course makes ever more question-worthy why Plato, who, we are usually told, held just such a 'doctrine,' decided instead to present his thinking in dialogues—and only in dialogues.

   2. Throughout, I simply preserve the Greek λόγος, so that each readers may determine the nuance most appropriate in each instance. The problems of how to translate λόγος, and quite especially in Heraclitus, are notorious. It can mean 'word,' 'speech,' 'sentence,' 'account,' 'measure,' 'reason,' and 'language,' among others. A particular problem in Heraclitus is to decide whether by λόγος he is usually referring to *his own λόγος,* that is, what he is writing, or whether he is referring to a larger, even 'cosmic' λόγος, the ordered movement of the world. Or both! My own preference is usually to give priority to the larger notion of λόγος, to which Heraclitus's own λόγος will refer just insofar as he is in 'attunement' with the larger λόγος. This is a good example of Charles Kahn's important notions of 'linguistic density' and 'resonance.' See Charles Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 89.

   3. One of the most thought-provoking and challenging longer discussions of Heraclitus's style is the chapter "On Reading Heraclitus" in Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 87–95.

   4. There is an inevitable arbitrariness in choosing to write on this or that topic in Heraclitus's writing. He certainly did not divide his own thinking into 'topics.' Not surprisingly, therefore, a consideration of his sentences on the soul will inevitably invoke many other issues in his thinking, only a small selection of which I take up in this short essay.

5. I follow the standard enumeration of Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (1903; reprint, Zurich: Weidmann, 1968). Translations are my own, though they often follow other standard ones. The Diels-Kranz is perhaps as close to a 'neutral' ordering as one could get, since the fragments are simply arranged alphabetically by the source from which they are derived. Kahn's proposed ordering in *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* is certainly fruitful, but not as widely available or accepted. We do not know, of course, what, if any ordering, Heraclitus himself had in mind. One is reminded in this regard of the soon to be written fragment 5 of Parmenides: "It is all the same to me from what point I begin, for I shall return again to this same point."

6. See Martha Nussbaum, "*Psychē* in Heraclitus, II," *Phronesis* 17, no. 2 (1972): 153–170.

7. Ibid., 169.

8. For the controversy over authenticity, see Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 79, 259–260.

9. There is some controversy as to whether the 'or' (Greek ἤ) should be 'not' (Greek μὴ). If the latter, it may seem to contradict fragment 36. In any case, the authenticity of this fragment is often contested. For discussion, see Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 77, 245, 332.

10. There is a good discussion of this controversy in his commentary on this series of fragments in Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 237–254. Kahn himself argues convincingly for the 'breath' hypothesis.

11. Ibid., 248.

12. Cobb translation, slightly modified. William Cobb, *The Symposium and The Phaedrus: Plato's Erotic Dialogues* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

13. Nussbaum, "*Psychē (Greek)* in Heraclitus, II," 158.

14. This is in agreement with Kahn's position. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 251ff.

15. Because there was no punctuation in written Greek at the time of Heraclitus, how the sentence is read must be left to interpretation. For example, it could read instead, "To think soundly is the greatest virtue and wisdom, speaking and acting the truth, paying heed to the nature of things." Once again, Heraclitus may have intended the ambiguity, thus invoking both meanings.

16. Perhaps paradigmatically in the *Apology*.

17. As representative of his address of this issue, particularly with reference to Heraclitus, see "Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)," pp. 70ff, and especially "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)," both collected in Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975). Both articles are originally from Heidegger's 1954 *Vortrage und Aufsätze*.

18. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 204. In his *Plato's Doctrine of Truth, with a Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger argues that Plato paves the way for the abandoning of this earlier (and more authentic) understanding of truth as unhiddenness, in favor of a conception of truth as 'correctness.' I attempt to call into question this reading in my *Finitude and Transcendence in the Platonic Dialogues* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). See especially chapter 6, "Truth and Finitude: On Heidegger's Reading of Plato," 139–164.

19. Fragment 34. See also fragments 1, 71, 89.

20. I employ Kahn's translation because 'attunement' preserves the musical, and so the 'hearing' intonation of the Greek *harmoniē*. Kahn's excellent discussion of this fragment

(*The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, 202–204) rightly emphasizes that the Greek word was not as targeted toward the musical as our 'harmony' is, but nevertheless does have that intonation among others.

21. Hyland, *Finitude and Transcendence in the Platonic Dialogues*. As I argue in chapter 6 of that book, truth as *alētheia* is everywhere in the Platonic dialogues.

22. See especially Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), especially the chapter titled "The Fecundity of the Caress." This momentous transformation is surely worth its own study.

23. See Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol*, trans. Willard Trask and Norbert Guterman (New York: Pantheon, 1956), for an excellent discussion of this matter.

24. Or, to cite another famous Heraclitean metaphor, like the flow of a river: "As they step into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow upon them" (fragment 12; see also fragment 91).

Key Readings

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Justice, Change, and Knowledge: Aristotle, Parmenides, and Melissus on Genesis and Natural Science

Rose Cherubin

> Probably we must first ask this question: whether generation is or is not. The earlier people who philosophized concerning the truth differed both from the accounts we state now and from one another. For some of them did away entirely with generation and destruction; for they say that none of the things that are come-to-be or perish, but only seem to us [to do so]; such were those around Melissus and Parmenides; who, even if they otherwise spoke rightly, yet must be considered as not speaking as students of nature; for that some of the things that are ungenerated and are entirely unmoving belong to another and more primary investigation than the science of nature. And those [thinkers], supposing that nothing other than the substance [*ousia*] of sensible things is, and being the first to reflect that some such natures will be if indeed any knowledge [*gnōsis*] or practical wisdom [*phronēsis*] is to be, thus transferred onto those [sensible] things the account from that [the ungenerated and unmoving objects]. (Aristotle, *On the Heavens* [*De cael.*] III.298b12–25)[1]

Aristotle extensively criticized Eleatic treatments of *physis* (roughly, nature). In this passage, however, he allows that some Eleatics spoke rightly on at least some things. What does Aristotle think that those around Parmenides and Melissus got right? How is this related to the study of nature?

This essay argues that Aristotle, Parmenides, and Melissus all associated the quest for understanding with accepting that something is permanent and stable. Like Parmenides, Aristotle sought to discover what we would need to say and conceive in order to seek reasoned understanding. Aristotle diverged from Parmenides and Melissus by exploring a way to delineate an area in which some limited grasp of movement and change would be possible, a

conceptual space wherein the account of movement and change would be coherent and internally consistent.

Aristotle does not say that we must accept those things because they are true or accurate. He does not claim that what we say is, is what is. He does not say that the *epistēmē* concerning *physis* is unconditional knowledge of the nature of what is, knowledge that holds across all contexts and is independent of how we conceive things. Rather, he portrays knowledge of mutable things as an understanding that is possible given certain parameters, axioms, and hypotheses.

I. Introduction

Aristotle connects the inquiry of *On the Heavens* to that of the *Physics* (*De cael*. I.268a29ff.). *Physics* I argues that Parmenides and Melissus worked from assumptions incompatible with the starting points of an inquiry about *physis*. The things that we say are "by nature [*physei*]" are those that each have "in itself a principle of motion [*kinēsis*] and of staying still [*stasis*]," with respect to place, to increase or decrease, and/or to alteration (*Phys*. II.192b11–15).[2] Therefore it is not surprising to read in *On the Heavens* 298b18 that the followers of Parmenides and Melissus were "not speaking as students of nature."

The *On the Heavens* passage describes Parmenides's and Melissus's circles as the first to reflect that something ungenerated and unperishing will exist if any *gnōsis* or *phronēsis* is to be possible. Aristotle appears to concur with this reflection. This raises three questions:

1. *To what in Eleatic thought does Aristotle refer?* Since Aristotle does not name the thinkers of Parmenides's or Melissus's circles, we must look to the work that attracted these circles. What if anything in Parmenides and Melissus fits Aristotle's description?

2. *Is there evidence that Aristotle accepted that there must be something ungenerated and unperishing if we are to have* gnōsis *and* phronēsis*?* Was Aristotle in accord with the insight he attributes to those around Parmenides and Melissus? Certainly Aristotle argued that there is something ungenerated and unperishing that underlies physical change (*Phys*. I.190a13ff., VIII.250b11–253a21; *De cael*. I.270a12ff.). What if anything does that have to do with his position on the possibility of *gnōsis* and *phronēsis*?

3. *What if any connection does Aristotle's response to that Eleatic reflection have to his work concerning things that move or change?* Certain principles that Aristotle followed in his work on moving and changing things echo Parmenidean concerns about inquiry. However, Parmenides's discussion was oriented toward *alētheia* (roughly, truth) alone, whereas Aristotle was interested also in what

can be demonstrated within certain conditions or under certain hypotheses. Far from claiming to provide an account of how the world is, independent of any particular assumptions or conceptions of it, Aristotle's works on *physis* show what can be said with consistency, and what can be inferred about things that move and change, *if* we accept certain parameters and assumptions. Aristotle shows what needs to be accepted in order to have a consistent account of things that we suppose to move and change; and he shows the limits of that consistency. This indicates, we will see, that he took Parmenidean concerns seriously. In addition, we can see his acknowledgment of starting presuppositions and their limitations as an important part of the search for *alētheia*.

II. Generation, Destruction, and Knowledge: Parmenides and Melissus

The term Aristotle uses for 'coming-to-be' or 'generation' in the passage under discussion is *genesis*. *Genesis* refers to any sort of coming-to-be: birth, creation, emergence, becoming different. For 'destruction' in the *On the Heavens* passage Aristotle uses *phthora* ('destruction,' 'ceasing to be,' 'perishing') and forms of the related verb *phtheirō*.

In the fragments of Melissus, Aristotle's terms *gnōsis* and *phronēsis* and their relatives do not appear. Relatives of each term appear once in Parmenides: *gnoiēs* at DK 28B2.7, and *phroneein* at B16.3.[3] Therefore we must look at uses of these terms in Parmenides and at the uses and associations of *gnōsis* and *phronēsis* in Aristotle. We must then consider whether and how these meanings and associations might appear in discussions of coming-to-be and perishing in Parmenides and Melissus.

Gnōsis
Aristotle uses *gnōsis* to refer to several kinds of knowledge, including *technē* (craft knowledge involving knowledge of causes) (*Met*. I.981a16); knowledge of a universal (*kath' holou*) (*Met*. I.981a16; *An. post*. I.71a19); knowledge sought by investigation (*De an*. I.402a5); knowledge whose acquisition involves investigating results of hypotheses (*Top*. VIII.163b9). (For brevity I cite only the senses most relevant here; see also *Met*. I.981b11; *An. post*. I.71a2, II.99b22, 99b29; *De cael*. III.302a11; *EN* I.1094a23.)[4]

Melissus and Gnōsis
Melissus argues that sensation is unreliable regarding how what-is[5] is (DK 30B8). He considers reasoning according to certain principles—today we would call them principles of identity, noncontradiction, excluded middle,

and *modus tollens*—to be the way to obtain a correct account of what-is. Having a correct account of what-is by means of reasoning according to principles would belong under *gnōsis* for Aristotle. Aristotle and Melissus differ as to what kinds of thing count as reliable in an account of what-is, and as to which accounts are correct. But they agree that reasoned inference is a way to get a correct account. Therefore when Aristotle wrote that Melissus or his followers held that *gnōsis* required the being of ungenerated, unperishing, unchanging things, he may have meant that Melissus et al. thought that a correct account of what-is required that there be something ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging. Do the fragments of Melissus support this characterization of his work?

Melissus concludes that what-is is one, ungenerated, unperishing, unchanging, unlimited, and homogeneous. He argues that if there were many things, they would be such as the one what-is is. This accords with Aristotle's contention that Melissus or those around him held that sensible things, *if real*, would be ungenerated, unperishing, and unmoving (B8). (For Melissus, though, sensible things are not. What-is cannot have parts, limits, or counterparts [B7, B8].)

This does not yet justify Aristotle's report, for it does not establish that for Melissus no correct account is possible without there being something ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging. What, then, does Melissus take to be the relationship between the existence of something ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging, on the one hand, and a correct account of what-is, on the other?

Melissus argues that if what-is is, it must not come-to-be, perish, or change (B1–B3, B7–B8). It must not come-to-be, because it would have had to come-to-be from nothing (μηδέν, B1), and he takes as axiomatic that no thing could come from nothing. What-is could not perish or change, because if it came to an end it would have completed coming-to-be at some time (B2). That would imply multiplicity (different states), whereas what-is is one (B7).

Melissus seems to have accepted that certain principles of inference are valid and that they apply to what-is. For example, his argument in B1 seems to be this:

1. Whatever is either came-to-be or did not come-to-be. (Let us abbreviate "Whatever is came-to-be" as *X*. Then [1] asserts: Either *X* or *not-X*.)
2. If whatever is came-to-be, it must have been nothing before it came-to-be. ("Not-being = being nothing" appears to be an axiom for Melissus.)

3. [No thing can come-to-be from nothing.] (unstated axiom)
4. [The conjunction of *X* and the axiom results in a contradiction.] (unstated inference)
5. Therefore whatever is did not come-to-be. (Therefore *not–X*.) (inference by *modus tollens*, thus by noncontradiction and excluded middle)
6. [If something is, then either it came-to-be or it always was.] (unstated axiom)
7. Therefore whatever is always was. (inference by *modus tollens*)

It looks, then, as though Melissus assumes that something is, assumes that his principles of inference are valid, assumes that applying these principles will result in a correct account, and concludes that what-is is ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging.

If this reconstruction of his reasoning is correct, then Melissus does not say quite what Aristotle takes him to be saying. Both the possibility of a correct account and the conclusion that something is ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging depend on the principles of inference and the axioms Melissus accepts (plus the assumption that the principles of inference apply to all of what-is). From the fragments alone, then, the claim that a correct account is possible and available does not depend on the claim that something is unperishing, and unchanging. Rather, both of those claims depend on a third thing.

There may be more support for Aristotle's report. Loenen observes that the paraphrases of Melissus in Simplicius (*in Phys*. 103, 13) and in *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias* 974a2 suggest that Melissus's "basic thesis" was τι ἔστιν, 'something is.'[6] Simplicius presents Melissus's argument for the thesis as "If nothing is, what could be said about it as of something that is? But if something is, either it is something that comes-to-be or it always is."[7]

If Simplicius's paraphrase is accurate, Melissus rejects the thesis "nothing is" because one could not formulate a way to speak about nothing as [a] being (using the logical principles Melissus accepted). Then he would reject the idea that things could cease to be the way they are, and the idea that things could cease to be entirely. If this analysis is correct, then Melissus implies that only if what-is is ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging could one have a coherent account, and thus a correct account. For Melissus, the only correct (consistent) accounts are coherent, and—because he seems to think that what-is conforms to his logical principles—the only coherent accounts are consistent and correct.

Simplicius's Melissus thus connects the notion that what-is is ungenerated and unperishing with the possibility of a coherent and consistent account

of what-is. Aristotle's *gnōsis*, in its use of reasoning toward truth, needs to be coherent and consistent. Thus if Simplicius is accurate, Melissus in effect suggests that there will need to be something stable that always is, if a kind of knowledge that Aristotle would call *gnōsis* is to be possible.

Gnōsis: Parmenides's *Gnoiēs*

We have noted that Parmenides does not use the noun *gnōsis*, but uses *gnoiēs*, from the related verb *gignōskein*. Fragment B2.7–8 reads,

> For neither would you recognize [*gnoiēs*] what-is-not—for that is
> not accomplished—
> Nor would you indicate it. (Parmenides DK 28B2)

B2 does not mention generation or destruction. At DK 28B8.20–21, however, the goddess suggests that if something comes-to-be or perishes, then it is not or was not or will not be. Thus generation and destruction invoke what-is-not. A reference to what-is-not need not imply a reference to generation or destruction. Still, if she holds that recognizing what-is-not is impossible for humans, and if she holds that generation and destruction invoke what-is-not, then the goddess implies that *gignōskein* is not compatible with generation and destruction.

Now, Aristotle's assertion in the *On the Heavens* passage was not that those around Parmenides and Melissus merely *associated gnōsis* with the being of something ungenerated and undestroyed. It was that those Eleatic circles held that the possibility of *gnōsis depended on* the being of something ungenerated and undestroyed. Therefore we must look further for whether anything in Parmenides would support Aristotle's assertion.

Phronēsis: Parmenides's Reference to *Phroneein*

The single use of a relative of *phronēsis* in Parmenides is in B16.3:

> For as on each occasion there is a mixture of much-wandering
> limbs,
> So mind [*noos*] is present to humans; for the same
> Is that which *phroneei* and the nature of the limbs in humans
> Both for all and for each, and the more is what is thought [*noēma*].
> (Parmenides DK 28B16)

B16 is generally thought to fall within the goddess's account of the opinions of mortals—opinions she deems untrustworthy (B1.30, B8.52). In the

extant fragments the goddess does not connect *phroneein* and the being of something ungenerated, unperishing, and unmoving. Therefore we must ask whether anything in Parmenides's fragments connects the being of such an entity with the possibility of what Aristotle called *phronēsis*.

Aristotle on *Phronēsis*

Phronēsis is an intellectual excellence, "a truthful characteristic of acting with reason concerning matters good and bad for humans" (*EN* VI.1140b6–8, 1140b21–22). It is the excellence of *logistikos* (reasoning, calculation) (*Top.* VI.145a31). When *phronēsis* is present in animals, sensation is both for the sake of self-preservation and "for the sake of the good or well-being" of the animal (*On Sense and What Is Sensed* 437a1).[8]

 On the Soul I.404b5 refers to *nous* "in the sense of," or "saying" *phronēsis*. At *Rhetoric* I.1364b16ff., "what *phronimos* people judge to be a greater good must necessarily be such, either without qualification [*haplōs*] or in so far as they have judged according to *phronēsis* . . . The what, quantity, and quality of things is such as would be defined by *epistēmē* and *phronēsis*" (cf. *Top.* V.137a14ff.).[9] What and how things really are is supposed to be such as would be determined by *epistēmē* and *phronēsis* (*Rhet.* I.1364b16–19). *Epistēmē* involves knowledge of causes, general principles concerning how and why things work as they do—at least as far as is required in order to have regular predictive success (*Met.* I.981b7–982b10).

 Phronēsis also has a connection to *alētheia*. *Phronēsis* is *alēthēs*, truthful (*EN* VI.1140b6–8, b21–22). *Phronēsis*, *epistēmē*, and *alēthēs doxa* (true opinion) are examples of right (*orthōs*) conceiving/intending/apprehending (*noein*), contrasted with cases of conceiving falsely (*pseudōs*) (*De an.* III.427b10ff.).

 To summarize, *phronēsis* in Aristotle is a way of conceiving rightly or truly, in accordance with *alētheia*. It has to do on the one hand with correctly identifying, and then selecting and pursuing, what is good, and on the other with grasping what things are and how they work. With this in mind, we will find that there is much more in Parmenides that is pertinent to Aristotle's *phronēsis* than the single use of *phroneei* in the extant fragments.

Dikē, *Anankē*, *Moira*, and the Characteristics of What-Is in Parmenides

Parmenides's goddess ties inquiry oriented by *alētheia* to the exclusion of generation and destruction. She asserts that on a road of inquiry oriented by *alētheia*, signs indicate that what-is is ungenerated, unperishing, whole, of one kind, unshaking, complete, without past or future, all together, one, and continuous (B8.3–6, corresponding to the road associated with *alētheia* in B2). To be on this road of inquiry requires speaking and conceiving (*noein*)

of what-is in a way that accords with the signs. On this road one is to speak and conceive of what-is as ungenerated and unperishing because of the work of *dikē* (roughly, justice) (B8.13–15). Necessity, *anankē*, is responsible for what-is being continuous, complete, and unmoving (B8.29–32). Fate or portion, *moira*, ensures that what-is is whole, unified, and not in any way lacking (B8.33–38). Because the *On the Heavens* passage concerns generation, destruction, and movement, and because Parmenides's goddess appears to assimilate all change to coming-to-be from and perishing into what-is-not, for brevity I will treat only *dikē* here.[10]

In her discussion of the road of inquiry she recommends, the goddess says that *dikē* excludes the coming-to-be and perishing of what-is. This draws on the traditional meanings and associations of *dikē*. *Dikē* was the characteristic way of a kind of thing, as well as the overall balance, regularity, and order of the universe. As balance and as provider of regularities, *dikē* was cosmic justice.

On this conception, if something could come-to-be from nothing or perish into nothing, there would be no regularities and no predictable or consistent characteristics. We could not rely on anything to have a stable identity or recognizable characteristics. A thing could appear or disappear entirely, or some of its characteristics could appear or disappear, for no traceable reason. Inquiry would not work. We could not recognize when we had found what we sought.

According to the goddess, *dikē* also prohibits change, including movement. In the B8 discussion of the recommended road of inquiry, she suggests that *all* change requires that something come-to-be from or perish into nothing or not-being or what-is-not. To illustrate what this might mean, suppose that some *eon*, some thing, was blue all over and then became yellow all over. The blue color or the blueness has disappeared from the thing. Something that was (a blue thing, or a thing's blueness) now is not. A yellow thing, or a thing's yellowness, has come-to-be from not-being. But *dikē* does not allow coming-to-be or destruction; what-is does not come-to-be and nothing comes-to-be alongside what is (B8.9–15). From B8.22, 8.26–30, and 8.37–38, what-is is all alike, unchanging, and unmoving.

In Parmenides, then, reasoned inquiry calls for us to understand what-is as ungenerated and unperishing. *Alētheia* shares this requisite. *Alētheia* is roughly the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as conveyed through trustworthy eyewitness accounts or through accounts that connect their objects to origins.[11] The second kind of transmission certainly calls for a world where nothing comes from or perishes into nothing or what-is-not. The possibility of a reliable eyewitness calls for the conditions Parmenides associates with the workings of *dikē*. One could not trust identifications or

memory if the conditions Parmenides attributes to *dikē* were not in effect, or if one did not conceive that they were.

Dikē in Parmenides is responsible for the ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging nature of what-is. We can carry out an inquiry and seek *alētheia* if in our inquiry we suppose that *dikē* is in effect. Conceiving of what-is under this supposition means supposing that what-is is ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging in the senses that Parmenides's goddess intends.

On this reading, there is clear justification for Aristotle's assertion that Parmenides or his supporters held that what-is has to be ungenerated, unperishing, and unchanging if what Aristotle called *gnōsis* and *phronēsis* are to be possible. We have seen that for Aristotle, *phronēsis* is oriented toward *alētheia*. Therefore it must respect the requisites of the quest for *alētheia*. Additionally, both *gnōsis* and *phronēsis* as Aristotle conceived them include knowledge of what things are and of how things work. *Phronēsis* also involves an understanding of the appropriate places and roles of things. *Dikē* traditionally regulated the characteristics proper to things, but also the overall balance and order of what-is. Thus Aristotle's *phronēsis* is connected to Parmenides's *dikē*, and so to the conception of what-is as unchanging, ungenerated, and unperishing. The possibility of Aristotelian *phronēsis* is tied to the conception of a world of beings ordered by *dikē*.

In Parmenides there is a tension between the requisites of inquiry. Inquiry calls for what-is to be understood as ungenerated, unperishing, unchanging (and one and continuous); but inquiry also involves multiple steps, the passage of time, and the identification of distinct things. Even *dikē*, *anankē*, and *moira* are originally defined in terms of a world of multiple and changing things, yet when followed to their logical conclusions they point to ungenerated everlasting stability.

If we share Parmenides's account of the requisites of inquiry or Aristotle's notions of *phronēsis* and *gnōsis*, a question arises as to what if any kind of understanding we might be able to gain of the multifarious changing observable world. Are we doomed to ignorance, or to deceptive and deficient opinions about that world? In his work on physical science Aristotle sought to discover the limits, parameters, and conditions within which we could develop a consistent account of the nature and workings of the things we say are.

III. Aristotle and What Is Ungenerated and Unperishing

The remark in *On the Heavens* with which we began suggested that Aristotle agreed that there must be something ungenerated, unperishing, and

unchanging if there is to be *phronēsis* and *gnōsis*. But to study *physis*, and especially to seek *epistēmē* (science) concerning *physis*, Aristotle says, one must accept that some things move, change, and in some respect come-to-be and perish (*Phys*. I.184b26–185a21, I.7). Does anything he says suggest that we must also accept some ungenerated everlasting stability in order to foster something like *phronēsis* or *gnōsis* specifically regarding *physis*?

Epistēmē, Hypotheses, and What We Say

Aristotle begins the *Physics* by noting that in inquiries concerned with principles and causes and elements, knowing (*epistasthai*) and understanding involve being aware of those principles, causes, and elements (I.184a10–12). We suppose, says Aristotle, that that of which we have *epistēmē* in an unqualified sense cannot be otherwise than it is (*An. post*. I.71b10–12; *EN* VI.1139b20ff.). Having *epistēmē* about something depends on grasping the *aitiai* and *archai*, causes and principles, of that thing (*EN* VI.1139b31–35; *Met*. I.982a1–6), why it is as it is (*Met*. I.981a15–30, 981b7–12, 981b25–982a1, etc.). While the most fundamental causes and principles of what-is qua what-is are investigated by first philosophy, other *epistēmai* cut off some portion of what-is and study only that (*Met*. IV.1003a21–26). Once its area of study is delineated, each such particular science investigates neither the hypotheses and axioms by which it is delineated (*An. post*. I.71a1–17, I.72a15–25) nor the basic principles common to all sciences (*Met*. IV.1005b24ff.).

By "hypothesis," Aristotle means not a statement to be tested, but an uninvestigated foundational supposition (a literal translation of *hypothesis* is 'something laid under'). As Thomas Upton argues, within the particular sciences,

> technical hypotheses . . . are immune to scientific, i.e. applied dialectical objections. However, these ἀρχαί are not necessarily immune to ontological objections to the *ontological status* (i.e. in what sense, if any, *are genera real beings*?) of that subject-genus which they hypothesize to exist . . .
>
> . . . For the physicist the empirical evidence for the reality of the essential, common sensible, motion (cf. *De An*. 418a15–20) is sufficient enough to base the hypothesis that nature is the cause of motion and rest, in those things in which it inheres καθ' αὐτό.[12]

Upton's reference to "empirical evidence" draws on remarks such as these: "Let us lay down [*hypokeisthō*] that the things of nature, either some or all

of them, are moving things; and this is clear from induction [*epagōgē*]" (*Phys.* I.185a12–14). (*Hypokeisthō* is a form of *hypotithēmi*, from which *hypothesis* derives.) The things that are said to be by *physis* appear "to have in themselves a principle of moving and of staying still . . . *physis* is then a principle and a cause of being moved and of being still [*ēremein*] in those things to which it belongs primarily . . . and not accidentally" (*Phys.* II.192b8–23). That there is *physis*, is *phaneros*, visible or manifest. It cannot, Aristotle says, be proven, for it would have to be proven from what is *aphanēs*, unseen or unmanifest. That attempt at proof would encounter the problem that we would not be able to be sure that the terms we were using referred to or accounted for real, visible things (*Phys.* II.193a1–9).

The status in Aristotelian physics of the hypothesis that there are moving things is the same as the status in geometry of the axioms and hypotheses of that field (*Phys.* I.185a15ff.). Aristotle does not claim that one must accept the suppositions of geometry, except when engaging in geometry; and similarly he does not claim that one must accept that there are moving things, except insofar as one seeks an *epistēmē* of them. He does not claim that the basic suppositions of physics are unconditionally true, and he does not claim that they are unproblematic outside the scope of inquiry into nature. He accepts them for purposes of seeking *epistēmē* regarding the world we say we observe.

What, then, of the claim that there is something unchanging, ungenerated, and unperishing?

The *On the Heavens* passage, and the *Metaphysics* IV and *Posterior Analytics* I passages mentioned above, place the study of unchanging principles outside the study of *physis*, in the inquiry into what-is qua what-is (first philosophy). This compartmentalization does not remove the potential for conflicts within the study of *physis*, however. For Aristotle argues that even within the study of *physis*, we must accept that there is some substrate that is ungenerated, unperishing, and stable (*De cael.* I.270a12ff.; *Phys.* I.190a13ff., VIII.1–2). This threatens to raise Eleatic-style concerns about how something stable could coherently be said to give rise to changeable and impermanent things.

Aristotle's response (*Phys.* I.189b32ff.) focuses on what we say and suppose. He makes no claim about whether what-is is as we say it is:

> From all things which come-to-be one may gather this, if one is to attend carefully to how we speak—that there must be always [*aei*] something which underlies that which is coming-to-be and that this, even if one in number is in form not one; . . . for "in a man" and "in the unmusical [thing]" are not the same. And the former persists, while the latter does not. (*Phys.* I.190a13ff.)

We say that a man persists while becoming a musical man, but that the unmusical thing he was does not persist. If we say that something always persists through all changes, we imply that there is something ungenerated, unperishing, and stable in what it is.

This implication follows from what we say and have so far supposed:

> Thus it is clear that, if there are causes and principles of the things that are by nature, from which they are, and that it is said that they come-to-be not accidentally but in accordance with their substance/ being, then all come-to-be from the substrate/underlying and the form. (*Phys*. I.190b17)

This conclusion provides what Aristotle describes as the solution to the difficulty posed by earlier thinkers concerning how things can come-to-be. But as David Bolotin notes, this solution is only apparent, for

> the notion of a single substrate that receives in turn the various forms offers no way of explaining why a certain being must come to be from definite antecedents . . . This interpretation of the principles, then, though it may allow us to deny that something can come to be from nothing, does not rule out . . . the notion that anything, among the possible beings, can come into being from anything else.[13]

That is, the language of forms and substrates does not solve the problem of why changes occur the way they do and not another way, why some changes are possible and some are not. Further, we have noted that Aristotle's use of the conceptions of form and substrate is grounded in his observations about what we say. We do not say simply that everything that changes involves a substrate that takes on various forms. We say that the specific things that change each have a substrate and can take on specific forms.

In other words, when we describe changes, we invoke the conditions that Parmenides associated with *dikē* and that Aristotle associated with the possibility of *gnōsis* and *phronēsis*. The conditions that enforced that nothing come from nothing also enforced the identity of kinds of thing, and the regularities and limitations of processes.

It is not up to the Aristotelian study of *physis* to explain how or why these conditions hold, for we need to assume that they are in place if we are to seek understanding of the world of motion and change. Without that assumption, we also could not say that anything was a cause or a principle; we could not

have *epistēmē* as Aristotle represents it. Aristotle does not say that he accepts the assumption because he thinks it is independently or unconditionally true. He indicates that one must accept it in order to conduct a reasoned inquiry toward an *epistēmē* of things that come-to-be, perish, and change. This is to accept the norms that make *phronēsis* possible.

In Parmenides's work, as we saw, a tension arose among the things we are to say and conceive in order to inquire and to seek *alētheia*. In order to inquire, we suppose both that what-is is ungenerated, unperishing, unchanging, and one; and that there are distinct things, and events in passing time. Insofar as they engender contradictions, these suppositions are inadequate to the task of conveying the *alētheia*. Yet we could not have uncovered this without them.

Aristotle built on this Parmenidean insight. Instead of rejecting the possibility of inquiry into the world of apparently mutable things, Aristotle explored the conditions that ground and delimit the consistency and predictive efficacy of our working account of the natural world. In so doing he revealed a gap between predictive success and *alētheia*. The contrast between Aristotle's approach and that of Parmenides suggests that orienting ourselves toward *alētheia* calls on us to seek the limitations of our conceptions, and to continue to find new ways to investigate what we say.

Notes

1. *On the Heavens*, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1939). All translations are my own.

2. *Physica*, ed. W. D. Ross, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1950).

3. Fragment numbering follows H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. W. Kranz, 6th ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951). The text of Parmenides is D. Sider and H. W. Johnstone, *The Fragments of Parmenides*, Bryn Mawr Greek Commentaries (Bryn Mawr: Thomas Library, Bryn Mawr College, 1986). The text of Melissus is D. W. Graham, *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, part I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

4. *Metaphysica*, ed. W. Jaeger, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957); *Analytica Priora et Posteriora*, ed. W. D. Ross and L. Minuo-Paluello, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964); *Topica et Sophistici Elenchi*, ed. W. D. Ross, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958); *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham, rev. ed., The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934); *On the Soul; Parva Naturalia; On Breath*, trans. W. S. Hett, rev. ed., The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957).

5. To avoid locutions such as 'what is is,' I translate Melissus's τὸ ὄν and Parmenides's and Melissus's τὸ ἐόν as 'what-is' or 'being'; τὸ μὴ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ἐόν as 'what-is-not' or 'not-being.'

6. J. H. M. M. Loenen, *Parmenides Melissus Gorgias* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959), 15ff., 125ff.

7. Graham, *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*, 468.

8. *On the Soul; Parva Naturalia; On Breath*.

9. *Ars rhetorica*, ed. W. D. Ross, Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). Cf. *Rhetoric* I.1363b14; *Met.* I.982b6–24.

10. On *dikē*, *anankē*, and *moira* in Parmenides, see H. Fränkel, *Parmenidesstudien*, in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Beck, 1960): 157–197, 162–173; J. Mansfeld, *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1964), 261–273; G. Vlastos, "Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies," in *Studies in Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. D. W. Graham (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 57–88; A. P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*, rev. ed (Las Vegas: Parmenides, 2008), 25–29, 148–154, 160–162; S. Austin, *Parmenides: Being, Bounds, and Logic* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), chap. 4; C. Collobert, *L'Être de Parménide ou le refus du temps* (Paris: Kimé, 1993), 50–59; C. Robbiano, *Becoming Being* (Sankt Augustin: Akademia, 2006), chap. 6; R. Cherubin, "*Alētheia* from Poetry into Philosophy: Homer to Parmenides," in *Logos and Muthos*, ed. W. Wians, 59–72 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

11. See T. Krischer, "ΕΤΥΜΟΣ und ΑΛΗΘΗΣ," *Philologus* 109 (1965): 161–174; T. Cole, "Archaic Truth," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 42 (1983): 7–28; P. Constantineau, "La Question de la vérité chez Parménide," *Phoenix* 41 (1987): 217–240; G. Germani, "ΑΛΗΘΕΙΗ in Parmenide," *La Parola del Passato* 43 (1988): 177–206; M. Detienne, *Les Maîtres de vérité dans la grèce archaïque,* rev. ed. (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1990).

12. T. Upton, "Aristotle on Hypothesis and the Unhypothesized First Principle," *Review of Metaphysics* 39, no. 2 (1985): 283–301, 292.

13. D. Bolotin, *An Approach to Aristotle's* Physics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 17.

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"As He Says in His Poetical Way": Anaximander and Empedocles on the Motive Forces of *Kosmos*

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> In saying this we mean to intimate that the differentiation of "nature and spirit" is simply *foreign to the Greeks*.
> —Martin Heidegger

Beginning with the Pre-Socratics, early philosophical thinkers published their thoughts, read the published works of others, and engaged in frequent conversation about those works, all of which shaped their questions and their approaches to those questions and deeply informed their insights. As is the case with any such conversation, central terms and key concepts can become fixed from much handling and grow specialized, even technical. Paths of thinking trod often and in large company become well-worn and take one always through the same familiar woods.

With respect to early Greek cosmology, those paths typically lead to and through conceptions of the *kosmos* that are material and mechanistic. When pretty much everyone from Aristotle on reads the Pre-Socratics, we tend to find them engaged in a search for a (or several) material principle(s) out of which all that is comes to be and is constituted, and for a force, a mechanism, that puts the *kosmos* and its dynamic processes in motion and keeps it moving. We read them as asking primarily about the stuff and motive force of the *kosmos*, and we interpret their works with a distinct bias toward the mechanical metaphysics we have found most comfortable inhabiting ourselves for many centuries now. Scholarship on the question of material principles is comprehensive and illuminating. Scholarship on the question of motive force is a bit more tentative, as it can be difficult to interpret what the earliest thinkers have to say on this subject, particularly from that mechanistic vantage point.

In scholarship and conversation, as in wandering, one way to overcome this hermeneutic attenuation is to attend to those moments on our path that surprise us or unsettle us, to those terms and concepts our usual wandering makes harder to see or hear. This will be our approach in this chapter: to listen carefully to the words used by the thinker to articulate his vision, particularly those that strike us as figurative, metaphorical, or poetic rather than technical and literal.

We have just this sort of interesting language in the very first bit of philosophical musing that survives in a single sentence from Anaximander. In this fragment, the question of the nature of *kosmos* is explicitly framed as a question of justice, particularly as a question of what the parts of the *kosmos* owe to each other and how they may, in accordance with 'the assessment of time,' relate to each other such that each may be accorded its due. Such a framing illuminates the Greek conception of *kosmos*. *Kosmos* and its verbal, *kosmei*, primarily signify 'order.' A good translation would be 'world-order'; but this term also communicates to the Greek ear strife and opposition, even war, and also, interestingly, beauty. *Kosmos* is the balanced and balancing order with which the world *adorns* (another common meaning of the term) itself such that justice is possible. Using this clue as our guide, we will examine two thinkers whose conceptions of the motive forces of the *kosmos* are very much concerned with questions of order and justice and the possibility of harmony amid strife and opposition: Anaximander and Empedocles.

Anaximander's Just *Kosmos*

Simplicius quotes the sole fragment of Anaximander that we have reason to believe is a direct transmission of his language:

> Of those who say that it [the original principle] is one, moving, and
> infinite, Anaximander, son of Praxiades, a Milesian, the successor
> and pupil of Thales, said that the principle and element of existing
> things was the ἄπειρον (infinite), being the first to introduce this
> name of the material principle. He says that it is neither water nor
> any other of the so-called elements, but some other ἄπειρον nature,
> from which come into being all the heavens and the κόσμοι in
> them. From that source which is the genesis for the things that are,
> to that source also they return 'of necessity' when they suffer cor-
> ruption; 'for they submit to punishment and make reparation to one
> another for their injustice according to the assessment of time,' as
> he says in somewhat poetical terms. (*Physica* 24.13–21)[1]

It is the part that Simplicius finds "rather poetic [ποιητικωτέροις]" that is of particular interest to us. Simplicius is, as are the rest of us, reading Anaximander after Aristotle. As a result, he doesn't seem to know quite what to do with some of Anaximander's language. He is, perhaps surprisingly when we think about it carefully, comfortable enough when Anaximander speaks of the *apeiron* as the source of both becoming and destruction and of all the *kosmoi* (here in the plural, indicating multiple world-orders). He is at home, as is clear, thinking in terms of primary physical elements. He seems to prefer to think in terms of categories not only of material theories, but also of material theorists. It is this odd talk of justice and penalty paid and repaid that throws him, so much so that he switches from summarizing Anaximander's position in terms he finds familiar to quoting him in terms he finds "poetical": "For they pay a penalty to each other and return punishment for their injustice, of necessity, according to the ordering of time."

I believe we must hesitate before reading this passage as metaphorical. Certainly it sounds odd to our ears to think of the structure of the *kosmos* in juridical terms. So we prefer to think of such language as Anaximander offers as figuratively characterizing what is in itself a more mechanical structure, as a hermeneutic aid perhaps, one that seeks to borrow, by analogy, from the world of our social experience to illuminate some important aspect of its material composition. But if the *kosmos* is a machine, then such an analogy is odd, at best, as Simplicius seems to find it. Perhaps we should listen to that language a bit more literally, supposing Anaximander to be expressing his conception of the dynamics of the *kosmos* more directly.

What that particular language expresses clearly, on its face, is that the things of the world are engaged with each other in a particular way: they are quarrelsome. At some time or place, one encroaches on its counterpart, and then, in turn, at another time or place, makes good the loss and becomes itself the victim of aggression. Such gains and losses balance overall and result in order, a *kosmos*, exemplified in cycles of succession in nature such as birth and death. But it is not just the mention of injustice and penalty that should capture our attention, but the notion that there is a force of necessity at work here, employed by or through time, that is concerned with balancing the books. We should particularly note that we must conceive of this force as 'concerned,' that Anaximander articulates a purpose at work in the dynamism of the *kosmos*, even a moral purpose, which although driven by 'time' may even be shared by at least some of the elements themselves. They pay penalties *to each other* for their injustice. If we are not to think of the elements themselves as recognizing this injustice and the debts they owe, it is difficult to see where exactly to locate such a concern or awareness.

This is not the familiar dynamism called to mind by our usual notion of the kind of necessity following on cause and effect. If Anaximander's odd description were the only such language employed by the earliest thinkers, it might be reasonable to dismiss it as a bit of figurative language, a poetic personification of material and mechanical dynamics. It is not. As we have said, the notion of *kosmos* itself already carries overtones of violence for the Greek ear. Parmenides, as he is relating the "way of seeming," has the goddess claim to declare the *diakosmon eoikota* (whole world-order or world-ordering). Mourelatos reminds us that this verb, *diakosmeō*, means primarily, in Homer, "to divide and marshal, muster, array,"[2] and the reference is usually to a battle formation.[3] When the *kosmos* is constituted of opposites, as so many of the early Greeks supposed, the martial connotations are extended. Mourelatos also reminds us that the terms for opposites that Parmenides uses, *antios* and *enantios*, are Homeric terms for entities engaged in battle. The contraries are marshaled in ranks against each other, as for battle, a battle in which, according to Anaximander, the advantage of one side injures the other and requires amends. For Anaximander as for Parmenides and also Empedocles, as we will see, the world-ordering is an ordering of pairs in strife and conflict, but it is an ordering.

Empedocles's Love and Strife

Aristotle also had trouble hearing some of the terms of the Pre-Socratics as a direct articulation of cosmological dynamics. In the *Physics*, as he summarizes many of the early thinkers' ideas about *physis* or 'nature' and the material constitution of the *kosmos*, he, like Simplicius, doesn't always seem to know what to do with some of their specific terms:

> We must explain then, first, that *nature* belongs to the class of
> causes which act for the sake of something; and then second about
> the necessary and its place in questions of the physical *kosmos*, for
> all thinkers ascribe things to this cause, arguing that since such
> things as the hot and the cold are of such and such a kind, therefore
> certain things necessarily are and come to be; and if they mention
> any other cause (one "love and strife," another "mind"), it is only to
> touch on it, and then dismiss it. (*Phys*. II.198b10)

Aristotle opens the *Physics* by discussing both the ideas and the "errors" of his predecessors, grouping them into his own categories of cosmological thought. He also states what he believes to be the central principle defining

nature: that a thing has the origin of motion and change within itself. By the end of the second book, he has outlined his ideas about causes, grouped them into four main categories, and offered a surprisingly lengthy excursus into the question of luck and chance as possible motive forces or causes. His question, as he states here at the beginning of Part 8, is whether things in nature occur of necessity, as we would expect if nature is a kind of cause-and-effect machine. As he says, he wants to know the place of necessity in the *physical kosmos*, a qualification he apparently feels he needs to make to clarify his question.[4] He shows disdain for other possible "causes," claiming that these thinkers only brought these forces up as a kind of aside, one that can be quickly dismissed. This amounts to a very odd reading of many of his predecessors. Even a cursory glance at their writing suggests a rather more central role for nonmechanical dynamic forces.

In his poem, *On Nature*, Empedocles says:

> A twofold tale I shall tell: at one time they [i.e., the "roots"] grew to be one alone out of many, at another again they grew apart to be many out of one. Double is the birth of mortal things and double their failing; on the one hand brought both to birth and destruction by the coming together of all things, yet again both nurtured and scattered by being carried apart. And these things never cease their continual interchange, now through Love [Φιλότης] all coming together into one, now again each carried apart by the hatred of Strife [Νεῖκος]. <So insofar as they have learned to grow one from many>, and again as the one grows apart they spring apart as many, thus far do they come into being and have no stable life; but insofar as they never cease their continual interchange, thus far they exist always changeless in the cycle.
>
> But come, hear my words, for learning increases wisdom. As I said before in declaring the limits of my words, I shall tell a twofold tale: at one time they grew to be one alone out of many, at another again they grew apart to be many out of one—fire and water and earth and the immense height of air, and cursed Strife apart from them, equal in every direction, and Love among them, equal in length and breadth. Her must you contemplate with your mind, and not sit with eyes dazed: she it is who is thought innate even in mortal limbs, because of her they think friendly thoughts and accomplish harmonious deeds, calling her Joy by name and Aphrodite. She is perceived by no mortal man as she circles among them: but you must listen to the undeceptive path of my discourse.

>   All these [roots] are equal and coeval, but each guards what it
> honors according to its own character, and they prevail in turn as
> time comes round. And besides them nothing further comes into
> being nor does anything pass away. How could it in fact be utterly
> destroyed, since nothing is empty of these? For only if they were
> continually perishing would they no longer exist. And what could
> increase this all? Whence could it have come? No, there are just
> these, but running through one another they become different
> things at different times and yet ever and always the same. (B17)[5]

Here Love and Strife clearly play a more central role than Aristotle would credit. We should note that Empedocles himself cautions us against any impulse to read these "roots" metaphorically, at least indirectly. Empedocles not only advises us that listening carefully to his words will increase our wisdom, presumably about how the *kosmos* is structured and works, but he also explicitly calls his discourse "undeceptive [οὐκ ἀπατηλόν]." He is telling us that all of his speaking, including his talk about Love and Strife, will serve to inform us truthfully about how things are. We are admonished to take that talk on its face, as it were, and gain insight and understanding from it.

Even the terms we may take to signify more physical or mechanical relations have broader meaning than might first appear. There is some ambiguity concerning the temporal ordering of this twofold. At times it is depicted as a succession in which, in a detail cognate with Anaximander's account, each in turn prevails over its counterpart; but at other times their equality is emphasized, which includes not only duration of coexistence, but also possibly a spatial equality wherein each is portrayed as "running through [ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα]" one another. The terms *isos* and *isotēs* ('equal' and 'equality') are not often used by the Pre-Socratics, but when they are used, they often carry the connotations of fair and impartial rather than strict equality in a mathematical sense, as they will primarily come to connote later. So although there is reason to take these terms as designating a kind of spatial coextension, such a reading causes some confusions, as McKirahan amply notes.[6] And as Empedocles articulates their equality, he does so by unpacking that equality in terms of "prerogative [μέδει τιμῆς]" and "character [ἦθος]."

These latter are quite interesting terms, particularly as applied to either the material or motive principles of the *kosmos*. 'Character' or *ēthos* is the root term for the concept of morality (the root for our term 'ethics') and, as Heidegger has reminded us, means in its originary senses a dwelling place or habitation. It is what we have accustomed ourselves to, and so has become our custom. It means a disposition, and, particularly, a moral character brought

about through habituation. It is a term used frequently about people, often enough of animals (primarily in the sense of dwelling or what we might term 'habitat'), but rarely of things. Its use here demonstrates that Empedocles is thinking of all of the "roots," and not just the two we take metaphorically, to be imbued with psychic character.

Even more telling is the phrase *timēs medei*. Literally, these two words mean guarding what one honors.[7] *Timē* is an honor, award, or even office, a thing of recognized worth or value, and so the value or worth or price of things. It is used to signify the value of an assessment, and, interestingly, the penalty to be paid in compensation for some injustice. The verbal form was a common term in later Attic legal language meaning 'to impose a penalty or sentence.' Its earlier usage already echoes this sense. *Medei* means 'to rule over or control' but also, and more to the point in this context, 'to protect.' It has a strong intentional register, used often to signify planning for or devising a protection or rule, being mindful of the need for the same. These terms strongly echo Anaximander, and the sentence as a whole offers a close paraphrase: "All these [roots] are equal and coeval, but each guards what it honors according to its own character, and they prevail in turn as time comes round."

As in Anaximander, Empedocles is telling us that a primary force at work in the *kosmos* is a moral force, in which the root elements are themselves concerned with justice, with protecting their offices and exercising rule as time dictates in a process of give-and-take, dominance and retribution, both running through and creating all that is. His description of the *kosmos* offers not a metaphorical 'rule' over spatiotemporal domains, but a moral/valuative contest in which each element protects what it values according to its character. In the line after his talk of prerogative and character, we are told that each "dominates [κρατέουσι]" in turn through temporal cycles. The term *kratein* can mean rather straightforwardly 'rule.' But its primary and root meaning is 'to be strong or powerful,' 'to conquer, prevail, dominate, get the upper hand.' This set of meanings closely glosses Anaximander's concept of temporal cycles in which each element transgresses on its oppositional partner and must pay back what it owes.

Learning to Be What We Are

Empedocles offers similar language in another passage quoted by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*: "But what is lawful [νόμιμον] for all extends without break through the wide-ruling aither and boundless light" (*Rhet*. 1373b6). In this passage law is configured not as a social convention, but as natural, running

throughout the heavens, at the least, without break, in language that mirrors his description of the extension of Love and Strife.

Empedocles not only asserts that what we might take to be the human concern for law is actually a natural force, but also presents natural elements as psychic forces in humans, and, by extension, all things that think and perceive: "For with earth do we see earth, with water water, with air bright air, with fire, consuming fire, with love [here *storgē* rather than *philotēs*] do we see love, strife with dread strife." He does not personify love or strife here, but refers to them among the elements, and refers to all elements as psychological forces in human perception. Perhaps we must read this enigmatic passage to suggest that all things, because all things are composed of these elements, are able to perceive. If so, then our usual division of the *kosmos* into distinct mechanical and psychic aspects is brought directly into question.

Empedocles makes a related observation in his admonition to Pausanias (to whom the poem was written) to cling to his teachings. He finishes his advice by remarking that "all things have wisdom or understanding [φρόνησιν] and a share of thought [νώματος]" (B110). *Phronesis* already signifies at this time a kind of practical wisdom, a knowledge of how to live well, and so is a morally inflected term. Empedocles uses a cognate in B17, highlighted above: "For learning increases wisdom [φρένας]." This is a straightforward enough claim. But the term for learning, *mathē*, is used just a few lines earlier: "Thus in that they [all things] have learned [μεμάθηκε] to grow [φύεσθαι] to be one out of many." It is interesting that Empedocles characterizes things as "growing" to be one. The term translated 'grow' is a form of the word for 'nature' (*physis*) whose primary root meaning is growth. Further, things have to "learn" to "grow."

Thus, learning is also a kind of natural force, brought about by two particular motive forces, love and strife, or desire and hatred, which causes things, which have a share of thought and possess wisdom, to grow into what they become. It is possible, just remotely, that all of this is metaphorical language. It is a much more reasonable reading, at this point, to think of Empedocles's *kosmos* as a distinctly psychic entity, in which things become what they are not as the result of external forces acting on them to move them mechanically, but by internal psychic and moral forces teaching each to become according to its character and nature.[8] In this passage, Empedocles turns from material elements to moral forces without calling attention to any shift because for him there isn't a shift. He is not explaining a material *kosmos* in which merely material elements constantly interchange by means of mechanical forces, but a *kosmos* in which what is material is motivated by intellectual and moral forces.

There is other language in this passage that further argues for this inter-
pretation. When Empedocles introduces Love as a force and element in the
kosmos, he enjoins us to *derkeu* or "behold or contemplate" her with our *voos*
or "understanding," not stumble around in sense perception. The motive
forces of the *kosmos*, perhaps because innate in our limbs, as he says here,
are not available to sense perception. And although δέρκομαι has the plain
meaning of 'see clearly,' just a few lines later Empedocles warns us that no
mortal has "perceived [δεδαήκε]" her "whirling [ἑλισσομένην]" among them.
Here the term for 'perceive,' *daō*, primarily means 'learn,' *didaskō*, and in the
perfective aspect, as here, to know from having learned. We cannot learn,
it would seem, from sense perception, from just looking at the interactions
of things from an external perspective. Love can and does teach us what to
become, but we must learn about her and her role in the *kosmos* by contem-
plating her force within us.

We have examined one of Empedocles's central passages at some length
to adduce what his specific language reveals both about how he conceives the
kosmos and, by extension, how it is possible to conceive of it in other-than-
mechanical terms. Empedocles talks of Love and Strife in other places as the
forces running both through all things and through each other, and acting
on things by producing within them desire and anger.[9] Here and elsewhere
(e.g., B110, B96) he speaks of the elements as yearning for each other as a
result of the force of love acting within or on them. *Pothein* or 'desiring' is a
term denoting strong emotion: it means deeply missing, even craving, what
is absent. He tells us that these forces which act on us so strongly are eternal
(B16): there will never be a time when they are not actively shaping what is.

He sharpens the picture of the moral dynamic in B35 where we are
explicitly told that this process of desire and hatred running through all
things is blameless. Both Love and Strife are each explicitly characterized
as *amempheōs*. If Empedocles's account has moved us to think of the *kosmos*
in moral terms in any way, we may be tempted to think of a moral binary in
which Love is the good force in the *kosmos*, and hatred a more blameworthy
force.[10] But such a binary ignores the 'double story' that Empedocles repeat-
edly emphasizes he is telling, in which the sources of both generation and
destruction are double. Both forces are at work in both processes, and both
are necessary, even good, in the moral sense, since the result of their *blameless*
activity is *kosmos* (order) itself. We are told several times that without these
forces, nothing would be at all.[11] There are only these, and through them
things "become mortal that had previously learned [μάθον] to be immortal,
and things previously unmixed became mixed, interchanging or reconciling
[διαλλάξαντα] their paths or journeys [κελεύθους]" (B35).

We have already seen how, in part, this "learning" is possible as a conse-
quence of having the elements within us perceiving themselves, in a sense, to
be reflected in the order of elements external to us. As he says in B109, it is
the yearning and strife within us that allows us to comprehend the yearning
and strife that move the *kosmos*. But there is a larger isomorphism at work
in the *kosmos* with respect to thought and learning. In another passage, we
are shown how his model for thought and "insight [φρένας]" mirrors the
cyclic dynamic of the *kosmos* as a whole: "nurtured in the seas of surging
blood, where most we find what is called thought by humans, for the blood
around the heart in humans is thought" (B105).[12] It is the flow, the give-
and-take, of blood in and around the "chest [φρήν]" that *is* thought and what
we call "thought [νόημα]." For Empedocles, unlike for most of the rest of
us throughout the Western tradition, human cognition is not some separate
process apart from the mechanical dynamics of a cause-and-effect *kosmos*
that we find difficult to explain. It is the self-same process, the flowing give-
and-take of a thoroughly psychic *kosmos*.

Justice

We are provided with another description of this cycle and the kind of
dynamism that drives the *kosmos* in one final interesting passage, where, like
Aristotle, Empedocles takes up the issue of necessity explicitly:

> There is an oracle of Necessity, an ancient decree of the gods, eter-
> nal and sealed with broad oaths: when anyone sins and pollutes
> his own dear limbs with murder, or who sins by swearing a false
> oath—spirits whose lot is long-lasting life—for thrice ten thousand
> years he wanders apart from the blessed ones, growing throughout
> that time into all kinds of mortal things, exchanging one hard path
> of life for another. The force of the air chases him into the sea, the
> sea spews him out onto the surface of the earth, the earth casts him
> into the rays of the shining sun, and the sun into the vortices of the
> air. One receives him after another, but all hate him. Of these, I too
> am now one, a fugitive from the gods and a wanderer, having put
> my faith in raving Strife. (B115)[13]

Here the *kosmos* is portrayed as playing a particular role in punishing and
purifying one who sins (*amplakein* and *hamartēma*) and pollutes himself and
his environment in terms that emphasize its role as a "matter [χρῆμα] of
necessity [ανάγκης]." It is qualified as an ancient decree of the gods, but it

appears most likely that the divine decree refers to the period imposed. The elements themselves are characterized as carrying out the punishment and are explicitly described as "hating [στυγέω]" the one who commits injustice, propelling him from one to the other in disgusted rejection of his condition.

The verbs are particularly interesting. The air *diōkein* or 'chases' him—it puts him to flight. The sea vomits (ἀπεπτέυ) him onto the earth. This term connotes suffering from indigestion, as if the sea received something that upset it and must regurgitate it. While such a response can be autonomic, or mechanical, the cause of the upset here is not some physical incompatibility, but the disgust the sea experiences over the deeds of the wrongdoer. Given that he changes forms frequently, it is not his mortal form in the moment but his original and underlying sin that 'upsets' the sea. The earth and sun cast him out. This term has broad meanings, but sometimes means 'to denounce,' and this meaning in this context, in company with these other terms, seems at least a probable echo. Each takes or receives him (*dechesthai*) only to cast him out and around the cycle again. In this passage the elements not only serve as a process of and vehicle for justice, but seem to strongly feel themselves the wrongness of the injustice, carrying out the punishment not as a mechanism designed and implemented by the gods, but as full participants in the moral judgment, perhaps even acting out of concern for the moral health of the *kosmos*. As elsewhere in Empedocles, psychic and moral dynamics are not just assigned to the motive forces of the *kosmos*, Love and Strife, but are also presented as internal and integral to the elements themselves.

The *Kosmos* in Motion

One of the long-standing puzzles in interpreting early Greek thought about the *kosmos* is the question of what sets everything in motion. One reason we may find the question so puzzling is that mechanism is not motivation—machines are not motive forces for themselves; they require motive forces. If we read the *kosmos* as a machine, we look, perhaps in vain, for a force that will set it all in motion and keep it moving through all its cycles of generation and destruction. After the Pre-Socratics, thinkers emphasized the mechanical dynamics they found in early cosmology: mixture and separation, for instance. Many of the earliest thinkers do indeed discuss such effects, and appear to think of them in at least partially mechanical terms. For Empedocles, however, these seem to be, in fact, *effects* that have clear psychological origins. Mixture and separation are results, not causes. The causes are desire and hatred, or judgment, which all things experience, in one way or another.

This interpretation also resolves some of the difficulties in locating these motive forces spatiotemporally, particularly during the periods when each totally dominates. They are everywhere still, internal to the things that are. The dominance is not a spatial or material exclusion, which leaves the other no *topos* (place) to be, but a psychological or moral dominance, where one force exerts little or no influence but remains fully within all things. And because both remain, and because both are in oppositional tension still, regardless of which is exerting primary or even total influence at a given moment, the transition must continue.

Certainly each of the Pre-Socratic thinkers had his own primary concerns. Empedocles's chief concern, like Socrates's, was the condition of his own soul. As he clearly states, the goal of his teachings is to enable one to live well, and our learning about the way things are serves primarily in this capacity. His project is explicitly moral, and the inquiry into the *kosmos* is anything but a disinterested materialist investigation. His framing of the inquiry helps us to see that cosmology was and can be an existential inquiry, an investigation of the order of relations among what is, and particularly of our place in that order that does not ignore or forget the role of desire and conflict, justice, or judgment.

Notes

EPIGRAPH: Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept of Φύσις in Aristotle's *Physics* B, I.," in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill, trans. T. Sheehan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 186.

1. Parts of this passage are also found in Hippolytus and Pseudo-Plutarch, but they do not share Simplicius's quotation of the original, nor his assessment of its character. It is possible that they did not have the original, but it is also possible they simply considered it irrelevant. All of these passages are versions of Theophrastus's view of Anaximander, which is lost to us. I have put single quotation marks around the parts most scholars take to be the *ipsissima verba*. The attempt to interpret this fragment has produced its share of controversy. For the standard discussions of this fragment, see G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Charles H. Kahn, "Anaximander's Fragment: The Universe Governed by Law," in *The Pre-Socratics*, ed. A. P. D. Mourelatos (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), and *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); and also Uvo Hölscher, "Anaximander and the Beginnings of Greek Philosophy," and Gregory Vlastos, "Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies," both in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, 2 vols., ed. D. J. Furley and R. E. Allen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

2. Compare *diakosmeō* in R. J. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), s.v.

3. Mourelatos, "The Deceptive Words of Parmenides' '*Doxa*,'" in Mourelatos, *The Pre-Socratics*, 317–318. *Diakosmon* is a compound form of *kosmos* in which the prefix signifies

complete and across or throughout the whole. The verb *diakosmeō* means to arrange and set in order. Cf. the use of the term in Thucydides (*PW* 4.93), also noted by Mourelatos.

4. And while Aristotle several times in these passages, and without much argument, compares *nature* and what is natural with the productions of *technē*, he does insist that nature is *not* a kind of artifact that makes itself. Still, that he thinks of *nature* as analogous to artifacts in any way reveals that he has begun to think of the *kosmos* as exhibiting some mechanical relations, analogous to the mechanical manipulation of nature in the production of artifacts.

5. The line set apart with angle brackets is inserted by Diels, in order to complete the sense of the literal fragment, and is taken from B26, which also shares lines 7–8 and 10–13.

6. Cf. R. McKirahan, *Philosophy before Socrates* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 275–276.

7. Kirk and Raven offer "each has a different prerogative and each its own character." See Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 349. McKirahan, *Philosophy before Socrates*, 237, offers "each rules in its own province and possesses its own individual character."

8. . "According to our character [ἦθος] and nature [φύσις]" is also a formula used by Empedocles in B110 to describe how his teachings will come to grow within us.

9. E.g., B35 and B109 as we have noted, and B26, B36, B57, B58, and B21, where he names strife *Kotos* (Anger). This term also connotes holding a grudge or vengeance against one who has wronged you, and so echoes again the concern for justice.

10. McKirahan, *Philosophy before Socrates*, 262, speaks of Love and Strife as "moral agents" and says of them that "Love and her effects are good, Strife and its effects are evil."

11. E.g., B17, B21, B26, and B35.

12. Cited by Porphyry in Stobaeus, *Selections* I.49.53.

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The Human as (W)hole: Aristophanes's Contest with Socrates in *Clouds*

Damian Stocking

However much laughter Aristophanes's *Clouds* may have occasioned over the last several millennia, for more recent generations of earnest-minded critics and thinkers it has also proved to be—as Nietzsche once impishly observed—a perpetual source of both "consternation" and "surprise."[1] It is one thing, after all, for Aristophanes to have used his prodigious comedic resources to lambaste the Sophists. What confuses Nietzsche's "moderns," though, is why Aristophanes should have chosen to parody the Sophists in the person of *Socrates*, a thinker who spent the better part of his life *contesting* the Sophistic movement's ever-expanding authority and prestige.

Of course, it is not simply these "moderns" who have found Aristophanes's identification of the philosopher with his putative lifelong opponents so perplexing. Indeed, if we are to rely on Plato's testimony, the first commentator on the play to profess himself nonplussed at Aristophanes's intentions in *Clouds* was none other than Socrates himself. In *The Apology*, the philosopher is utterly baffled as to why the playwright makes him lay claim to a Sophistic expertise in "making the weaker argument the stronger," since—obviously!—he himself knows "nothing great or small" about such matters (*Ap*. 19b). Nor indeed can Socrates understand the comedian's perverse insistence on associating him with those other intellectually "overactive [περιεργάζεται]" types, the new breed of cosmologists, physicists, and the like, who spend their days and nights inquiring after things "subterranean" and heavenly (*Ap*. 19b). With all such forms of inquiry, Socrates protests, he has nothing whatsoever to do ("I have no share in them," *Ap*. 19c).

In light of these flabbergasted disavowals, one has to wonder: what precisely *was* Aristophanes up to with his portrait of Socrates in *Clouds*? What is the meaning of these scandalous ascriptions, these outrageous (and apparently false) attributions to the philosopher's intellectual character? For David Konstan, the answer is a straightforward one: Aristophanes's portrayal of

Socrates as quasi-Sophist-cum-naturalist is a product of standard "comedic license."[2] While conceding that there are, here and there, certain "resemblances" between the Socrates of *Clouds* and the Socrates we know from Plato and Xenophon, Konstan contends that in the main, the thinker presented to us in the play is little more than a "compound figure," a "stand-in for the new currents of critical thought generally."[3] Apparently unconcerned with the philosophic precision of his portrayal, Konstan's Aristophanes has simply employed Socrates as a convenient means for "capturing the popular anxiety" about all the many forms of rational inquiry emerging at the time, for an audience of fifth-century Athenians that frankly "would have seen little or no difference" between a Sophist, a Pre-Socratic, and a Socrates.[4] Pressed for an explanation as to why Aristophanes would elect to "concentrate specifically" on the philosopher, to make *him* the representative of all the burgeoning forms of disenchanted reason, Konstan offers the deflationary response that Socrates was (1) "odd-looking," (2) a "local," and (3) "a bit of a public nuisance."[5] In Konstan's view, in other words, Aristophanes must have felt that his Athenian audience would need little excuse to turn on the newfangled intellectuals of his day, and Socrates simply provided the comedian with a ripe piece of low-hanging fruit with which to gratify their prejudice and their hate.[6]

For all the precision of his analyses, therefore, Konstan basically concedes Socrates's point in *The Apology*: Aristophanes's send-up of the philosopher in *Clouds* really has "nothing to do" with his actual views or practices. In what follows, however, I would like to challenge that perspective. While not denying that the Socrates of *Clouds* is, just as Konstan insists, a "composite" figure, I would also like to show that Aristophanes has left us several important clues to indicate that the playwright did indeed have Socrates's specific philosophic aims in mind in *Clouds*. If Aristophanes has elected to attack the so-called New Learning of the Classical period by way of Socrates, it is through neither intellectual irresponsibility nor comedic opportunism; it is, rather, I contend, because the comedian recognized in Socratic doctrine and practice the clearest articulation of certain pernicious tendencies driving the movement as a whole. In attacking Socrates's project in particular, Aristophanes was able to attack what he took to be most dangerous in the work of Sophist and naturalist alike.[7]

Of course, given the dearth of contemporary written testimony concerning Socrates's actual words and thoughts, it may seem impossible at the outset to isolate anything like a "Socratic practice as such." As it turns out, however, Aristophanes seems to have given us access to precisely that, only he has done so—characteristically enough—by way of one of his most vulgar and (seemingly) nonsensical jokes.

On his tour of the interior of Socrates's *Phrontisterion*, or 'Thinketeria,' Strepsiades, the whinging, shockingly amoral, yet dauntless comic antihero of *Clouds*—an ancient Larry David of sorts—comes upon two groups of students; the first seem to be looking closely at, or are perhaps lying flat on, the ground. These students are "investigating things under the earth" (*Cl*. 189). Having judged this "scientific inquiry" to be nothing more than an inefficient search for root vegetables, Strepsiades bumbles on toward the next group of students. These, in contrast to the first, are searching even deeper regions— the places "below Tartarus" (*Cl*. 192). Consequently, they have so severely stooped themselves over as to be bent in two—a fact that becomes clear from Strepsiades's next question: "But why then does his/their asshole [πρωκτός] stare into the heavens?" (*Cl*. 193). The answer to this question is a strange one indeed: "By itself, independently, it gives itself instruction in the lawful regulation of the stars [αὐτὸς καθ' αὑτὸν ἀστρονομεῖν διδάσκεται]" (*Cl*. 194).

The phrase, *autos kath' auton*, may of course be familiar to some from the dialogues of Plato, where it is quite frequently employed to characterize the independence of both the so-called Forms and the 'separable' soul from the contingencies of material existence.[8] In that context, of course, the phrase makes perfect sense. To act or exist *kata ti* is to be determined in one's action and existence by that thing (to act, *kata nomous*, for example, is to act 'in conformity with the laws'). That which exists *autos kath' auton*, therefore, retains its 'self-sameness' and 'separateness,' its autonomy, by being 'related to' nothing but itself—by existing in conformity with itself alone. In *Clouds*, however, *autos kath' auton* is applied not to any abstract metaphysical entity, but to the human anus. Apparently we are to imagine that, even as the student's head sinks down toward Tartarus, his "asshole [πρωκτός]" rises up toward the sky, in a valiant but vain attempt to be alone, to exist autonomously and in relation to nothing else but itself. (The attempt to achieve this self-determining independence is suggested, likewise, by the reflexive, nontransitive use of the middle voice verb, *didasketai*, 'to teach oneself.')

Of course, a hole is the one thing in this world that, by definition, can never be by itself, alone, or independent. A hole is, so to speak, never wholly 'whole'—it is an absence that exists only in relation to another thing. The ridiculousness of the line thus smacks of satiric 'reference,' a deliberate (and mocking) misemployment of terms taken out of their usual context. As Justin Broackes observes, the phrase *autos kath' auton* "makes no good sense unless it alludes to something, so to speak, offstage."[9] That "something," Broackes convincingly argues, can only have been a doctrinal saying of sorts, one widely associated with the 'historical' Socrates. As Broackes points out, the phrase is an unusual one, with no exact antecedents in the philosophic

literature; that such a singular phrase should be associated with Socrates by two separate authors, by Aristophanes and Plato alike, speaks strongly in favor of a common historical source.[10] *Autos kath' auton* must therefore have been Socrates's characteristic and peculiar locution.

Clearly, then, Aristophanes has not merely used Socrates as a stand-in for the New Learning generally, but wished to target Socrates's own views and thinking in particular. But what precisely did Aristophanes mean to parody in this scene? It would be anachronistic to suggest that *autos kath' auton* had the same meaning for Socrates as it would eventually have for Plato. To grasp what Socrates *himself* might have intended by the locution *autos kath' auton*, we can turn to Eric Havelock's still quite valuable analyses of the language of *Clouds* and *The Apology*. Havelock notes that throughout the *Apology*, Socrates exhorts his fellow citizens to undertake a "curiously circular" exercise:[11] they should not neglect to "think upon their thinking [φρονήσεως . . . φροντίζεις]" (*Ap*. 29e1–3). One might suspect that Socrates is doing no more here than asking his fellow Athenians to sharpen their mental faculties; against this natural supposition, however, Havelock points to a similar Socratic admonition to "show concern for yourself, for how you might be as good at thinking as possible" (36c). A concern for one's own thinking, evidently, is equivalent to a concern for one's own self; for Socrates therefore, at least according to Havelock, "the essence of life was introspective thought."[12] And so, as Havelock sees it, the reason Socrates entreats the citizenry to "think upon thinking" is not so that they might descry some exterior, objective truth or good by doing so (i.e., so that they might "become wise"), but rather because it would allow them to engage in a completely self-related, self-determining activity: "a self-contained procedure: oneself acting upon oneself."[13] To think upon thinking is, in other words, a technique for rendering the *self* into something fully autonomous and independent; and that, as I see it, is the essence of the Socratic project as such: to render one's own *self* into something that is *autos kath' auton*.

For all its relative philosophic imprecision (the metaphysical refinement of the project would presumably fall to Plato), this characteristic undertaking and preoccupation on the part of Socrates must have formed—so it seems to me—the ultimate ground of Aristophanes's attack on the philosopher in *Clouds*. Far from employing the old Athenian thinker as a useful catchall for the theories of Hippo of Elis, Damon, Diogenes of Apollonia, and the like, it is this ambition in particular—this desire to achieve perfect self-sufficiency through a disciplined practice of intellectual self-relation—that must have most especially provoked Aristophanes's comedic ire, for he has made it central to his characterization of the philosopher's practice throughout the play.

In their first interview, for instance, rather than having Socrates ask Strepsiades in a straightforward manner, "How did you fall into debt?" Aristophanes has him inquire instead, "How did you *forget your own self* [σαυτὸν ἔλαθες] as you were falling into debt?" (*Cl.* 242).[14] When Strepsiades finally resolves to submit himself to Socrates for rhetorical and "forensic" training, his new instructor begins with the odd (but as we should now recognize, the entirely characteristic) request that Strepsiades begin by making a full report on the "way of your own self [τὸν σαυτοῦ τρόπον]" (*Cl.* 478). Even the chorus of clouds does its part in reinforcing the Socratic lesson, urging a rapidly flagging Strepsiades not merely to "cogitate," but also to compress, concentrate, and as it were "coagulate yourself [φρόντιζε . . . σαυτὸν . . . πυκνώσας]" (*Cl.* 700–703).

Now one might claim that this insistent use of the reflexive *sauton* is merely imitative, that Aristophanes has no feeling for its philosophic implication. To answer this objection, though, we need merely look to Socrates's famed arrival on stage in *Clouds*. For there the philosopher is revealed to us floating high above all earthly concerns, subject, so he himself fancies, to the limitations of neither time (he addresses Strepsiades as *Ō phēmere*—"O ephemeral one!" [*Cl.* 223]) nor space (in his opening lines he proudly declares, *Periphronō ton hēlion*—which we could render quite literally as "I *circum-spect* the sun!" [*Cl.* 225]). And when Strepsiades ingenuously asks of Socrates's student, "Hey, who is this guy?" (*Cl.* 218), the only answer he receives is the heavily fraught single-word response *autos* (*Cl.* 219). Before even conferring a proper name on him, the play identifies Socrates with the 'self-standing' intensive pronoun *autos*, one that 'names' instead his peculiar philosophic ambition. He is presented to us explicitly—and derisively—as the would-be Man Himself, the Self-Same Man, the Man Alone.

Perhaps, though, what is really at issue here is not exactly *what* Aristophanes sought to attack in the person of Socrates—this much, I hope, should by now be sufficiently clear—but rather *why* he sought to attack it, and with such vehemence. For, as Martha Nussbaum (citing Foucault) has ably shown, the achievement of a condition of impervious self-sufficiency was in fact a widely held ideal in Ancient Greece: the "good man" of the city was one who was always "in control of himself, rather than being controlled by others."[15] What precisely, then, would Aristophanes find objectionable about Socrates's aim of rendering the self *autos kath' auton*?

The answer to this question lies, it seems to me, in Aristophanes's self-proclaimed allegiance to Dionysus, the god of dramatic festivals, the god "who nourished and raised me! [Διόνυσον τὸν ἐκθρέψαντά με]" (*Cl.* 518). In *Clouds*, Dionysus is presented to us specifically as the god of tragedy and comedy (cf. 310–311), and within the play itself Socrates is in fact made to

stand in direct opposition to both these genres. "Don't joke around," Socrates warns Strepsiades, "nor make like those 'trugically' pathetic [τρυγοδαίμονες, *Cl.* 296] ones!"—the term 'trugic' being, of course, comedy's way of pairing itself with tragic song, as the "song of the *trux*," or the wine dregs. Socrates's antagonism toward tragedy seems no less keen. As a recent graduate from Socrates's Thinkery, Strepsiades's son, Pheidippides, stubbornly refuses to sing his father one of the old tragic songs of Aeschylus; rather, he insists on declaiming a Sophistic piece of oratory, a *rhesis*, on the subject of sibling incest (cf. *Cl.* 1371). The author of this scandalous rhetorical 'set piece' is of course none other than Euripides—an author who, as we learn from *Frogs*, "abandoned the tragedian's art [παραλιπόντα/τῆς τραγῳδικῆς τέχνης]" (*Fr.* 1493–1494) when he chose instead to "sit and prattle on with Socrates [Σωκράτει/παρακαθήμενον λαλεῖν]" (*Fr.* 1490–1491).

This carefully staged contest between Socrates and the two primary 'Dionysian' art forms should in no way be considered incidental to Aristophanes's opposition to Socrates's project for the self as we have reconstructed it. For as I have attempted to show elsewhere (particularly with regard to tragedy), these dramatic genres fulfill their sociopolitical—or, more precisely, their *communal*—function precisely by enacting the destruction of the selfsame, contained, and autonomous self, the *autos*.[16] We can see this most clearly in Greek tragedy, of course, where one tragic hero after another, whether moved by arrogance, a misplaced sense of civic responsibility, or simple human anguish, attempts to achieve a condition of total self-sufficiency, yet only comes to ruin. To cite one example among many—in Sophocles's *Antigone* we find Antigone herself endowed with an intransigent "temper to know herself alone [αὐτόγνωτος . . . ὀργά]" (*Ant.* 875); Creon is similarly infatuated with his own "self-will [αὐθαδία]" (*Ant.* 1028)—yet both act finally only as catalysts for one another's destruction.

To explain this peculiar (yet constitutive) feature of Greek tragedy, this genre-specific insistence on destroying those who either claim or seek absolute self-determination, I have in the past made extensive use of Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of being-in-community, of "Being itself . . . as community."[17] Though we may often suppose that community is something 'added on' to human existence, something that free human agents may or may not decide to engage in, Nancy points out that, in fact, no human being ever exists prior to its relation to other human beings; there simply is no human being who, in his or her every action, feeling, or thought, is not 'always already' engaged with some 'other,' and that other with some other, and so on. "There is," declares Nancy, "no singular being without another singular being . . . There is therefore what might be called . . . an originary or ontological sociality."[18]

To put this matter another way, we are creatures of finitude through and through, forever coming into existence in relation to an 'outside' we can never finally master. This of course is a situation (as Greek tragedy well knows) fraught with instability and uncertainty. Inevitably, then, we try to master this instability. Reacting against our finite being, we seek a perfect immanence—and this by one of two different 'policies' (that is to say, 'politics'). Either we withdraw from contact with those whose 'difference' threatens to alter us, as an Antigone or an Ajax might; or else we attempt, in the style of Creon or Xerxes, to subsume those others into sameness with ourselves.

As Nancy is quick to point out, however, there is a deep irony in such immanence-seeking gestures. For inasmuch as we are beings-in-relation, there is no way for us to achieve a truly immanent state of being—such a condition can be found only in death (whether the death of the 'other' or of ourselves). And so we find that, in tragedy, the same characters who desperately attempt to assert and secure their existential independence inevitably find themselves surrounded by corpses, or end as corpses themselves.

Obviously, then, we must find a way—even against our own policies of self-protecting immanence—to maintain ourselves in our openness and "exposure" to others. But there is a profound difficulty here. We cannot, Nancy insists, make a "policy" or "work" of exposure to difference; for any difference we decide to "be open to" must inevitably be a "difference" that we ourselves would have produced (and would thus be no real difference at all). This is why, for Nancy, true exposure to the other, true being-in-community, can only come in the "unworking"—in the "interruption, fragmentation, and suspension" of our policies and projects.[19] Only in the negation of our usual practices of immanence is real openness to the other made possible—only thus do we become responsively alive to others, or, indeed, manage to live on at all. Paradoxically, then, as Nancy's colleague Jacques Derrida has put it, the only way a creature of finitude "lives on," finally, is by finding a way to "protect itself against its self-protection."[20]

This, I take it, was the communal function that tragedy—and, as we will see, comedy as well, after its own manner—played for the Athenian polis. The Athenians would, it seems to me, have identified closely with the immanence-seeking practices of those heroes and heroines presented before them on the tragic stage. Having witnessed the ruin of a Xerxes or an Ajax, the audience would come to abandon—if ever so briefly—its own finitude-destroying policies of self-protection. With their drive to 'selfsameness' and self-determination temporarily suspended, the city's citizens would come to open themselves, at long last, to an indeterminate otherness—an otherness which, for once, they would not seek to master. Through tragedy's violence

against the self-assertive *autos*, Athenians were able to experience, in its all fertility (and fragility), that being-in-relation which the "grace of Bromios" (*Bromia charis*, *Cl*. 310) alone might confer on them.

So I think we can see why Aristophanes, as a defender of Dionysian drama, would wish to oppose the Socratic project for the self. In restoring us to a sense of our own finitude, such drama is "what undoes, in its very principle . . . the autarchy of absolute immanence";[21] in its plots, characters, dialogue, and choral songs, it looks to do nothing else but offer, for the time that it can, an "interruption of self-consciousness."[22] Yet Socrates, as we have seen, desires only to perfect the self's consciousness of itself, and to achieve thereby an immanence, or autonomy, of selfhood that would necessarily preclude any determination 'from the outside.' Whatever political or personal stability Socrates imagined such a technique might offer, to Aristophanes it meant little else than the ruin of all being-in-community as such.

This is a point the playwright makes quite explicit for us in his presentation of Strepsiades in the second half of *Clouds*. For there Strepsiades is made to confront a formally 'tragic' reminder of the pain his refusal to pay back his debts has caused (the so-called second creditor enters the scene with the familiar tragic intonation "ἰώ μοι μοι," which Strepsiades himself identifies with a tragic song of mourning, a "threnody"—cf. *Cl*. 1259–1260). His only response to this painful vision of our finite fragility and need, however, is to offer the now-familiar injunction: "Turn yourself toward yourself [κατὰ σεαυτόν νυν τρέπου]" (*Cl*. 1263). Such is the effect of Socratic instruction in *Clouds*.

It should be clear enough, then, given Aristophanes's self-proclaimed devotion to the Dionysian (and, by implication, the community of finite beings it sustains), why he should wish to oppose Socrates's teaching. There still remains, however, the difficulty of understanding why the comedian has chosen to collapse the distinctions between Socrates and other intellectuals of the day. Why make Socrates a stand-in for Pre-Socratics and for Sophists too? As I see it, it can only be because Aristophanes recognized in these intellectual pursuits one and the same objective, one that Socratic teaching had simply rendered explicit. From Aristophanes's point of view, in other words, the ultimate aim of rational inquiry into the origin and structure of the cosmos conducted by the Pre-Socratic thinkers, as well as the systematic investigation of speech and persuasion conducted by the Sophists, was nothing other than the achievement of the self's immanence.

Of course, at first blush nothing could seem further from a 'concern with the self' than something as grand and abstract as a speculation regarding the constitution of the universe as a whole. But we would do well here to recall

Vernant's observation concerning the ultimate effect of Greek cosmological speculation. In its wake, "the human, the divine, and the natural worlds made up a unified, homogeneous universe, all on the same plane . . . The ancient and the primordial were stripped of their grandeur and mystery; they had the reassuring banality of familiar phenomena."[23] Where once the procession of starry constellations in the night sky might have served human beings as reminders of their mortal finitude, the subsequent scientific reduction of Zeus into a clay watering pot [χυτρεοῦν, *Cl.* 1474] and of human beings into lumps of coal existing beneath a large barbecue lid (*Cl.* 96–97) tended instead to render all existence continuous with ourselves and our own day-to-day experience. In light of such rational discoveries, there simply is nothing that is fundamentally 'outside' us. Thus, when thunder is explained away as a kind of cosmic flatulence in *Clouds*, and Aristophanes frames the lesson in specifically Socratic terms ("I will teach you from out of your own self [ἀπὸ σαυτοῦ 'γώ σε διδάξω]" [*Cl.* 385]), it is not from out of a simple indifference to intellectual distinctions, but from a really quite profound insight into the implications of rationalizing inquiry for human community. Socratic teaching articulates best for Aristophanes the hidden tendency of 'objective' scientific thought.

And of course the same can be said of Sophistic practice too. It is not just that in mastering the medium of political discourse the well-trained rhetor can enfold all diversity of opinion into sameness with his own, so that "Tongue [τὴν Γλῶτταν]" (*Cl.* 424) can displace all the gods of Olympus. Nor is it simply that language gives us another means of assimilating all existential difference through resemblances in sound, common word origins, and the like (Strepsiades is delighted to see that 'thunder' and 'fart,' βροντή and πορδή, are "alike [ὁμοίω]" in their names [*Cl.* 394]). Beyond all that, sophistry—at least as figured in *Clouds*—is concerned not simply with a mastery of all forms of otherness *through* language, but is understood at a deeper level as the attempt to exercise mastery *over* language. Thus we have Socrates's efforts in *Clouds* to innovate strictly feminine noun forms for feminine entities (such as "rooster-ess [ἀλεκτρύαινα]" [*Cl.* 666]) as a means of 'rationalizing' language itself. With the Sophists, apparently, it is no longer true, as Heidegger would have it, that "language speaks us," that we live out our finite lives within its mystery; the Sophists' essential ambition is ultimately to remake language, and through it the world as a whole, in their *own* image.[24]

So we can now see, I think, just how deeply principled and insightful was Aristophanes's decision to make Socrates the stand-in for the whole of the New Learning; from the comedian's point of view, philosopher, scientist, and Sophist were all engaged in the same underlying task, the one Socrates

names explicitly with his idiomatic usage, *autos kath' auton*. As a votary of Dionysus, as a believer in tragedy and its vision of our finitude, it is a movement against which he simply had to pit himself. But why, we might ask, has Aristophanes elected to do so in comedic form? Why not defend our tragic finitude by means of tragedy itself?

To understand the appropriateness of launching a specifically *comedic* attack on Socrates, it is important first to recognize that both comedy and tragedy are profoundly Dionysian—that is, both are dedicated, through and through, to maintaining us in our communal being-in-relation; it is just that they do so in different ways. Tragedy depends, as we have seen, on the audience's identification with the *subject* of immanence-seeking practices, the practices of exclusion and domination that reduce the other to the dimensions of the *autos*. But comedy, I would suggest, appeals to us, contrariwise, as the *objects* of such practices. Whereas in tragedy we are brought to recognize our own tendencies to overrule, objectify, or discount the other, in comedy it is we ourselves who are objectified, discounted, overruled; in comedy, we are the other—we are, as it were, the 'beset' (and 'beset' is of course what all comedians have always been, and must continue to be). Comedy's task, then, is to release us from the sterile misery of this objectification, into the abundant fertility of our finite condition, the possibility and openness of community.

Now this it can do in any number of ways. It might, for example, contrive to put before us a comic hero who thoughtlessly transgresses the objective bounds to which we would gravely subject him or her, but who—while passively made to suffer the consequences of this transgression—manages to 'live on' in any case (so in *Clouds* we laugh to see the combined might of philosophy, science, and rhetoric helpless before a man it cannot stop from masturbating; cf. *Cl.* 734). Or it might, more actively, seek to 'objectify the objectifier,' allowing us to discount the power of those who had attempted to discount us first—as when, for instance, feeling abject before the power of politicians and celebrities, we delight to know they can be easily impersonated, their 'uniqueness' mechanically reproduced and packaged at will. Such 'counterobjectification' is of course practiced everywhere on Socrates in *Clouds*, from the impersonation of his talk and manner, to the crueler (but no less comedic, and no less liberating) subjection of this would-be transcendent "thinker of his own self" to all the painful contingencies of a mortal, embodied life (whether by pointing out to the audience the measly "prop" rope by which the great man is suspended as he boasts of "treading the air," or by subjecting him to the touch of fire as it does in the end, reducing his once-proud boasts to a pathetic squeal).

But howsoever it achieves its end, comedy, I submit once again, is just as committed to our Dionysian finitude, ecstasy, and fertility as tragedy ever was. If Aristophanes has sought to oppose the newfound enemies of our mortal being-in-community in comedic form, I surmise it is because at the time of the writing of *Clouds* at least, the technique of achieving the self's immanence through intellectual means was not sufficiently widespread to become a subject for tragedy. For the ancient Athenians it was, one suspects, a simple matter to identify themselves with the effort to overmaster all forms of otherness on the basis of physical and political might, genealogical descent, or religious scruple; what was not so obvious to them is how one might revert to new practices of rational inquiry as a means for achieving the self's absolute self-containment. But if they did not see such things as an options for themselves, what the Athenians did acutely feel was the degrading effect the new intellectual techniques had on them—whether it was sophistry's claim to be able to manipulate them at will (to make them, as Strepsiades puts it, "sausage for thinkers"; cf. *Cl.* 455–456); or science's reduction of their words, and their very own selves, to void and whirling air; or Socrates's intense form of self-concentration, his heedless gait and unfocused rolling eyes (cf. *Cl.* 362), that seemed to belittle all around him into pure nonentity (that is, into "creatures of a day"; cf. *Cl.* 223).

For the sake of being-in-relation, for the sake of our finite being-in-community, these new and disturbing behaviors required radical disruption—and as *Clouds* attests, Aristophanes obviously felt equal to the task. Against the new vision of the human being that systematic rationality had made possible—the vision of ourselves as capable of rising above our finitude to achieve to achieve a state of complete immanence, with Socrates as our guide—the comedian pits his view of us embodied, frail, open to every influence of pleasure and pain. His vision is not of the human as whole, but the human as hole—an "asshole," in fact, staring presumptuously into the vast night sky.

Notes

1. "It is in this tone, half outraged, half scornful, that Aristophanic comedy usually spoke of these men (i.e., Euripides and Socrates), to the consternation of those moderns, who . . . could not get over their surprise that Socrates should figure in Aristophanes' plays as the first and leading *sophist*, as the mirror and quintessence of everything the sophists were trying to do." Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Raymond Guess and Ronald Speirs, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13.

2. Cf. David Konstan, "Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, ed. Donald R. Morrison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 79.

3. Ibid., 82, 86.

4. Ibid., 87.

5. Ibid.

6. Cf. too Woodruff: "Aristophanes conveniently painted one human target for the conservative wrath that both these new trends (i.e., natural science and persuasive argument) aroused." Paul Woodruff, "Socrates and the New Learning," in *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates*, ed. Donald R. Morrison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 94.

7. In a sense, then, this essay takes up Nietzsche's suggestion above, that Aristophanes attacks Socrates as the "mirror and essence" of the New Learning in general. Prominent among other critics who have also sought to 'defend' Aristophanes's *Clouds* 'philosophically' would be Nussbaum, whose Aristophanes is opposed to Socrates's attempt to reform education on strictly rational principles (Martha Nussbaum, "Aristophanes and Socrates on Learning Practical Wisdom," *Aristophanes: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, Yale Classical Studies vol. 26 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 84); and Freydberg, who (in a reading deeply influenced by the work of John Sallis) wishes to interpret *Clouds* as a reflection on the limits of *logos*, but one that is in essential accord with "genuine Socratic activity" (Bernard Freydberg, *Philosophy and Comedy: Aristophanes, Logos, and Eros* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008], 12). While I agree with Nussbaum that Aristophanes is opposed to the Socratic demand for a purely rationalized system of education, the grounds for this opposition, as I hope to show, lie somewhat deeper than a concern for preserving traditional educational means which Nussbaum (sometimes) seems to impute to the playwright (cf. Nussbaum, "Aristophanes and Socrates on Learning Practical Wisdom," 84, 89). Likewise, I agree with Freydberg that Aristophanes happily underscores the limits of *logos* in his play; but where Freydberg argues that Aristophanes "deliberately omits" any mention of "serious" Socratic speech "precisely in order to celebrate it" (Freydberg, *Philosophy and Comedy*, 21), I argue that Aristophanes engages—and opposes—Socratic thinking directly.

8. Cf. Broackes's listing of the phrase's usage in the *Phaedo* alone: 64c6, 64c7, 65c7, 65d1, 66e6, 67c7, 67e8, 70a7, 78d6, 79d1, 79d4, 81c1, 83b1, 100b6; in Justin Broackes, "Autos kath' hauton in the *Clouds*: Was Socrates himself a defender of Separable Soul and Separable Forms?," *Classical Quarterly 59* (2009), 49–50.

9. Ibid., 55.

10. Ibid., 56.

11. Havelock, "The Socratic Self as It Is Parodied in Aristophanes' *Clouds*," *Yale Classical Studies 22: Studies in Fifth-Century Thought and Literature*, ed. Adam Parry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 6.

12. Ibid., 9.

13. Ibid., 7.

14. Significantly, this is essentially the same idiom that Plato has Socrates use in the opening of *The Apology*, where Socrates declares himself so impressed at the rhetorical prowess of his accusers that "I myself almost forgot myself" (*Ap.* 17a2–3).

15. Martha Nussbaum, "The Comic Soul: Or, This Phallus That Is Not One," in *The Soul of Tragedy: Essays on Athenian Drama*, ed. Victoria Pedrick and Steven M. Oberhelman, 155–179 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 160. I find myself in far greater agreement with Nussbaum here than in her 1980 essay ("Aristophanes and Socrates on Learning Practical Wisdom," *Yale Classical Studies vol. XXVI Aristophanes: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 43–98),

especially in her assertion that "Comedy celebrates the human being as a limited bodily being, in need of 'external goods' and other human beings" ("The Comic Soul," 166). I do not agree, however, with her implication the comedy takes the part of the ungainly phallused ἥττων λόγος in *Clouds*. As will be seen below, Aristophanes opposes Socrates on grounds that set him in opposition to the κρείττων and the ἥττων λόγος alike. See note 21 below.

16. Cf. Damian Stocking, "Antigone, *désoeuvré*: Tragedy, Finitude, and Community," *Mosaic* 41 (2008): 153–168, and "The Ruin of Song: Community and Autoimmunity in Sophocles' *Antigone*," in *The Returns of Antigone*, ed. Tina Chanter and Sean Kirkland (Albany: State University Press of New York, 2014), 69–86.

17. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 6.

18. Nancy, 28.

19. Nancy, 31.

20. Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 80.

21. Nancy, *IC*, 4.

22. Nancy, *IC*, 19.

23. Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Origins of Greek Thought* (1962; trans., Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 103.

24. Thus where Socrates, in his intellectual turning toward himself alone, withdraws from the threat of otherness in the manner, so to speak, of Antigone, science and sophistry, in their attempt to homogenize and appropriate all exterior difference, seek immanence in the manner of Creon. The same schematic difference could apply to the κρείττων and the ἥττων λόγος; the former seeks Creon-like domination through traditional *mores*, the latter an imperviousness to others through self-indulgent shamelessness; Aristophanes, as a defender of finitude, finds them both worthy of ridicule.

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*Classical Greek Philosophy:
Plato and Aristotle*

Erōs and *Eris*: Love and Strife in Ancient Greek Thought and Culture

John Russon

When Peleus and Thetis celebrated their marriage, they neglected to invite Discord.[1] Discord sent the gift of a golden apple on which was inscribed "for the fairest." Wifely Juno, wise Minerva, and beautiful Venus each claimed to be named by the inscription, and discord erupted among them. They chose Paris to judge the matter, and each offered a bribe: Juno offered kingship; Minerva, military success; and Venus, Helen—the most beautiful woman. Paris judged Venus to be fairest, forsaking kingship and military success for the sake of possessing Helen. He took her with him to Troy and thereby started the Trojan War. This mythical story makes clear how *erōs*, erotic passion, characteristically involves us with *eris*, strife. It reminds us that erotic passion—the domain of Venus—can present itself so compellingly that it leads us to reject established order—embodied in Juno and Minerva—and thereby throw us into a life of strife.[2] The story presents in compact fashion the basic phenomena of *eris* and *erōs* and, through the poetry of Hesiod and the philosophical writings of Aristotle, Heraclitus, and Plato, we will see that strife and passionate striving define the very fabric of nature and human life.

I. Hesiod on the Nature of Reality

The beginning, according to Hesiod's *Theogony*, is 'gap': *chaos*. A gap is an opening, a space between. Typically, we imagine two things as points of reference and understand a gap as the space they define, the distance 'between *them*.' If gap is first, however, the between precedes that which it is between: the gap, spacing, is the fundamental reality that gives rise to the spaced, to 'things,' rather than vice versa.

Gap has three immediate offspring, according to Hesiod: the broad-breasted, firm seat of all (Gaia), the depths of that broad-pathed domain (Tartaros), and Erōs, who "unstrings the limbs and subdues the mind and

sensible thought in the breasts of all gods and all men."[3] That gap gives rise to Gaia underlines the sense that the 'between' gives rise to that which it is between: it is gap that enables the "broad" earth. Further, as realizations of gap, whatever gap is 'between' will themselves be gaps: earth is itself "spaced," characterized by an opposition of surface and depth, broad-breasted and deep, Gaia and Tartaros. This is a self-opposed reality, which Heraclitus shortly will name: the *palintropos harmoniē* that "differing with itself, agrees with itself."[4] And what is it like to *live* this reality, to live as 'gap'? To experience the 'between' is to experience the insufficiency of what one *is*, to experience the longing for the beyond, to know the weakness at the heart of the substantial, to be "unstrung": this is the reality of Erōs.

Gap has further offspring, dark (Erebos) and night, both 'gaps': realities that are indeterminate but pregnant, charged. Mark Rothko writes, "Often, towards nightfall, there is a feeling in the air of mystery, threat, frustration—all these at once."[5] Night subsequently gives birth to lame, to bitter lament, to dooms, to fates, to nemesis, to deception, to sexual passion, to old age, and to Eris, 'strife.' Finally, this "loathsome strife" bears "burden, oblivion and famine" as well as "the tearful sorrows," "the clashes and the battles and the manslaughters," "the quarrels and the lies and argument and counter-argument," "lawlessness, ruin, and oath." These offspring are very much the realities of our human world, and Hesiod alerts us to their derivative character: they are realities that need to be explained, and what explains them is the more fundamental reality of strife—*eris*—itself a realization of *chaos*, gap.

Gap, then, confronts us with two striking realities: *erōs* that unstrings the limbs and subdues the mind, and *eris* that gives birth to burdens, clashes, argument, lawlessness, and oaths. This is the lesson of Hesiod, but "Hesiod" is the narrator (i.e., part of the story) of the *Theogony*, itself a work of oral-traditional poetry handed down over generations; the *Theogony*, in other words, is not the product of an individual author, but an articulation of the cultural wisdom of generations, of "the poets who are to us just like fathers and leaders of wisdom," as Socrates says.[6] This is wisdom presented not in the form of arguments but in the form of stories, suggestive narratives that speak to the imagination and call on the receptive intelligence of the listener if they are to be appreciated.[7] In Hesiod we get the Greek vision of reality that it is the work of subsequent philosophers to bring to conceptual articulation.

II. Aristotle and Heraclitus: Reality Is Dynamic

We commonly expect that reality will come in neat packages. We imagine ourselves to have discrete identities, and we imagine things to be

self-contained—separated from each other and from ourselves. A definitive feature of ancient Greek philosophy, however, is its attunement to the ways in which we and the things of the world are not static and self-contained, and this is particularly illuminated through the paired themes of *eris* and *erōs*—strife and sexual passion. The Greek thinkers emphasize the *dynamism* of reality: the ways in which things are defined by a tendency to move, change, and develop.[8] Further, things grow and develop in interaction—often competitive interaction—with their surroundings.

This dynamism and interaction is immediately evident in growth.[9] Each spring, flowers break through the soil and send up shoots that ultimately end in full bloom, and animals give birth to offspring that quickly learn to control their bodily movements and grow into independent animals. These plants and animals grow in and through the process of assimilating the materials of their inorganic and organic environment—materials that equally resist them. The natural environment presents us with the drama of living, growing things that, through interacting in both competitive and symbiotic ways, are each enabled (or not) to carry out their individual processes of growth.

Growing things, furthermore, do not grow in an arbitrary fashion: growth is the progressive realization of an intrinsic identity—what Aristotle calls the "what it is" or the "look."[10] What we call an "individual" living thing is a process of *striving* to realize an identity that is its own formative, intrinsic norm—what Aristotle calls its "end," or "that for the sake of which."[11] We demonstrate that we are Aristotelians whenever we say, "What a nice dog," or "That orchid needs water," because in each of these cases we recognize what we see as an enactment of a *type*, a "species [*eidos*]." Whereas in a reductive sense we could say that what is "actually" present is simply a very specific, finite mass of tissue, what we assert in these recognitions is that what is "actually" present is *a dog*, that is, we recognize the finite specificity *as* a phase in the realization of an identity that is itself the truth of the situation, even though that identity is never "actually" or perfectly present as such. This governing identity is what Aristotle calls the "actuality [*entelecheia*]" of a living thing, whereas the finite enactment of the living process is the derivative or secondary sense of its reality.[12] When we say, "There is a dog," we effectively see *through* the finite specificity to recognize the indwelling identity that is being realized *as* this specificity. Growth *makes sense* to us: we recognize in a changing process the striving of a form to be realized. Further, this defining form is not an alien agent imposing itself on a resistant material: it is the very indwelling impulse (the *hormē*) of the thing itself—what Aristotle calls "the first cause of motion in a thing"—to *change into itself*.[13] When we say, "That is a dog," we recognize the metaphysical legitimacy of the form:

we recognize that the struggle to realize the form is the very essence of the matter.[14]

In place, then, of separate, well-defined realities, what we find in nature are processes of environmental interaction and struggle that are strivings to realize immanent norms. What we commonly call a 'thing' is really (1) a 'physical' struggle to maintain itself through mastering the context of dynamic involvement with a natural environment comprised of others enacting parallel struggles for mastery, and (2) a 'metaphysical' struggle within itself between the current form of its finite specificity and its indwelling identity. A thing is a reality realized only as a struggle that, as Heraclitus writes, "differing with itself, agrees with itself," and "all things come together through strife and necessity."[15] Through Aristotle and Heraclitus, then, we see a development of the Hesiodic vision—a recognition, that is, that a metaphysics of strife as contest and as striving is the key to a dynamic understanding of reality. What, though, is human nature, and what is our place in nature?

III. Plato and Human Nature

Plato's *Symposium* portrays a conversation about *erōs*. The participants in the conversation praise *erōs*, and in the process they reveal that *erōs*, which we typically assume to be the base personal lust one feels for touching the attractive body of another, is in fact the motive force behind our highest and most definitively human pursuits. The centerpiece is the contribution by Socrates, itself largely the report of a conversation he had with a woman named Diotima, from whom, Socrates claims, he learned "erotics [*ta erōtika*]."[16] According to Diotima, *erōs* is itself a force in human experience that grows and develops, so there is not a single practice or a single feeling that realizes *erōs*; instead, *erōs* takes various forms that, taken separately, can seem very opposed to each other, and these different forms are better or worse at realizing the definitive character of *erōs*. Before addressing Diotima's account, it is illuminating to review the facets of erotic life emphasized by the other speakers.

Phaedrus notes that lovers feel an emotional and existential tie of commitment to each other that would lead them to die for each other: the erotic urge, that is, fixes itself on another person, it leads one to ascribe ultimate value to that erotic object, and that valuing is experienced as an affective tie, a lived sense of a compelling bond.[17] Pausanias observes that this seemingly most intimate, personal bond is mediated by social conventions, that is, societies have established ways for recognizing what are the right and wrong ways for carrying out our sexual pairings and thus our intimate behavior is itself a way of endorsing or challenging a cultural sense of propriety.[18] Eryximachus

emphasizes that our sexual passions are rooted in bodily processes that have their own physiological norms and equilibrium, quite independently of the interpersonal dimensions that so move us emotionally.[19] Aristophanes proposes that our erotic longings are not simply empirical matters, but reflect a "metaphysical" need we have for another.[20] Agathon highlights the transformative character of the experience of *erōs*: he describes the first blush of new love in which the world seems enchanted and we experience *erōs* as a "new god" whom we follow in opposition to all the rules and cold necessities of the established order.[21] Socrates suggests that our desires put us in the thrall of the beautiful object, unwarrantedly imputing to it a goodness that it need not possess.[22] Alcibiades reveals how the experience of being loved, in which one feels oneself to have power over the lover, can grow into the experience of loving, such that one feels oneself answerable to the very perspective one formerly presumed to dominate.[23] The speeches reveal that our erotic life is more than simply a matter of bodily mechanics and pleasurable sensations: *erōs* is the urge that drives one, as a body charged with spirit, to join with another body charged with spirit, and in that urge are nested the seeds of the complex personal and interpersonal issues that define our human struggles and aspirations. This is the point made by Diotima.[24]

Diotima describes our erotic urge—that force we feel stirring and prodding us when we are in the presence of beautiful bodies—as a fundamental force of growth in our lives, the fundamental striving or "first cause of motion" that impels us to cultivate the highest aspects of our nature. Diotima's claim is that our erotic impulse has a path of development, beginning in the *erōs* for one other beautiful body, but growing into a desire for all other beautiful bodies, and thence to an *erōs* for a beautiful soul and from there to an *erōs* for virtue, knowledge, and legislation, culminating ultimately in a love for the beauty that is the cause of all these "beauties."[25] In order to understand Diotima's claim, let us consider what it is like to experience *erōs*.

Sappho famously describes the experience of being passionately fixated on a beautiful body, experiencing a compelling desire that overrides our interest in other affairs, no matter how important:

> Now again *erōs* the limb-loosener,
> sweet-bitter, unmanageable, creeping,
> whirls me.[26]

This—finding oneself gripped bodily by a domineering force, simultaneously and ambiguously pleasant and painful—is the immediate experience of *erōs*. But what, Diotima asks, is this a desire *for*?[27] Though popular advertising

insists that our desire is for the pleasurable sensation of orgasm through genital stimulation, honest reflection on our experience makes clear that the answer is not so simple.

Though our erotic desire is incited by the bodily presence of another, we do not automatically know what it is that we want. Experiences of sexual interest can be very puzzling, and it is not uncommon for people to remark, "I don't know what I'm feeling." The culture of popular advertising culture encourages us to interpret our experiences of sexual desire even before we have such experiences, with the result that we have a readymade answer to what they are. Yet when we employ this pre-scripted interpretation to our interpersonal situations, we can find that there is a poor fit. Discharging our feelings in genital touching and related activities can easily "not feel right," or it can leave us feeling dissatisfied or disappointed. Diotima's insight is that such reactions are appropriate: the familiar interpretation of sexuality is not right.

Though the beauty of the body may initially entice us, what we are fundamentally responding to in erotic desire is the presence (or, more exactly, as we will see in a moment, the absence), of another person. In other words, it is not the body as a mass of flesh that attracts us, but the body as the avatar of another soul like our own: the body as the site of *another desire*. We take pleasure in the caress of another, but the pleasure of the caress is not simply the experience of bodily sensations: it is the pleasure of bodily sensations produced by another, the pleasure of approval, the pleasure of *being desired*. This is the implicit point of Diotima's observation that *erōs* is a desire for a soul: sexual exchanges are not just matters of bodily stimulation, but are *gestures* of mutual desire.[28]

Once we recognize that erotic life is the domain of mutual desire—the domain of bodily life in which souls engage with souls—we can understand many of the familiar experiences of sexuality. We can understand both why consent is an important issue in sexual life and why sexuality can be a threatening domain, for the only thing that can satisfy our desire to be desired is *the other's desire*: it is up to the other person to choose us, to find us desirable, and that is something we cannot control on our own. Erotic life is the domain in which we find ourselves exposed to the other, and exposed, furthermore, in a way that touches us at the most intimate levels. In sexuality, we are thus vulnerable.

Fear of this vulnerability can lead us to adopt defensive strategies to avoid facing this risk. I may seek to debase or degrade my partner in a gesture of resistance against her or his power over me or I may debase or degrade myself in the hope of making myself more desirable. Or, since self-esteem

in the eyes of others is what is at stake, I may undertake a 'sexual' relation with one person for the sake of how I will thereby appear in the eyes of some other whom I desire. Indeed, what looks like 'sex' from the outside may be a vehicle for winning esteem in my peer group, for 'getting even' with another lover whose desire threatens me, or, more broadly, for acquiring the cultural credentials to measure up to the social standards that shape the perceptions of others. In what we typically take to be our sexual actions, then, we can see that it can easily be matters of interpersonal competition or of answering to social norms that animate us, rather than a desire for pleasurable genital sensations.[29]

Of course, we do not always flee the vulnerability of sexual life. We can live our sexuality as a site for interpersonal growth, finding in the passion the other directs at us a boost to confidence, a motivation to accomplishment, or an inspiration to creativity. In these cases, we discharge the erotic urge not simply through genital stimulation, but through acting in the world, through learning, through artistic striving. Indeed, we can find that being embraced by another soul can have the effect of "giving us back to ourselves," so to speak, but giving us back as someone we could not be on our own.[30] We can thus experience the other as our own "better self," calling us to change our ways, the experience explicitly attested to by Alcibiades and Apollodorus in their descriptions of their experience of Socrates in the *Symposium*.[31] Erotic life can thus blossom into the whole range of human aspiration and accomplishment, in experiences of personal growth and transformation and in experiences of worldly practice. Thus, as Diotima claims, our desire naturally grows into a desire for virtue, for knowledge, for politics, and so on.

So, what is erotic desire a desire for? We can see that there is no single 'correct' answer. Genital touching, learning, and taking political responsibility are all ways of taking up the fundamental 'question' posed to us by our erotic longing without any one of them exhausting its meaning. The erotic urge may arise in the presence of beauty, but it does not prescribe a single course; indeed, taking up this urge will always be a matter of interpretation—it will always call on us to be creative, to take responsibility for determining for ourselves what it is that is being called up. This is why Diotima defines *erōs* as the desire to "give birth in beauty."[32] The desire to "give birth" (in a metaphorical sense) is the desire to create, the desire to have something good, something worthwhile, emerge through oneself, and this is the nature of the erotic impulse.[33] In the presence of the beautiful, we have inspired in us the desire that something of value, something important, come from us. What that something is is not clear, and our own creativity is thus summoned up, inasmuch as it is "up to us" to figure out what to do with the impulse.

In Plato's *Symposium*, then, we have a profound articulation of the Hesiodic vision: our *erōs* presents itself to us as a question, a striving without a predefined goal, and to experience that question is precisely to find ourselves defined as the *gap* between imperative and answer. In *erōs*, we are held by the question but without a secure answer.[34] Inasmuch as we are defined by this *erōs*, there is thus a strife in us that will never be overcome. Living up to our *erōs* requires that we reject pat answers and hold onto the question of our animating desire as an imperative to creativity.

Like dependence on the desire of the other, the need to be creative can be threatening: we may well feel unequal to the task, unable to perform. For that reason, we often fall back on pre-scripted answers to the question "What do I want?" or "What should I do?" In the face of the anxiety of freedom that this erotic impulse opens up for us, we can find it comfortable to rest in a 'guaranteed' solution. In any situation of creativity—painting, philosophizing, serious conversation—it is a challenge to 'come up' with something, and, when one does, there is no obvious way to find a standard by which to evaluate the worth of what one has produced. Consequently, creativity does not typically take the form of utterly unprecedented originality; instead, we tend to work through established models, and the works of those involved in creation thus run along a continuum from banal repetition of established forms to shocking invention without obvious precedent, with most results sitting somewhere between these extremes. So too in erotic life it will be only the most creative and daring who will expose ourselves to the full openness of the erotic question and only the most psychologically and interpersonally dull who will truly embrace the empty interpretation of sexuality offered by advertising, with most of us finding ourselves somewhere between these extremes. Wherever we find ourselves, we typically do not have a clear understanding of what we are doing. Socrates claims to be learned in "the mysteries of *erōs*," but most of us cannot say the same, and though we *feel* the pull of the soul in erotic life, we do not adequately cultivate the full flourishing of our erotic life.

Diotima shows us that our reality as souls striving together to realize our humanity is what is at stake in our charged, intimate dealings with others. Now, what is unique about the human—what Plato and Aristotle discuss under the name *nous* or 'mind'—is that, though we are inherently finite, mortal individuals, we feel the call of the universal, the eternal, the infinite: we experience the voice of 'the divine,' the truths that transcend the ongoing process of the coming-to-be and passing-away of individual things. With Aristotle and Heraclitus, we saw that any natural thing is characterized by a striving after its own proper form; Plato shows that the distinctive character of the human is striving after the "divine."[35] We are the beings who

are capable of recognizing truth, goodness, and beauty, and we strive to be defined by these realities rather than by the passing reality of our mortal finitude. It is this that is at stake in our *erōs*. Though the immediate experience of *erōs* is a passionate attraction to a body, we are able through that body to encounter a soul, and through that encounter with another soul we are opened onto the broader aspirations of humanity as such. Ultimately, then, our *erōs* is a seeking for kindred spirits with whom we can be together in our pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

Socrates's practice of philosophizing is thus a profound realization of erotic life. Socrates's desire was to "converse about virtue everyday," to join with others in examining life and making being-together a site for realizing the good.[36] Socrates thus devoted his life to talking with others *intimately*, calling them to "turn around" and devote themselves to caring for their own souls by caring for higher pursuits.[37] But this fulfillment of his erotic passion was not an easy or comfortable affair; it was a matter of great strife. Socrates's erotic attraction to others—his *care* for others—led him to challenge them, making himself a figure of strife. Not surprisingly, his 'passes' were not always welcomed, and his 'conversing about virtue' could be a matter of conflict. Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, in presenting Socrates's defense speech at his trial for impiety, shows that that strife between souls can take a very bodily form: Socrates was condemned to death and executed.

In the *Symposium*, then, and in the character of Socrates in general, we have a vision of the essentially erotic character of human life, and the essentially human character of erotic life. *Erōs* is our fundamental *experience of* the striving that is constitutive of our human nature, a striving that, because it is enacted in the domain of interpersonal life—the domain of conflicting wills—is a matter of essential strife.

IV. *Erōs* and Political Strife.

In Homer's *Iliad* (XVIII.478–607), Thetis asks Hephaistos to make for Achilles spectacular armor to wear into battle. Along with a corselet and helmet, Hephaistos makes a shield, which, as well as being a military instrument, is a work of art on which are depicted the parameters of the human world. Central to the shield is the portrayal of two cities—a city at peace and a city at war. The city at peace is a site of marriage festivals, ritual feasts, the proper apportioning of goods, and a lot of song and dance; the city at war is a site of hate, confusion, doom (*Ker*), and a lot of blood (XVIII.535). What is striking about these images is that the role of strife (*neikos*) is definitive for differentiating these two. Central to the city at peace are two men at strife

with each other over the proper response to the death of a third, one offering restitution for the killing, the other refusing. These men have brought their case to the judges rather than resorting to vendetta-style violence. The city at peace is not a city from which strife has been expelled (as Peleus and Thetis tried to expel discord from their marriage), but one in which strife is recognized as the proper material for communal negotiation and navigation.[38]

This perspective on politics is not unique to Greek myth. Aristotle writes about Solon that

> Solon realised that the city was often split by factional disputes but some citizens were content because of idleness to accept whatever the outcome might be; he therefore produced a specific law against them, laying down that anyone who did not choose one side or the other in such a dispute should lose his citizen rights.[39]

Aristotle (*Pol.* I.1–2), similarly, defines the political realm not as the space of uniform perspective, but as the site where people come together with conflicting visions of the good. In our discussion of *erōs*, we recognized at the interpersonal level that it is in the coming together of souls—the coming together of inherently differing perspectives—that human fulfillment is enacted, and the institution of the *polis* recognizes this at the impersonal level of social life.

The *polis* is "made out of" the "strife" of conflicting wills, but the *polis* is the reality in which it is recognized that the proper response to this conflict is to engage in collective deliberation about these matters in the context of a decision-making body empowered to adjudicate these matters in light of the good of the city rather than in light of self-interest. In this context, it is interesting to note that it is precisely *erōs* that is summoned up in Athens as the key to political health. Describing this situation in Athens in the fifth century B.C.E., Mark Munn writes,

> An elemental power, Erōs was both a primordial force of nature, according to Hesiodic and Orphic theogonies, and the spirit of passionate affection that bound all men and women, citizen and foreign, to the service of Athens, according to Periclean rhetoric.[40]

Indeed, Pericles, the Athenian statesman, had called on Athenians to

> fix your eyes every day on the greatness of Athens as she really is, and fall in love with her. When you realize her greatness, then

reflect that what made her great was men with a spirit of adventure, men who knew their duty, men who were ashamed to fall below a certain standard.[41]

Such a passion for the *polis* can offer the possibility simultaneously to appreciate the inherent worth of differing perspectives and to strive for their reconciliation. An *erōs* for politics, however, is a complex matter.

An *erōs* for politics opens up a range of possibilities analogous to the range of erotic approaches to interpersonal life. A political passion has its virtuous enactment perhaps in a person like Socrates, who is prepared to die for his pursuit of justice within the polis. Such a political *erōs* also has various vicious forms, however, such as the lust for power witnessed in violent demagogues or in xenophobic patriotism. But, as in all the domains of *erōs*, where the danger lies is also where lies the possibility of "salvation," so to speak; indeed, as the Athenians remark in the "Melian Dialogue," "if one follows one's self-interest, one wants to be safe, whereas the path of justice and honour involves one in danger."[42] In politics, as in interpersonal relations, the Greek vision calls us to engage, rather than evade, the essential strife in human affairs.

Notes

1. Ovid, *Heroides*, 16.71–90, 149–152, 5.35–36. See also Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, LXV.9.5, Apollodorus, *Epitome*, E.3.2, and *Iliad* XXIV.25–30.

2. Compare Euripides's *Medea*, Second Stasimon, ll. 636–638: "Dreaded Kypris, Never hit me with quarrelsome angers and insatiable strife, after stinging my heart for another bed" (Euripides, *Medea*, trans. Cecelia A. Eaton Luschnig, http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/medea.trans.print.shtml, accessed March 30, 2018).

3. *Theogony*, ll. 121–122, trans. Apostolos N. Athanassakis, in *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, Shield*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). Compare Sappho, fragment 130, cited below (note 34).

4. Fragment 51 (Diels-Kranz numbering). Translations of Heraclitus are my own.

5. Quoted in David Sylvester, "The Ugly Duckling," in *Abstract Expressionism: The Critical Developments* (exhibition catalogue), ed. Michael Auping (New York: Abrams, 1987), 140.

6. Plato, *Lysis*, 214a1.

7. See Plato, *Apology*, 22b–c.

8. See Aristotle, *Physics* II.1 (192b14–16 and *passim*).

9. Compare Aristotle, *Physics* II.1, 193a2–9.

10. Respectively, "*to ti esti*" and "*to eidos*"; *Physics* II.3.194b27–29.

11. Respectively, "*to telos*" and "*to hou heneka*"; *Physics* II.3.194b33–35.

12. *De an*. II.1.412a22–b9; *Physics* II.3.194b24–26.

13. *Physics* II.3.194b b29–30: *hē archē tēs metabolēs hē prōtē*. For *hormē*, see *Physics* II.1.192b18.

14. *Physics* II.3.194b24–26: matter is the 'that out of which' (*to ex hou*).

15. Heraclitus, Diels-Kranz fragments 51 and 80.

16. *Smp*. 201d; see also 198d, 210a, and 212b.

17. *Smp*. 178a–180b.

18. *Smp*. 180c–185c. Pausanias and Phaedrus are oriented by the distinction between lover and beloved that defines the Athenian institution of pederasty.

19. *Smp*. 185e–188e.

20. *Smp*. 189d–193d.

21. *Smp*. 194e–197e; see *Smp.* 201e, 204c.

22. *Smp*. 198a–199b.

23. *Smp*. 215a–222c.

24. *Smp*. 201e–212b.

25. *Smp*. 208e–209e, 210a–212b.

26. Fragment 130, trans. Patricia Fagan (original text in *Greek Lyric*, vol. 1 [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982]).

27. *Smp*. 204d: "The lover of beautiful things desires; what does he desire?"

28. *Smp*. 209b–c, 210b–c.

29. Compare *Smp*. 208c.

30. See *Smp*. 209c: the relationship with the other releases what one "has been carrying inside [oneself] for ages." Compare *Lysis* 207a–b.

31. *Smp*. 216b–c and 172c–173a, 173d, respectively.

32. *Smp*. 206b–207a, 206e.

33. See *Smp*. 208e.

34. See *Smp*. 202e–203a and 204a–b.

35. Compare *Smp*. 206a, 206c, 207a, 207d, 208b, 208e.

36. *Ap*. 38a.

37. See *Republic* VII.518c–d.

38. Compare Plato, *Laws* I.628a.

39. Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, V.8.

40. Mark Munn, *The School of History: Athens in the Age of Socrates* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 111.

41. Thucydides, *History*, II.43.

42. Thucydides, *History*, V.107 (trans. Rex Warner).

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Plato and Aristotle: More Than a Question of 'Separate Forms'

Francisco J. Gonzalez

According to the standard textbook account, an account that also exerts its influence on even some of the most specialized works of scholarship, Plato and Aristotle both identified being with 'form' (*eidos*) but diverged in that, while Plato separated the 'forms' from sensible objects and placed them in some 'place beyond the heavens,' Aristotle brought them back down to earth by making them inseparable from the sensible substances of which they are the forms. This is doubtless a nice story and one easy to recount to beginning students of ancient Greek philosophy. It is, however, simplistic to the point of misrepresentation. For one thing, it exaggerates the importance of the notion of 'form' in the debate between Plato and Aristotle, a debate that has much more to do with their divergent understandings of being itself. Second, in making the issue one of whether or not the 'forms' are 'separate,' it defines the dispute from an entirely Aristotelian perspective and thereby from the very outset sides with Aristotle. If we agree with Aristotle that Plato 'separated' horseness from actual horses and thereby treated it as a kind of Super Horse, of course we will find Plato's position ridiculous. What I seek to do in what follows, therefore, is to indicate the ways in which the philosophical dispute between Plato and Aristotle is much more complicated and interesting than the textbook account would lead us to believe.[1]

The crucial divergence between Plato and Aristotle can be said to concern their interpretation of what it means for something to be "itself by itself." They agree that what truly is is itself by itself, but Aristotle interprets this in such a way that the particular individual thing, rather than the common characteristic that defines it, fits this criterion. For Plato a thing's being is *what it is*, so that beauty is the *ousia* of beautiful things.[2] This *ousia* is common to the things that have it and also irreducible to any or all of them, so that it must be one thing, itself by itself. The particular beautiful things are dependent on beauty as their *ousia*. For Aristotle, the *ousia* of a beautiful thing is its

separate existence as an individual, so that its beauty becomes a mere property ontologically dependent on it. Speaking grammatically (though doing so already favors Aristotle), for Plato beauty is the subject and the individuals are the accidental predicates, while for Aristotle the individual is the subject and beauty is the predicate. As we can see, this fundamental disagreement regarding the nature of *ousia* can be expressed without reference to 'forms' and indeed has only been hidden by the constant talk of 'forms.'

This is not to say, of course, that this disagreement does not have important consequences for how Plato and Aristotle use the terms *eidos* and *idea*. First, the term *eidos* becomes indispensable for Aristotle's characterization of what is since the individual thing comes to be characterized as a compound of form and matter. To see the significance of this we must first note what is often not noted: that the term *eidos* is dispensable for Plato. In the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* things like justice itself, beauty itself, and so on are talked of *without the language of form*.[3] Though these two dialogues must be counted among the most important expositions of what has come to be called Plato's Theory of Forms, there is only one passage in each in which the term *eidos* could be argued to refer to a 'Form,' and it is convincingly argued in an important and exhaustive study of the terms *eidos/idea* in ancient Greek philosophy (hereafter "the Liège study")[4] that neither is best read in that way.[5] The passage from the *Symposium* is that in which the lover is described as coming to realize that the beauty in one body is akin to that in another body and that if it is necessary to pursue the beauty *ep'eidei* [εί δεῖ διώκειν τὸ ἐπ᾽εἴδει καλόν]" (*Smp.* 210b), it would be foolish not to take to be one and identical the beauty in all bodies. It is at the very least overtranslation to take the phrase in question to mean "if it is necessary to pursue the beauty that exists in the Form." Given that we are speaking here of the beauty common to bodies, the word *eidos* need refer to no more than the visible aspect of these bodies; the confirmation of their beauty being one and the same is to be found in their common visible form, not in some 'Form' that transcends the visible. We cannot even say that Diotima inserts the word *eidos* here to anticipate the later reference to beauty itself, since she does not use the language of *eidos* at all when she comes to talk of beauty itself as something invisible and existing itself by itself. In the case of the *Phaedrus*, the passage in question is that in which the act of understanding, in proceeding from a plurality of sensations toward a unity that comprehends them with the help of reasoning, is described as understanding "what is said according to the *eidos* [κατ᾽εἴδος λεγόμενον]" (*Phdr.* 249b7). Here again there is no need to translate *eidos* by 'Form' in some metaphysical sense and no reason to do so given that in the broader context this term is not used to designate the

entities 'beyond the heavens' such as beauty itself, justice itself, knowledge itself, and so on, when they are explicitly under discussion. Furthermore, the emphasis on "what is said [λεγόμενον]" suggests that what is at issue here is the general character according to which a thing is addressed in speech (as, for example, in saying, "This thing and that thing are beautiful").

Even in the *Phaedo* the beings in question are first introduced without the language of form:[6] Socrates first speaks of the just itself and the good itself and then, to bring all such things under one logos, uses the expression "the being which each thing happens to be [τῆς οὐσίας ὃ τυγχάνει ἕκαστον ὄν]" (*Phd.* 65d13–e1). It is not until later that the term *eidos* is used to refer to those things qualified by the term 'itself' when Phaedo reports that those present were in agreement with Socrates in recognizing *einai ti hekaston tōn eidōn*. We must take this statement as casually as Phaedo makes it (*Phd.* 102b1). We do not have here the sudden and unanticipated introduction of some technical sense of *eidos* as 'Form' with a capital. Socrates has for some time been speaking of the equal itself, the beautiful itself, and so on, and now uses the word *eidos* as a convenient though unnecessary shorthand for referring to all of those natures or types. Unfortunately, popular translations of this passage of the *Phaedo* are very misleading. Grube (and Gallop, though without the capitalization) translates: "It was agreed that each of the Forms existed."[7] This translation is misleading, first, because the capitalization suggests the sudden introduction of a technical sense where there is none and, second, because it leaves the *ti* untranslated: what is agreed to is not the existence of some special class of entities called 'Forms,' but rather that each of the beings already referred to—justice, equality, beauty, and so on—*is something*. What is agreed to at 102b is therefore nothing more than a general positive answer to the questions asked earlier in the dialogue: "Do we say the equal is something?" (*Phd.* 74a9–10) and "Do we say the just itself is something or nothing?" (*Phd.* 65d4–5). The term *eidos*, then, when it finally appears in a philosophically important context, adds absolutely nothing to what has already been said and agreed to. It is simply a convenient way of avoiding the awkwardness of having to refer constantly to "those beings followed by the term 'itself'" or "that being which each thing happens to be." The Liège study rightly concludes: "We have been able to determine that Plato could very well talk about the Ideas without having recourse to this particular vocabulary . . . Conversely, the fact that this [thesis of the Ideas] is clearly stated in a work does not imply that all uses of the words εἶδος and ἰδέα refer to the Ideas."[8] It is highly ironic, however, that in presenting this conclusion the authors A. Lefka and A. Motte cannot themselves dispense with the language of 'Ideas' even in telling us that Plato *could*! This should

make us ask ourselves where this need to speak of 'Ideas' or 'Forms' is coming from if not from Plato himself.

Furthermore, as is also shown in the Liège study, the use of the terms *eidos* and *idea* in the ordinary sense of 'sensible form' or 'aspect' as well as in the more specialized sense of 'type' or 'species' predominates throughout the dialogues, including those that use these terms also in a supposedly metaphysical sense. In the so-called affinity argument of the *Phaedo*, for example, the word *eidos* is used *not* to designate that which is invisible and immutable, but rather to speak of "two types of beings [δύο εἴδη τῶν ὄντων]," the visible and the invisible (*Phd.* 79a6). But this usage is especially well confirmed by the study of the vocabulary of the *Republic* in the Liège study. In this dialogue the sense of 'class,' 'species,' or 'kind' is by far the predominant sense of *eidos*, amounting to more than two-thirds of the total occurrences of the term.[9] Also, many occurrences that have been interpreted in a metaphysical sense need have no more than a logical sense (tied to the method of dialectic).[10] Indeed, J. Follon, who examines the *Republic* for the Liège study, lists only five passages in the entire dialogue in which *eidos* or *idea* have indisputably the metaphysical sense.[11]

In short, Plato often refers to what he takes to be truly being—beauty itself, the good itself, justice itself, and so on—without using the term *eidos* and often, indeed most often, uses the term *eidos* without referring to these realities. For Aristotle, in contrast, *eidos* becomes a constituent principle of *ousia* along with matter and thereby a technical term indispensable to his characterization of *ousia*. The Liège study has noted "the even more important presence of the vocabulary of form in Aristotle."[12] The occurrence of the terms *eidos* and *idea* along with *morphē* in the *Metaphysics* alone indeed surpasses that in all of Plato's dialogues combined.

The second point to be made is that Aristotle must sharply distinguish between *eidos* in the sense of what forms matter in the individual, *eidos* in the sense of the universal (as species predicated of many individuals),[13] and, finally, *eidos* in the Platonic sense. Plato in contrast does not distinguish in the dialogues between different senses of *eidos*, though we, like Aristotle, assume he should. In the Liège study, Follon finds it "completely remarkable" that within the few lines at *Republic* 510b–c "Plato uses the same word *eidos* first in the technical sense of the theory of Forms and then in the banal sense of species or variety; this requires translators themselves to employ *different* words to translate one word that is nevertheless identical at b8 and c5."[14] At b8 we read of dialectic conducting its research only through *eidē* taken in themselves, while at c5 we read of the three *eidē* of angles. But that is not all: just a little later mathematicians are described as making use of visible

eidē, and the part of the Divided Line under discussion is referred to as the "intelligible *eidos*" (*R.* VII.511a4). Follon's surprise does not end even there: in turning to Book X he encounters what is in his view another inexplicable slippage: at 597a Socrates reminds Glaucon that the artisan does not make the *eidos* (identified here explicitly with "what is a bed"), while at 597b he refers to three *eidē* of bed made by painter, artisan, and god. Follon again remarks: "Thus, in the space of a few lines, Plato employs *eidos* first in the specialized metaphysical sense of *ideal Form* and then in the banal sense of *variety* or *species*."[15] Plato indeed appears completely unconcerned here with distinguishing between different meanings of the term.

It therefore becomes relatively easy for Aristotle to characterize the Platonic sense of *eidos* as a confusion between two senses: that of individual form of the individual substance and that of form as universal. The key here is to see that Aristotle's critique of Plato is based on a distinction between different senses of *eidos* not found in Plato, which is in turn based on a different interpretation of ontological independence or of what it means for something to exist in itself and by itself. It is Aristotle who turns *eidos* into a technical term and thus an indispensable one in ontology. If we eliminated the term *eidos* from the *Metaphysics*, the result would be a completely incoherent text; if we eliminated the same term from the *Republic*, the philosophical content would be unaffected, even if some of the visual imagery might perhaps be less compelling. In this sense it is Aristotle who first comes up with a 'theory of forms' and then looks in Plato for a contrasting theory to oppose.

Talk of the 'separation' of 'Forms' indeed becomes meaningful only from the Aristotelian perspective: since being an *ousia* for Aristotle means existing separately from and independently of other *ousiai*,[16] Plato in identifying *ousia* not with the individual thing but rather with its 'form' is from Aristotle's perspective 'separating' the form, turning it into a thing existing on its own. Plato is thereby also treating a universal common to many individuals as if it were itself an individual thing. If we adopt the Aristotelian perspective, Plato's positing of justice itself—the good itself, beauty itself, and so on—as the true being of the things that are good, beautiful, and just, or, in other words, Plato's view that the true being of something is the one and self-same *what it is*, is not only wrong, but *complete nonsense*. It is therefore remarkable that so many scholars adopt the Aristotelian perspective, thereby attributing to Plato a view so utterly silly as not to be worthy of even the most mediocre philosopher: that there are these 'universal things' called 'Forms' despite having no matter and existing in a world of their own separate from our world yet somehow constituting the being of the things in our world from

which they are thus absolutely separate. There can be no doubt that the good itself is 'transcendent' with respect to sensible good things, but all depends on how one interprets this transcendence. Everything suggests that the Aristotelian 'separation' is a misinterpretation and perhaps a willfully abusive one.[17] There can be no doubt that Plato occasionally uses the word *eidos*, with the proper qualifications, to refer to that 'what-it-is' which he identifies with the true being of things; but to latch onto this term, make it Plato's exclusive characterization of true being, and then accuse him of 'separating' universal 'kinds' or 'species' is again willful distortion. Aristotle is allowed such distortion because what makes him a great philosopher is precisely his adoption of a radically new ontological perspective vis-à-vis his teacher, so radically new indeed that his teacher's supposed view ceases to make any sense. But *we* have no such excuse.

That Aristotle is imposing on Plato a certain technical vocabulary foreign to him is evident in his tendency to reserve the term *idea* for Plato's supposedly 'separate forms' when this does not at all correspond to Plato's own practice in the dialogues. Aristotle even goes so far as to claim that *ideas* is what *Plato* called the type of beings that do not change (*Met.* I.987b78). *Idea* does sometimes have a special emphasis in Plato, since its semantic scope is not as wide as that of *eidos* and Plato in the *Republic* does speak of the *idea* of the good rather than the *eidos* of the good. Yet what is referred to in either case is nothing other than *the good itself* or *what the good is*.[18] If Plato, even when he chooses one term over the other, makes no explicit distinction between the two and finds it unnecessary to turn either into a technical term, that may be because what matters is not the term but the thing itself being referred to. Furthermore, *eidos* is still used by Plato much more often than *idea* to refer to the beings that do not change. More importantly, as we have seen, Plato often uses *neither* term to refer to such beings, using instead completely different terms and phrases. So we must choose to believe either Aristotle's testimony or Plato's own texts. Indeed, Aristotle's testimony is not even consistent with his own practice: in the *Metaphysics* he himself uses the term *eidos* more often than *idea* to refer to the 'Platonic Forms' (124 times versus 109). Nevertheless, Aristotle in ontological contexts uses the term *idea* *only* to refer to the 'Platonic Form,' while using the term *morphē only* to refer to form in the sense of the determination of some underlying matter; *eidos* in contrast covers both senses and in addition that of 'species.'[19] Therefore even in Aristotle the term *eidos* retains a certain ambiguity that requires the use of other terms to make technical distinctions, even if the different senses of *eidos* are always in any case clearly demarcated. The explanation for his misrepresentation of Plato's usage is therefore not hard to find: Aristotle has

to introduce a technical terminology not present in Plato in order to keep distinct what Plato was talking about from what he wishes to talk about. Against Plato's *ideas*, Aristotle is speaking of *eidos* in the sense of *morphē*. It is indeed highly significant that the one term that is 'technical' in Aristotle in referring *exclusively* to what he takes to be an essential principle of *ousia* is neither *idea nor eidos* but *morphē*, since it is this word that expresses 'form' in the sense of what forms or shapes an underlying matter. To the extent that 'form' is arguably a better translation of *morphē* than it is of *eidos* or *idea*, one could conclude that the notion of 'form' first becomes philosophically significant in Aristotle.

This identification of *eidos* with *morphē* and thus its reference to an underlying matter is also significant in showing the limitations of the term *eidos* even within Aristotle's ontology. Given this conception of *eidos*, it would seem that Aristotle would need to dispense with the term when it comes to thinking of the highest substance which is pure *energeia* without *dunamis* and thus without matter; and indeed, as is sometimes noted but not often enough, Aristotle does avoid the term in characterizing the being of the unmoved mover.[20] After all, having criticized Plato for separating *eidē* he can hardly turn around at the very pinnacle of his metaphysics and speak of a 'separate form': if there must be a being without matter, it cannot be a form. One must therefore wonder if it is not in the end terribly misleading to speak of a 'philosophy of form' in the case of either Plato or Aristotle. This is not to deny that the concepts of *eidos* and *idea* play an important role in the ontologies of both (though much more important in Aristotle than in Plato), but rather to counter the tendency to make these concepts the primary and defining ones in their ontologies. I suggest that we can better understand the role played by the terms *eidos* and *idea* in each philosopher by not exaggerating this role if we think of Aristotle's philosophy as a 'philosophy of act' (*energeia*) and Plato's philosophy as a 'philosophy of what-it-is-in-itself,' or to make the contrast with Aristotle even sharper, a 'philosophy of potency' (*dunamis*).

Here we need to recall both the definition of being as *dunamis* in the *Sophist* and Aristotle's critique of Plato's forms at the end of *Metaphysics* Theta, not for being 'separated,' but for being only 'potencies' that therefore cannot have the priority in substance that Aristotle assigns to *energeia*. In the *Sophist* the visitor from Elea offers the following defining mark (*horos*) for what counts as being: "What I claim to be really [*ontōs einai*] is everything, of whatever sort, that is in a state of possessing a power [*dunamis*] for by nature either acting upon anything else or being acted upon even in the smallest way by the most insignificant thing, and even if only once altogether.

For I posit that the defining mark is to be delimited [*horos horizein*] thus: that beings are nothing other than power" (*Sph.* 247d8–e4). The seriousness and importance of this definition are shown by the two purposes it is made to serve in the discussion. First, the definition is introduced to explain to the 'Giants,' who recognize as existing only what they can grasp with their hands, how incorporeal things such as 'justice' can also exist: justice may not be tangible, but it nevertheless exists by virtue of having the power to produce certain results in our own actions and in the actions of a city. Second, and even more significantly, it is also used against the so-called friends of the forms who identify what is real with certain incorporeal forms. Because these friends of the forms insist on a sharp separation between being and becoming, they strongly resist any definition of being in terms of the power to act or be acted on. The Visitor, however, argues against them that their forms could not be known or have any effect on anything unless they too are defined as powers; indeed, to deny the proposed definition of being in favor of an absolute separation between being and becoming would be tantamount to banishing all knowledge and life from the realm of what is truly real. The suggestion of the entire passage, then, is that, against both the proponents of tangible becoming and the proponents of intangible being, justice, goodness, and the other forms must be understood to exist as powers.[21]

This conception of 'forms' as powers then forms the basis of Aristotle's critique in *Metaphysics* Theta. In this chapter Aristotle is defending the priority of *energeia* to *dunamis*, arguing that it is prior in *logos*, in time, and in substance. For this last priority he offers two arguments: first, *energeia* is prior in substance as that for the sake of which a substance has a *dunamis*, where this end (*telos*) is the form that makes it what it is (*Met.* IX.1050a4–b3); second— and this Aristotle signals as the most important argument (*kuriōteros*, *Met.* IX.1050b6)—substances that are corruptible and as such possess *dunamis* are dependent on, and therefore secondary to, substances that are purely active and therefore eternal (*Met.* IX.1050b6–30). In other words, not only is *energeia* prior to *dunamis* in a substance that is characterized by both, but substances characterized only by *energeia* are also prior to substances possessing *dunamis*. It is in this context that Aristotle introduces a critique of those who postulate the 'Ideas,' the reason clearly being that he sees in their position a reversal of the priority of *energeia* to *dunamis* which he has been defending. We read: "If there are such natures or such substances as the Ideas spoken of by those who concern themselves with *logoi*, there would be something much more knowing than knowledge itself and much more in motion than motion. These are more activities [*energeia*] whereas those are the powers [*dunameis*] for these" [*Met.* IX.1050b34–1051a3). Though

perhaps obscurely expressed, the point is nevertheless clear in context: the Platonic form of knowledge itself is not the activity of knowing, but only the power or potency for such an activity, where 'knowledge' refers primarily to the activity. Knowledge itself is knowledge to a lesser, not a greater degree, than the activity of knowing exercised by a particular person. But in this case the forms cannot have the priority in substance the Platonists grant them but are dependent on the corresponding activities and exist only for them. As Pseudo-Alexander comments, the critique is that "knowledge and motion are only powers of what is actually knowing or actually moving, *so that they cannot exist by themselves* [ἡ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἡ κίνησις δυνάμεις εἰσὶ τοῦ τ᾿ἐπιστήμονος καὶ τοῦ κινουμένου, μὴ δυνάμεναι καθ᾿αὑτὰς εἶναι]."[22] As this comment indicates, the inseparability of the Platonic forms is tied to their being only powers or potencies. The clear contrast here is with Aristotle's ontologically prior substances that are said to be always active (*aei energei*, *Met*. IX.1050b29) and therefore separable.

What is at issue between Plato and Aristotle is therefore not whether 'forms' exist 'separately' as 'substantivized universals' (an a priori nonsensical thesis because already couched in the Aristotelian terms intended to make it nonsensical!) or are to be dragged down from the place beyond the heavens and made to exist only in matter. Instead at issue is whether *ousia* is to be understood as *what-x-is* and thus as a *power* distinct from and independent of its realization or effectuation in specific individual things or whether *ousia* is the individual thing *that-actively-is* as the underlying subject of the 'predicates' it has in common (*koinon*) with other things. Put in the terms of *Metaphysics* Theta, the issue is whether knowledge itself or the individual actively exercising knowledge has priority in *ousia*. This formulation of the debate has two advantages: it avoids making Plato look a priori like a fool and shows the debate to be philosophically problematic and in principle undecided *to this day* (even if the Aristotelian position can be said to have many more contemporary supporters). To abstract the words *eidos* and *idea* from their occasional, purely convenient and nontechnical use in this debate and to turn them into technical terms for Plato's or Aristotle's or, even worse, for the 'Greek' interpretation of being, is a distortion that only blocks access to what remains to be thought in the philosophies of these unsurpassed and unsurpassable thinkers.

Notes

1. If Martin Heidegger gives too much importance to the term *eidos* and its etymology in the interpretation of Plato's ontology, he has the merit of seeing that the difference between Plato and Aristotle concerns the interpretation of *ousia* and of rejecting the traditional and silly account of the difference according to which Aristotle pulled down the 'Ideas' from their place beyond the heavens and planted them in concrete things. For a

particularly clear statement of Heidegger's view on this point, see *Nietzsche II* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1961), 407–408.

2. A. E. Taylor repeatedly shows how the term *eidos* can be a virtual synonym of *ousia* and *physis* both in Plato and in scientific writings prior to Plato: see *Varia Socratica* (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1911), 226–231.

3. Noting this (28–29), J.-F. Pradeau rightly concludes: "Platon peut se prononcer sur ce qui est intelligible sans en mentionner la 'forme.'" *Platon: Les formes intelligibles. Sur la forme intelligible et la participation dans les dialogues platoniciens* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001), 29.

4. A. Motte, C. Rutten, and P. Somville, *Philosophie de la forme: Eidos, Idea, Morphē dans la philosophie grecque des origines à Aristote: Actes du colloque interuniversitaire de Liège, 29 et 30 mars 2001. Travaux du Centre d'études aristotéliciennes de l'Université de Liège* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 2003), hereafter cited as "Liège study." Translations of the Liège study's original French are my own.

5. Liège study, 113, 135, 282, 286–287.

6. M. Dixsaut, *Platon et la question de la pensée* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2000), makes much of this fact. She notes first that "Le sens 'platonicien,' l'*eidos* comme Forme ou Idée, n'est donc ni exclusif des autres usages, ni juxtaposé aux significations 'courantes' du terme" (78). She also insists on the significance of the fact that the terms *eidos* and *idea* are not used at *Phaedo* 76d, but rather the language of *ousia,* even if one could claim that they all have the same referent (83). *Ousia* is for Dixsaut the proper object of questioning, the object that stimulates the desire to know, the object of the give and take of *logoi* in dialectic, while *eidos* is the object of knowledge, the term by which the questionworthiness of *ousia* is evaded. So she can conclude that the hypothesis of Forms "n'est pas la condition de la pensée qui se désire elle-même en désirant ce qui est en vérité: elle n'est pas la condition du *logos* qui interroge et qui répond, la condition du discours de la philosophie. L'affaire du philosophe et de la philosophie n'est pas, dans le *Phédon*, une affaire d'*eidos* ou d'*idea,* de possibilité de la connaissance, mais une affaire d'*ousia*. Dans le *Phédon, ousia, eidos* et *idea* ne sont trois noms pour une même chose que si l'on croit que les noms renvoient à ce qu'ils désignent et ne prennent sens que de ce qu'ils désignent" (90). Though she is right to note the greater importance of the language of *ousia* in the dialogue, in so sharply opposing to it the language of *eidos* and *idea* Dixsaut appears to be exaggerating both the philosophical implications as well as the importance of the etymology of these terms.

7. M. Dixsaut (*Platon*: Phédon [Paris: Flammarion, 1991]) is better, though giving in a sense *two* translations: "après s'être mis d'accord avec Socrate, et après avoir reconnu que chacune de ces Formes existe et *est une chose déterminée*." Hackforth is in some sense better: "and it was agreed that every Form was a real existent."

8. Liège study, 279; see also 98.

9. Liège study, 288.

10. Liège study, 291, 293.

11. Liège study, 169. In another essay, "The Banality of Eidos in Plato" (forthcoming), I argue for a more radical thesis: that the term *eidos* in Plato never has a technical sense but must always be qualified in a certain way in order to be able to refer to things like the beautiful itself and the good itself.

12. Liège study, 576.

13. A text that shows well the distinction between these first two senses is *Met.* Λ 5 1071a27–29, where Aristotle claims that even in the case of things that belong to the

same species (ἐν ταὐτῷ εἴδει), each has its own particular causes, including its own particular form (εἶδος).

14. Liège study, 162.

15. Liège study, 163–164. Ritter also notes this 'Bedeutungswechsel' but explains it through his view that the class or type has a basis in objective reality. Ritter, *Neue Untersuchungen über Platon* (Munich: Oskar Beck, 1910; reprint, New York: Arno, 1976), 294.

16. τὸ χωριστὸν καὶ τὸ τόδε τι ὑπάρχειν δοκεῖ μάλιστα τῇ οὐσίᾳ, *Met.* 1029a28.

17. The only Platonic dialogue in which the forms are said to exist 'separately' (*chōris*) is the *Parmenides*, and even there the term is introduced in association with the verb 'to divide' when Socrates speaks of someone who "divides the *eidē* separately themselves by themselves (διαιρῆται χωρὶς αὐτὰ καθ᾽ αὐτὰ τὰ εἴδη)" (*Prm.* 129d7–8; see also 130b2). The sense here is therefore the rather ordinary one of being 'separate' in the sense of 'distinguished' or 'divided from.' Nothing warrants reading into the word some absolute ontological transcendence. Indeed, that the word not be loaded in this way is essential to making sense of the discussion that follows, in which at issue is precisely the nature of the relation between likeness itself and the like things that participate in it and where interpretations of the 'separation' range from complete immanence (likeness itself parceled out among the like things) to existence in the mind as thoughts to existence in an entirely other world.

18. Robin Waterfield (*Plato's* Republic [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994]) does not hesitate to translate *idea tou agathou* simply as 'the character of the good,' and his translation makes clear how Socrates most often is speaking about 'goodness.'

19. "Quant au terme ἰδέα, il est en général réservé à la forme séparée platonicienne, sauf dans les traités biologiques où il est fréquemment utilisé lors des descriptions morphologiques, avec le sens d᾽ 'apparence' ou d᾽ 'aspect.' Si *εἶδος* peut également référer à la forme platonicienne, ce n'est jamais le cas de *morphē*" (Liège study, 581).

20. Among those who have noted that Aristotle does not apply the term *eidos* to the unmoved mover is M. Baltes, "Idea (dottrina delle idee)," in *Eidos—Idea: Platone, Aristotele e la tradizione platónica*, ed. Francesco Fronterotta and Walter Leszl (Sankt Augustin: Akademia, 2005), 9. G. Aubry (*Dieu sans la Puissance:* Dunamis *et* Energeia chez Aristote et chez Plotin [Paris: J. Vrin, 2006]) shows particularly well that in Aristotle the *dunamis/ energeia* pair has priority over the form/matter pair (10) and that the unmoved mover is pure act rather than pure form (64–65), the latter notion being nonsensical for Aristotle.

21. For a more detailed account of the definition of being in the *Sophist* and a defense of its importance, see my "Being as Power in Plato's *Sophist* and Beyond," in *Plato's* Sophist: *Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium Platonicum Pragense*, ed. Ales Havlícek and Filip Karfík (Prague: Oikoymenh, 2011), 63–95.

22. Pseudo-Alexander, 593.30–32. In commenting on 1051a21ff. Pseudo-Alexander takes Aristotle's point to be that the objects of mathematics cannot be substances because they are potentialities and what exists only potentially cannot be a substance (595.24–26).

Key Readings

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Measure, Excess, and the All: *To Agathon* in Plato

Claudia Baracchi

> Now let us say through what cause the composer composed becoming and the all. He was good, and in one who is good there never arises about anything whatsoever any grudge.
>
> —Plato, *Timaeus*

> Apollo, what a daimonic excess!
>
> —Plato, *Republic*

I. Remarks on *Republic* and *Timaeus*

The Platonic Socrates addresses the question of the good in the central books of the *Republic* (VI–VII). He names the good without claiming to possess the knowledge thereof. He names it in a sequence of affirmations without eidetic perspicuity—without defining the good in its whatness. At the insistence of his desirous interlocutor, Socrates ventures to speak *logoi* admittedly falling short of beauty, for, he says, discourses not illuminated by truth are ugly (*R*. 506c). Not knowing the truth regarding the good, he will at most (and reluctantly) offer an account of the "offspring" and "interest" of the good—an outline of its semblance and phenomenal precipitate (*R*. 506d–507a). Thus, the discourse of the *Republic* develops in this tension between the philosopher kings (whose prerogatives include the proper grasp of the good and all that flows from it) and the philosopher Socrates (who consistently fails to provide an appropriate account of the first and ultimate cause that the good designates). It remains to be seen whether Socrates's posture here simply reveals a constitutive inadequacy or whether, precisely in pointing beyond the order of eidetic knowledge, it may end up indicating the utmost philosophical accomplishment.

First of all, then, the good appears as a generative principle: as the father of the sun (and hence of the domain of visibility) and, at the same time,

as the source of intelligibility (of intelligence and what it intellects) (*R.* 508e–509b). And it is only in virtue of the analogy with the sun that the good may be seized in its infinite resourcefulness, generosity, and overflowing (*R.* 508b). Just as the sun discloses the visible as such by inundating it with light, so the good discloses the intelligible as such by pervading it with the invisible glow of being and truth. In its superabundance, the good gives rise to the whole range of manifestation visible and invisible:[1] it opens up the region of intellect and the intellected and, as the father of the sun and distant progenitor of phenomenal becoming, it underlies all manners of sensibility, the region of seeing and being seen. The regions of sensibility and of intelligibility emerge in their originary continuity, as the continuum of increasing or decreasing manifestness. One can discern here already the emanative movement variously elaborated in the neo-Platonic lineages and assimilated into the Judeo-Persian-Arabic traditions—the procession out of the one into the many successive layers of cosmic becoming. The good infuses light and subtle radiance into life as a whole (*R.* 518c).

Thus, the good appears as a strange idea, if indeed an idea at all—let alone an idea among ideas. For it originates the articulation of being that takes place in and as the eidetic manifold, and hence can hardly itself be captured in terms of ideality or eidetic determination. It carries the excessive trait of origin vis-à-vis that which is originated—a peculiar inaccessibility and impervious anteriority. Thus, this discourse lacking the halo of beauty, and repeatedly addressing the good as an idea (*R.* 505a, 508e), ends up making explicit the discontinuity of the good with respects to all that it engenders: the good is characterized as *epekeina tes ousias*, beyond being (*R.* 509b).[2] This, *stricto sensu*, means 'unspeakable,' or speakable in modes of *logos* irreducible to predication, determination, and definition. Among other things, the good unveils the richness and nonsimplicity of *logos*.

The good: a strange idea, then, and one displaying an even stranger analogical relation to the sun. For the likeness of intelligible and sensible, in and of itself, already presents conspicuous problems: how can the resemblance of the visible to the invisible be understood? In virtue of what liminal law of sense can visible and invisible be yoked together, such that their relationship may meaningfully be assessed in terms of adequacy and agreement? In what way may the consideration of the visible provide access into the invisible? Such questions become even more troubling when at stake is the proportionality or similarity between the sun and the good, son and ultimate father (*R.* 508b–c). This is why the imaginal, mythical strand of the discussion in the *Republic* can hardly be taken to be a didactic tale, purely and safely allegorical, anchored to a doctrinal content that, however figuratively rendered,

remains available and clear. Myth in this context always signals an abiding, undiminished mystery: the good lends itself to no representational strategy, whether conceptual or mythical. Mythical elocution is here no representation in disguise; it does not make present, as if prolonging and reinforcing the power of representation, endowing it with further resources. Rather, myth gestures toward that which hovers throughout and beyond conceptual delineation as well as its ancillary figurations—that which, in fact, even threatens such a dualism and draws back from its language. Neither conceptually nor beautifully exposed, invisible beyond eidetic invisibility and figured beyond the figures of allegorical codification, at the heart of the *Republic* the good emerges as the sublime first and last principle: generating and regenerating, overflowing itself in infinite vitality and generosity.

Plato's *Timaeus* harbors a similar suggestion of the good in terms of creativity. The two dialogues analogously revolve around the mysterious paternity whose narrative is surrounded by cautionary remarks and disclaimers. Allusively evoked in the *Republic* by reference to the sun (which, in its shining and warmth, engenders all that is and sustains its development), the good is again indicated by *Timaeus* figuratively, as the poet and maker (the *poietes*), the artisan and father of the cosmos and of all there is (*Ti.* 28a, 28c, 29e). This is said in an *eikos logos*, a discourse imaginal, likely, or probable (thus rooted in appearing, resembling, opining), which is at once *eikos muthos*—in fact, quite interchangeably, a myth (*Ti.* 29d, 30b).

The good emerges as a cipher of perfection in the sense of completion and completeness—as the articulate wholeness where all that is, is at once preserved in its difference and joined together, composed with others so that they may lie alongside each other. In the whole, the many differences are conjoined (such is the etymological resonance of harmony, from *harmottein*, articulating by fitting together, uniting through joints). Thus, the good should be perceived in its contiguity with the theme of order—mathematical order, but also the order not fully mathematizable inherent in beauty, in music, in the harmonious composition of the all, of every organism, of everything alive (*Ti.* 30a, 31a, 47d).

The question of completeness becomes equally central to the thinking of the human good. Indeed, the ability to envision the whole (both the whole within which one is situated and the whole that each one, in his or her compositeness, is) and direct one's life accordingly, is set into relief as the crucial parameter by which human comportment may be assessed. This is abundantly clear in the *Republic*, where *logismos* is emphasized among the other components of the threefold psychosomatic complex (the human being). *Logismos* names the capacity for reckoning, evaluating, and drawing together. This is

precisely what calculation does: it establishes connections that yield deeper and more precise insight. If this 'part' or dimension of human psychism is so privileged and called to rule over the others (the ardent or spirited and the desiring), this is not (or not simply) because of some axiological dogmatism prioritizing reason (with disembodiment and dualism as its corollaries). Rather, *logismos* plays such a governing role because of its ability to perceive beyond itself and, precisely in virtue of such a movement of transcendence (even of self-overcoming), to perceive the whole. *Logismos* sees vastly, sees through, and because of this it can safeguard (*R.* 475b–c): it contemplates that which is different and thus gathers and assists in the realization of the whole as such. The appetitive dimension of the psyche cannot contemplate this amply: it is driven to the satisfaction of its own impulses and blindly seeks to be sated. Even the spirited, courageous element of the soul, which to some extent displays an ability to look beyond itself, does not fully enjoy the lucidity characteristic of *logismos* in recognizing other dimensions and, therefore, the composite whole of which it is part.

Thus, the ruling function of *logismos*, determining the excellence in one's comportment through life, is less a matter (in fact, not at all a matter) of a rationalistic ethics—unless, by rational and rationalistic, we mean the *ratio* that joins, orders, structures, and informs well beyond human intellectualism and its constructs. What is at stake, instead, is the unique disposition of *logismos* to keep an eye on the whole, to guard, with a focus not only on itself and its own. As itself, and yet not simply for itself, *logismos* enacts itself in the whole, with an awareness of the whole. In other words, what is at stake is not so much (or not at all) the control over others, but rather the recognition, protection, and preservation thereof—the capacity for recognizing differing components and granting them the condition for being what they are, as they are, and enact themselves according to what belongs to them, no more and no less. It is in and of itself noteworthy that, in the course of a certain history (of Platonic interpretation, of the West as such), this posture should come to be viewed, at best, as a kind of condescension or paternalism, and, at worst, as the paradigm of all violence and violation.

In this sense, then, in the outline of the good we observe the concomitance of excess and measure. The figure of exceeding indefiniteness, of fullness and completeness, of the exorbitant superabundance that remains closed off vis-à-vis proper predication, coincides, in the experience of finite beings such as ourselves, with the pursuit of measure—however mutable and constantly to be reevaluated. It is such a pursuit that distinguishes the mortal condition, as acknowledged by the poets and philosophers alike[3]—the search for the measure that is not given, not automatically established by nature, but rather

the measure that remains as a task for humans to carry out, for each one to negotiate, each time anew and again. For, in the perspective of a finite being, excellence (fullest self-accomplishment and realization of what is one's own) precisely coincides with the recognition of one's partiality and finiteness, and hence with the capacity for being with others, inhabiting one's place and time with a sense of such a company. Interestingly enough, in becoming oneself while never alone, in this accompaniment that limits and delimits, lies one's highest accomplishment. It is here that one comes into focus most sharply: at once in one's singularity and in shared openness.[4]

This much, then, is at stake in the narratives surrounding the good in the two Platonic dialogues most centrally concerned with such a theme—if it is a theme. From the images of paternity in both texts emerges a sense of the good lying in the care for what is and, at the limit, in a mode of care for oneself which is at once a caring for others, letting them be. It should be noted, however, that these tales of paternal creativity are essentially complicated by the remembrance of an irreducibility. In both texts, the figures of the monoparental generation of and by the good irresistibly tend to dissipate themselves. They verge on an alterity either imageless or nearly ineffable. Such is the indication of the drift toward necessity which, in the *Republic*, shifts the emphasis from the sublime paternity of the central books to the enigmatic maternity in Book X (silent Ananke and her daughters at the center of the cosmos) (*R.* 616c–617c), and, in the *Timaeus*, leads to the most critical moment of the dialogue, where the question of *chora* is addressed— and never overcome (*Ti.* 48a–53b). However, regarding the union of the good and necessity (a union whose necessary and archaic character would deserve careful consideration) let this reminder suffice here.[5]

II. The Absolute Flight of the Good: Plato's *Philebus*

Everything said around the good in Plato harbors the provisional, tentative character emphasized thus far: both the luminescent imagery in the *Republic*, with its thrust beyond being, and the figurative *logos* in the *Timaeus* signal the intractability of the good and call for a cautious sobriety in the exercise of discourse. Here, however, it may be important to consider a further Platonic text, the *Philebus*, in which the traits of the good summarily examined above are reflected and incisively articulated.[6]

The *Philebus* exposes Plato's meditation on the *archai* (principles or origins), positing the four kinds of principles: (1) the unlimited (infinite multitude), (2) limit (measure, number), (3) the mixture of these (that which is limited or delimited, i.e., becoming), and (4) the cause of the mixture—that

which limits, the limiting principle bringing limit to bear on the unlimited. In Socrates's words: there are "an extensive unlimited in the whole and a satisfactory limit, and no inferior and shallow cause [αἰτία] is presiding over them, arranging and ordering [κοσμοῦσά τε καὶ συντάττουσα] years, seasons, and months" (*Phlb*. 30c).[7] Here the problem of the good, that is, of the ultimate cause of measure and order, is developed in consonance with Timaeus's discourse, suggesting the intimate connection between ethical and cosmological questions, the life of mortals and the unending life of the all, life as such and mathematics. Indeed, the domain of becoming (the 'third kind,' the *locus* of 'mixing') is neither simply the matter of cosmological investigation nor merely the theater of human life and the human condition. The 'mixture' is said to come to be from the blending of unlimited and limit. It indicates what is enclosed between the terms of the unlimited and the limiting. That which is in between, the intermediate blend, is all that is: the beings that come to be and pass away as well as (to the extent of their implication in materiality) the beings of mathematics or the eidetic, the limit.[8] The mixed indicates "*genesis* (in)to being [γένεσιν εἰς οὐσίαν]" (*Phlb*. 26d8: coming into being, *genesis* brought to being) or "being that has come to be [γεγενημένην οὐσίαν]" (*Phlb*. 27b8–9: engendered being). What emerges here in its conspicuity is the inherence of being in becoming, becoming having the character of being, unfolding in the manner of being.

With such gestures, this text points to the inherence of the eidetic, of the mathematical, of the good itself, in the cosmos. To be sure, the 'mixed' is essentially addressed by reference to human life, that particular interpretation of *zoe*, that domain in which the unlimited is ceaselessly engaged, brought into a limit, and measured, that is, wrested out of itself. The question the dialogue broaches is not simply that of the human good, however, but that of the good both (1) "as the cosmos of being and becoming" (the cosmos, the dwelling of the third genus)[9] and (2) as that which dwells in the third genus, that whose proper refuge and abode is the mixed life (the good "in the human being and in *to pan*" [*Phlb*. 64a]). Human life belongs in the "mixed," yet neither exhausts it nor is coextensive with it (see also *Phlb*. 27d).

Thus, the scope of the inquiry is not defined, let alone narrowed, by the prominence accorded to the human in the *Philebus*. On the contrary, we should also emphasize a certain instability of the distinction between human life and other manners of aliveness (*Phlb*. 15d–16a, 22b). Socrates discusses the "nature of the good [Τὴν τἀγαθοῦ . . . φύσιν]" (*Phlb*. 60b10) in terms irreducible to the human, and proposes that "to whatever *zōon* it should always be present in every way completely and without exception, it no longer stands in need of any other thing, and it has the adequate most perfectly"

(*Phlb*. 60c). What ultimately emerges is a cosmic vision in which the whole is understood as itself animated and living, and *nous* (intelligence itself) as unthinkable aside from soul, that is, apart from animality, from being-alive (*Phlb*. 30c).[10]

The good is the cosmos of the living and living cosmos. It pertains to that which lives. Far from reducing the thematic focus of the dialogue, the figure of the human is transfigured through the exorbitant character of such a theme. Paradigmatically sighted "by the rock, under a certain tree" (*Phlb*. 38d), the human appears as a synecdoche of the good, as a *sumbolon* into which is fitted all that is: the fleeting image of the human being gathers the inwardness of earth, its self-seclusion, and the sky summoning the earth out of itself, calling forth that which grows from out of the earth. The openness of the human to its beyond, an openness into which that which is not human fits, is constitutive of the human. The human is revealed as constitutively finite and yet not self-contained—in fact, hospitable, disseminated, open into the all, an appearance as elusive and evanescent as the good in its invisibility.

In this context, therefore, the good names the unity of life and, under such a rubric, the various tactics of cohesiveness, ranging from gravitational attraction, to sexual attraction, to the attraction drawing the predator to the prey. Indeed, the "third," the cosmos of the mixed, does not hold together solely in the modes of "health" and "harmony" (*Phlb*. 31c). It, too, involves the oscillation between *solve et coagula*. It is "no less" a matter of "the dissolution [λύσιν] of nature, when the harmony in us animals is dissolving [λυομένης]," indicating the "genesis of pains," than of "that harmony being brought together again," thus "returning to its own nature," indicating the "coming to be of pleasure" (*Phlb*. 31d4–10). Shortly thereafter, Socrates mentions again the alternation between corrupting and restoring characteristic of the "mixed": beings are depleted by "disjunctions and conjunctions, fillings and emptyings, and certain increases and decreases," which cause suffering, but "whenever there is a restoring to their own nature," this is acknowledged as relief and pleasure.

These remarks are decidedly Pre-Socratic in tenor. As in Empedocles, we find signaled here both the friction and the closeness of iatro-ethical preoccupations and cosmological vision—the concerns at once of the physician, the physicist, and the philosopher. For we discern a tension between the good of that which lives and undergoes (animals, human beings, all finite beings) and that which lives without undergoing anything other than itself (cosmos as a whole), or that whose undergoing may not be understood in terms of suffering as we experience it (celestial bodies). Discrete living beings, such as ourselves and those around us, painfully undergo that which,

at the cosmic level, may be construed as a harmony. They undergo each other, the encroachment of each on others. The very coming into being and passing away involve suffering at the level of the singular being. At the same time, they reveal a more comprehensive order transcending every singularity. Here we glimpse the genuinely therapeutic vocation of the philosophical reflection in its essential, if impervious, intersection with the equally philosophical desire for a comprehensive contemplation.

This much is implied in the elucidation of the good as belonging in the "third," that is, as rooted in "becoming into being" or "engendered being." The good inhabits the mixture of limit and unlimited just as *nous* properly inheres in the *psychē*. Dwelling in the "mixed," the good informs that which shines, while as such withdrawing from view. As Socrates observes, recalling the early stages of the dialogue, "Now, too, some argument revealed to us, just as in the beginning, not to seek the good in the unmixed life, but in the mixed" (*Phlb*. 61b4–6). Even more pointedly, as "that which is being sought," the good "will be more evident in whatever is beautifully mixed than in whatever is not" (*Phlb*. 61b8–9). Here is clearly announced the connection between the good and the beautiful. Concomitantly, the inquiry must now focus on the beautiful, as the dwelling of the good—for in general (and a fortiori if at stake is the good) inquiring about a dwelling place may reveal a great deal about the one dwelling and taking refuge there.

At this juncture, and in concomitance with the need to elaborate on the meaning of "mixing beautifully," Dionysus and Hephaestus are evoked, as the deities who have "this office of blending" as their lot (*Phlb*. 61c1–2). The former intervenes in body chemistry and, hence, in the quality of consciousness, by drawing "spirit" out of a fruit. Like "wine pourers," says Socrates, we have to mix "as beautifully as possible" into the wine of life the honey of pleasure and the "dry and healthful water" of thought (*Phlb*. 61c). The latter god, Hephaestus, intervenes in the chemistry of the body of the earth (and in the broader organism in which the body of the earth is inscribed) by practicing metallurgical fusion and forging. Although this is not made explicit, such "alchemical" operations demand an understanding of the differentiated materials belonging in *physis*, a grasp of their qualities, properties, reactivity to other substances, ability to blend with them, and potentiality for transmutation (fermentation, melting, taking on shapes, etc.). Not surprisingly, then, considerations regarding number, measure, proportion, and commensurability inform the discussion of the beautiful.

In fact, the relation between measure and beauty is crucial and its implications far-reaching. Measure is decisive both in the work of blending (measuring the "ingredients") and in the determination of the pleasures to be

admitted along with thought (i.e., the measured pleasures). The following are the Socratic directions concerning the pleasures that should be mixed with *nous* for the sake of obtaining a beautiful mixture:

> The pleasures you spoke of as true and pure, regard them as pretty
> nearly our own and at home with us, and besides them the plea-
> sures that come with health and moderation, and, in general, mix in
> all those pleasures that prove to be, as though she were a goddess,
> the attendants of virtue entire and follow along with her every-
> where. (*Phlb*. 63e)

Such a manner of proceeding would lead to "that mixture in which one sees a mixing and blending [μεῖξιν καὶ κρᾶσιν] as beautiful as possible and least subject to internal strife," that is, stable, stabilized, no longer volatile (*Phlb*. 63e9–64a1). At stake is trying "to learn," in such a mixture, "what is by nature good in the human being and in the whole, and what look [ἰδέαν] one has to divine it is" (*Phlb*. 64a1–3). Of course, truth must likewise be an ingredient of this mixture, if the latter is to be at all and see the light (*Phlb*. 64b). The 'idea' of the good (a question both central to and excessive to human living, indeed, embracing all that is) may be discerned to the highest degree in the good blend, in the dwelling that the appropriately mixed life is. Thus, with the examination of the question of measure, we are drawing closer to the good. As Socrates signals, "We are standing at the portico of the dwelling of the good" (*Phlb*. 64c1–2).

Measure is generative, indeed, the cipher of infinite fecundity. The infinite bound by and to measure is *genesis*: being born, coming into the light (beauty) and becoming manifest (truth), means being brought into an outline, a limit or shape. "Beauty, commensuration, and truth" are "causes" of becoming, and reveal the good (*Phlb*. 65a3). The *how* of the blend can, thus, be understood in terms of measure and of the being and manifestation granted through it. Such is what makes the mixture good, or even what makes it as such. *Metron*, *summetron*, *alethes* indicate beauty as order, order as beautiful: *kosmos* (but even the Latin *mundus* harbors that meaning) as a polished jewel, a beautiful ornament shining forth.

Measure and symmetry preserve the components of the blend, while holding them together and bringing them into one. They allow for the manifestness of the differing *as such*. The elements blended are neither over-whelmed nor obliterated, but rather exalted in the combination. They can appear as such, in their being and vividness: "Every way of blending whatso-ever and of whatever kind, if it does not get measure and the commensurate

nature, destroys of necessity the things being blended and first itself, for anything of the kind is not even a blending but truly an unblended mishmash, and on each and every occasion proves to be really for those in possession of it a smashup" (*Phlb*. 64d9–e3). The good can be glimpsed, if at all, in this granting and guarding the determinacy of each. It is such a tutelage that makes the difference between a manifold configuration and the indeterminacy (the fusion and confusion) of the unlimited.

But, in the final analysis, Socrates aims to move beyond the threshold (the portico) of the dwelling of the good, to the good "itself." As he undertakes to do so, this image, which still preserves beauty (the house) and the good (the indwelling) in their distinctness, dissipates. This leaves Socrates again "perplexed and pathless." For the good seems to revert into the beautiful, as it were: "Now the power of the good has fled for us into the nature of the beautiful, for measuredness [μετριότης] and commensuration [συμμετρία] surely turn out to be everywhere beauty and virtue" (*Phlb*. 64e5–7). The flight of the good into the beautiful signals an obscuration concomitant with the glowing of the beautiful, of what shines forth and, thereby, is. What is allows for an insight into the good as such. Simultaneously, however, precisely through the phenomenon of appearing, the good is announced as unapproachable, inaccessible: it withdraws from the all-absorbing glow of appearances. The good is at once preserved and betrayed in and by the beautiful. It hides there, in beautiful shining, while itself being a matter neither of place nor of shining. It abides there, but as a fugitive, whose only trace may lie in the peculiar intensity of beautiful appearance. Such a flight and hiding signal the good disappearing *in* and *as* the appearing of the good. It is a matter of transfiguration or, more precisely, of the transcendence of figuration, an infinite transcendence.

In viewing "beauty, commensuration, and truth" as "responsible" for the "things in the mixture," Socrates is renouncing the possibility of disclosing the good in terms of "one single *idea*." Rather (this is his suggestion here), we may gain some insight into the good thanks to these "three things" (beauty, commensuration, and truth), "as if they were one"—while the one *idea* of the good, in its simplicity and eidetic perspicuity, will remain elusive (*Phlb*. 65a). Ultimately we come to divine the good as the mathematics of the whole and of each one, as the mathematics through which the mere collection of what somehow is turns into the *kosmos*, the beautiful order shining like a jewel and alive. To be sure, here we undergo again the paradox of having to gain an insight into the inapparent through the apparent, of the one through "three." But this seems to be the only, however qualified, access to the good. The order and proportion of the mixture (the good in and of the mixture) is revealed

through beauty—or even through the *logoi*, and most notably through the engagement in dialectic, if we are to attribute any significance to the fact that, in the *Philebus*, speeches are consistently characterized as "beautiful."

Such, then, would be the union of goodness and beauty: the good inhabits phenomenality, lives there, indeed, enlivens by abiding, making the abode vibrant, intensifying the life there, fulfilling and saturating its becoming. As in the *Phaedrus*, the beautiful designates that which is resplendent, which most shines. In turn, the good emerges as submerged in the beautiful, as that which remains unseen *in* and *as* the glow (the being seen) of the beautiful. Yet, pace Gadamer, it might be unduly precipitous to establish the identity of the good and beauty. For, fled into beauty and harbored there, the good dwells, its *dunamis* unfathomed ("if we are not able to track down the good with a single *idea*" [*Phlb*. 65a1]). The fading of the image of the house with its inhabitant and the flight of the good into the beautiful do not bespeak their con-fusion, let alone identity. Rather, they point to a distinction as necessary as it is elusive and indeterminate. The convergence of the beautiful and the good or, rather, the inherence of the good in the beautiful intimates transcendence, most notably absolute transcendence, as nothing transcendental, but rather phenomenal, altogether at the heart of phenomena. In other words, it intimates transcendence as an inscrutability at the heart of the visible, the cryptic character of the manifest as such.

As the work of proportion and symmetry, beauty gathers together while allowing the shining of what is, in its look, outline, brilliance, and singularity. As an analogy to the abode of the good in the beautiful, think of the abiding of light, unseen, in the thick opacity of a moonless night shrouding all phenomena. Only just before dawn, before anything (any thing) is illuminated, can one perhaps almost divine the light itself in the East: when no thing is appearing yet, but only a trace, a presentiment of the light itself, the veil of night becoming thinner, translucent. But, as soon as the light begins to pierce the dark, it is immediately concealed by the nascent appearing and glowing of things: it dissipates in and as the emergence of what is. We do not see the light shining, but the things that begin to dawn and unfold thanks to it, dimly at first, barely perceivable in their outline, and then progressively more saturated. The sun rising, its light shining, allow things to show themselves, each one, one by one, yet all together gathered into one. We do not see the light but what it reveals. Always already a matter of expanse and expansiveness (always already together with *chora*), it is the *in which* of disclosure and *dwells in* disclosure. Between the mystery of matter as such (the unbound and indeterminate) and the mystery of light (the cause of determinacy), born of such a twofold mystery, becoming unfolds.

The good, then, is disclosed in its crucial connection with generation—with the power to generate, fecundity, a movement of generosity and brimming. It is *aition* or 'responsible' for the mixed, as an impulse prompting things to grow and evolve—to develop, quite literally to turn (*volvere*) out of themselves, to unfold out of their enfoldment and become explicit. For "that for the sake of which whatever is becoming for the sake of something would always be becoming, is in the lot and portion [μοίρᾳ] of the good" (*Phlb*. 54c9–10).[11] Thus, the good names that which calls for and sustains such a development and fulfillment: the inapparent "in which" things come to be, are engendered (just as the beautiful at *Smp*. 206e). In this perspective, we are also compelled to connect it with the question of justice in *Republic* IV, which at once engenders (the three other virtues) and promotes the continuing being of the engendered. The good is similarly creative and protective of wholeness (and similarly elusive). In virtue of this, the good elicits love, moving in the manner in which a beloved moves the lover. As the *Symposium* teaches, love is of the good (*Smp*. 205e–206a).

Understanding the good as the cause and origin of all, and, as such, as the beloved, means thinking value most fundamentally, in fact, even beyond the order of intelligible foundation and intelligibility as foundation. It means to intuit, contra the choral pronouncement asserting the wisdom of not being born (*OC* 1224–1238), a trace of the good in being, that is to say, in being alive, in the bare fact of aliveness. As Aristotle will have said in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, "[Sensing] that we are sensing or [thinking] that we are thinking [is to be aware] that we are (for to be was stated to be sensing or thinking); and sensing that one lives [αἰσθάνεσθαι ὅτι ζῇ] is in itself one of the things that are pleasant, for life is by nature good, and sensing [αἰσθάνεσθαι] that the good belongs in oneself [ὑπάρχον ἐν ἑαυτῷ] is pleasant" (*EN* 1170a33–b4).[12] *It is good to be* always means: it is good to be *here*, in this singular spatiotemporal configuration, in the envelopment of these circumstances—"by the rock, under a certain tree."

Notes

1. It is the principle, *archē*, "of all [τοῦ παντός]" (*R*. 511b7).

2. It is at this juncture that Glaucon bursts out in wonder: "Apollo, what a daimonic excess!" (509c). In the *corpus*, this is the only occurrence of the name of Apollo in an exclamatory mode. Plato is probably evoking the Pythagorean exploitation of the etymology of Apollon (= non-many), thereby gesturing toward the good as one.

3. Consider, paradigmatically, Sophocles's *Antigone* 332–360: the human being, "uncanny [δεινός]" in being "all-resourceful [παντοπόρος]," calls for the work of measurement and delineation.

4. In Plato's *Timaeus* the quest for measure and attunement is at one with the experience of the utmost dilation in and identification with the cosmos (*Ti*. 47a–e).

5. Again, the irreducible duplicity (compositeness, nonsimplicity) of the ultimate principle(s) carries repercussions concerning ethical matters no less than cosmogonic or cosmological ones. Consider, for instance, how Timaeus addresses the question of the motility and health of the human psychosomatic complex by reference to the vibratory field of *chora* no less than to the sky (88d–90d).

6. I present a more extensive analysis of Plato's *Philebus* in "One Good: The Mathematics of Ethics," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 25, no. 2 (2004): 1–31.

7. Here and throughout I refer to Seth Benardete's translation of the *Philebus*, in *The Tragedy and Comedy of Life: Plato's* Philebus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), although with occasional variations.

8. Socrates repeatedly avoids elaborating on the limit as such, as though it were not possible to discuss the limit according to itself, aside from becoming, that is, from what comes to undergo the limit and, thus, to be limited, measured, numbered. Socrates speaks of "that with limit" and "that which has limit" (24a). Even more remarkably, he relates the mixing together of "the unlimited [things] and those that have limit" (26b). In turn, Protarchus speaks of "the limit in the things that are" (26c). See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Platos Dialektische Ethik* (1931; reprint, Hamburg: Meiner, 1983), 108–109.

9. In *The Tragedy and Comedy of Life*, Benardete speaks of "the good as the cosmos of being and becoming" (*Tragedy and Comedy*, 214). This laconic formulation implies the belonging together of being and becoming, their being (at) *one*. It furthermore intimates that, qua *kosmos*, i.e., structured unity, "of being and becoming," the good would designate that *in which, according to which*, and *thanks to which* what is comes to be. To put it even more sharply: "If, however, the good straddles the opposition between being and becoming, it must be in the kind of mixture the unlimited can inform. Without the cooperation of the more and the less, the good could never take root in becoming; it would always be after the end of becoming and not copresent with becoming. The reality in becoming is the good" (215). The good, then, emerges as *gignesthai ontos*: becoming "really," or, more precisely, "beingly," in the manner of being; becoming endowed with being. In this way, the good comes to designate the *in which* (*kosmos*) of becoming, yet also that which *dwells in* becoming, "taking root" there and conferring being to it. The good, then, indicates the cosmos of being and becoming, but not simply as the place-time of becoming, let alone its container and external circumstance. Rather, it indicates that which inheres in it, informs its splendor and unraveling, hides there. We will return to this when considering Socrates's later remarks on being "at the portico of the dwelling of the good" and on the "power of the good" having "fled for us into the beautiful."

10. See also *Sophist* (249a) and *Timaeus* (30b).

11. See the inceptive statements in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1094a1–5 and 19–25.

12. The translation is mine.

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In the Wake of Socrates: Impossible Memory

Walter Brogan

The *Phaedo*[1] is certainly one of the richest of Plato's dialogues, filled with complex images, metaphors, and arguments and layered in a dauntingly complicated structure that one fails to attend to at one's own peril. The aim of this essay is to look at certain aspects of the dialogue that center on the theme of remembrance in a specific way, namely inasmuch as it has to do with Plato's attempt to remember Socrates, to offer a fitting memorial to the spirit of Socrates after and in the wake of his death. Plato's dialogues, and perhaps most of all the *Phaedo*, are replete with references to distance, separateness, and being-apart, and allusions to opposites that cannot be brought together into a unity despite their tendency to exist in a nonidentical relationship where the one cannot be found without the other, a kind of impossible being-together. But no distance or gap for Plato is more cogent and worthy of philosophical reflection than the distance caused by the death and departure of Socrates. The problem of remembrance and the possibility and impossibility of recovering from the loss of Socrates haunts this dialogue, made even more poignant by the reminder that Socrates saw his philosophical vocation as antithetical to writing and to the false attempt to reify and preserve in writing what otherwise is vulnerable to the forgetting and recovery from *lethe* that belongs to time.

As we will see, the *Phaedo* is all about this play between forgetting and recovery, and for reasons that I believe are central to Plato's philosophy, truth is only ever possible as a recovery from *lethe*. In the *Phaedrus*, this falsely guided attempt to record philosophy and thus to hold on to and preserve the truth of being is condemned. But this is no less true in the *Phaedo*. Philosophy cannot succumb to replacing itself with record keeping in an attempt to escape from or deny the irretrievable absence that is part and parcel of the mortal realm. Socrates's departure and his relentless insistence on the necessity of this withdrawal for philosophy to begin again is a witness to this. The task of philosophy to open the human soul to knowledge of what is itself by itself (*auto kath' hauto*) cannot be achieved by reifying the presence of being.

Beauty, goodness, and true being cannot be captured or possessed. But the question then becomes for Socrates at the end of his life and for Plato after the death of Socrates: granted the loss of an immediate and full access to what is itself by itself, in the face of this loss of the origin, can we philosophize successfully, and, if so, how? Platonic philosophy occurs in the space of the play of presence and absence that belongs to the ambiguous space of memory. Platonic philosophy as a philosophy of memory is also always or almost always the philosophy of an impossible memory, the memory of an event that has not taken place; a mythological memory that can only be recovered indirectly as through the images of the good that Socrates offers in the middle of the *Republic* or in the myth of Er at the end of this dialogue, which is also, as in the myth of the earth at the end of the *Phaedo* and the *chora* passages in the *Timaeus*, the story of a memory beyond time. Philosophy is an activity that is done in exile and the return home is fraught with peril along labyrinthine paths that must be traversed without guarantee. In this regard, it is perhaps dramatically significant that Socrates calls into question at the beginning of this dialogue the banning of poetry and writing, its exile from philosophy. Perhaps, in the face of the death of Socrates, philosophy must reinscribe its connection to poetry and myth, as Socrates does in regard to Aesop's *Fables*. Socrates reinterprets a persistent dream he has had and suddenly declares that he should have sung. Though declaring himself a musician of *logos*, the greatest of all musicians, and initially believing the dream commanded him to continue on this path, he now, facing death, worries that he should have listened to the Muses and pursued *muthos*. So the dialogue from the very beginning establishes the problem of the relationship of philosophical *logos* and *muthos*, as well as the connection of philosophy to poetry and music.

Socrates then frames the whole dialogue around what he calls his *mutholegein* about his imminent departure, his going away and his return home, about his departure to Hades; and he asks what we are to think of it (*Phd.* 61e). This first declaration is that the practice of philosophy consists in the care of dying, in the anticipation and waiting for death, and occurs in the period between now and sunset. But it becomes immediately clear that philosophizing in this way, while we are in the middle of things, requires a thinking about being-apart and the radical condition of being-away that because of death cannot be circumvented. This theme of waiting for death and the search for an understanding of a being that is away and separate becomes the most essential task of a philosophy committed to the thinking of mortality. It is dramatically signaled in the explanation for the delay in Socrates's execution at the beginning of the dialogue, which was caused

by the annual sending of the ship to Delos to honor Theseus's slaying of the Minotaur and the saving of Athens, a feast dedicated to Apollo, the god of light and purification. In a sense I would argue that Socrates's most authentic philosophizing occurs in the space of this delay. In the face of death, both the beauty of the *logos* that dwells on what is always to come and the limits of this *logos* are discovered. This limit of *logos*, I will suggest, is dramatically announced at the end of the dialogue when Socrates tells the myth of the earth and declares that it is best to die in silence.

The theme of *katharsis*, of the opposition of contamination and purity, gives the dialogue a tragic framework, although Socrates insists that the *logos* of philosophy and the love of *phronēsis* is the key to overcoming the tragic condition of the human being. This connection to tragedy, and the dramatic portrayal of Socrates's reaction to those who are already in mourning over his end, is evident from the very beginning of the dialogue in the discussion of pity (*eleos*) and fear (*phobos*). Phaedo declares that he and the others were filled with a wondrous affect on the last day of Socrates. Since Socrates was so happy, he did not feel pity as would be appropriate at a scene of mourning. Instead he felt a wondrous mixture of pleasure and pain, sometimes induced to laugh and at other times to weep. The pain of death was brought together with the pleasure of philosophy. This initial description of the coming together of these two opposite affects becomes a recurrent theme throughout the Dialogue. Each of the arguments for the immortality of the soul deals in one way or another with the problem of opposition and contradiction. Socrates himself makes this theme explicit in reference to the removal of the chains from his legs, and speaks of the wondrous fact that pleasure, in this case the pleasurable sensation of the blood returning to his legs, is related to its opposite pain. He notes that they will not come together at the same time, yet one is never there without the other that follows after it—as if, he says, they were joined together in one head. Opposites are at war with one another, we are told, but "the god wished to reconcile them, and when he could not do that, he fastened their heads together" (*Phd*. 60c). It is this war of opposites, the separateness of each that nevertheless achieve in life an impossible coming together that I think is the main theme of the dialogue. Certainly the opposition of life and death, their utter apartness and yet their inseparability is the primary discussion, but the theme is pervasive and shows up in the discussion of the coming together in the dialogue of *logos* and *muthos*, of soul and body, of the sensible and intelligible and of likeness and unlikeness, to name a few examples. It is dramatically signaled when Socrates is said to get up after being released from his chains and put his feet on the ground, where they remain for the rest of the discussion, a discussion

centered on the question of the soul's departing from the earth and the visible realm of the body (*Phd*. 61c).

Socrates insists that grief, as if death were a tragic event, is inappropriate for one who has pursued the good and avoided evil. Philosophy is the condition of freedom and what makes possible the seeing by itself of what is, and thus philosophy heals to the extent possible the tragic condition of the loss of this capacity. Thus Socrates is convinced that this withdrawal from the compulsory attachment to the body is a godly activity. And the *logos* of philosophy is the human way to pursue this freedom. At precisely this point in the dialogue (*Phd*. 63d) Socrates is warned that *dialegesthai*, engaging in dialogue, will cause the *pharmakon*, the poison he is about to take, to lose its effectiveness. Philosophical *logos* defers the tragic effect of the *pharmakon*. Philosophy is the space of this deferral of dying, the space in that sense of living in the face of death. From the point of view of the multitude, this activity of philosophy, the neglect of bodily desires and the practice of dying, as Socrates declares it to be over and over again in the dialogue, is a comic condition, and those who practice it deserve to die (*Phd*. 64b). Simmias says he cannot help laughing at this ironic point. Philosophy as the desire for death and the openness to what is to come is the *pharmakon*, the antidote and remedy, for the tragic loss that is experienced by all those who are going to die. It embraces head-on the cause of tragic fear and declares itself to be the only true catharsis for human being. Thus philosophy is a response to the tragic condition, one that does not shy away from its relationship to comedy, and its comic relationship to the body. In a sense, philosophy is the place where the irreconcilable opposition of comedy and tragedy is held together and joined at the head.

Only a free relationship to the body can open the soul to behold true being. The story of the *Phaedo*, I believe, is not about the battle of the soul with the body, but about the contamination and dissipation caused by bodily desire disconnected from the connection to truth uncovered through the soul. It is a story about the consequent need for *katharsis*, the need for purification and purging that belongs to the embodied condition of human being mired in the fleeting reality of the senses.

Philosophy holds apart the opposing realms of contamination and purity, yet *katharsis* is the overcoming of the fear that drives our overattachment to the everyday, thus it has this mundane reality as its starting point. What is striking about these passages that announce the philosophical task of separating the desires of the soul from those of the body is that they are couched in the need for a recovery. Socrates says: "Does not the catharsis consist in separating, so far as possible, the soul from the body and teaching the soul

the habit of collecting and bringing itself together from all parts of the body, and living, so far as it can, both now and hereafter, alone by itself, freed from the body as from fetters" (*Phd*. 67c5–d2). So the soul holding itself apart from the body enacts a kind of recollection, a recovery of its unity by gathering itself back into itself and thus healing the dispersion and dissipation caused by the body's co-optation of what the soul seeks. And this philosophical recovery from the illness of greed and dissipation is only possible, as we will see, through an originary opening to an almost forgotten memory of freedom and health. The provocation for philosophy is the awakening of the awareness of one's dispersion and entanglement, but the insistence of philosophy is that the forgotten condition of wholeness comes before and is not dependent on this recollection.

The risk of this philosophical turn is made very clear in the next passage, when Socrates points out: "This is what we call death, is it not, a release and separation from the body" (*Phd*. 67d4–5). We can appreciate once again the comedic element of this pronouncement: the quest for freedom and a life that is not compulsive and violent but genuinely fulfilling and connected to true being is a desire for death. And Socrates by no means shies away from this conclusion, saying that only the care for dying and death, the proper relationship to death, overcomes the terror and grief of those who flee in the face of their mortality. The philosopher who holds herself in a proper relation to death is the one who achieves the *katharsis* that allows for *phronēsis*, true wisdom. But, Socrates declares, this wisdom can only be recovered in another realm beyond the confused mixture of body and soul, a realm where the separation of the soul from the body occurs, in Hades. There the soul can discover being itself that is inaccessible through the eyes and is thus invisible. Plato plays throughout the Dialogue on the similarity in the names Hades (*haides*) and the name for the invisible, namely *aeides*. Homer's underworld becomes the place beyond, where intelligible being and true wisdom can be found. *Phronēsis* is found in Hades. If Hades is the site of invisible being, then it is not to be feared. The courage of the philosopher in the face of death is thus distinguished from ordinary courage in that ordinary courage is a way of being in relationship to fear. But the philosopher has overcome fear and experiences courage in itself and the other virtues, separate from and purified from the oppositional mixture of courage and fear, and the like. What is enacted in the course of the dialogue is the education of Cebes and Simmias, that is to say, the curing through the *logos* of what is called their childish fear of death, their childish fear of the imminent departure of their father Socrates. "Where," Cebes asks, "shall we find a good singer of such charms, since you are leaving us?" (*Phd*. 78a1–2). Socrates constantly thematizes the

intractable resistance of Cebes and Simmias to the various attempts to dem-
onstrate the path through which this monster Fear that imprisons them can
be slain.

But is this *mutholegein* (*Phd.* 70b), this mythology as Socrates calls it, that
the soul exists apart from the body in Hades, a likely (*eikos*) story, Socrates
asks? And here begins the various attempts to offer *logoi* that demonstrate
the likelihood that the soul is immortal. As it turns out, these stories all rest
on the claim that the soul exists prior to birth rather than that it exists after
death. That is, they are stories about a mythical past, a past prior to our com-
ing to be and prior to what has been for us up to now; another and more
distant past than the past we have experienced since birth. And in each case
these are stories about remembrance and recollection, about birth and what
occurs prior to birth that makes birth possible. What gets left out of account
until Socrates's second sailing is the story that establishes what occurs with
death and after death, that is, stories about what will come to be, stories
about the impending future that can only be told in relationship to death and
dying as that toward which we are heading in the end, stories that tell of the
future place of *logos* after the death of Socrates.

The first argument for the immortality of the soul is that all things are
generated from their opposites so that birth is only possible as a reincarna-
tion, following in the wake of death. Life and death, greater and smaller, hot
and cold, sleeping and waking all belong together in the endless circula-
tion of opposites, where separation generates togetherness and vice versa.
Without this contrariness, Socrates argues, all things would come to an end
and cease to be, all things would become one or end in chaos. If the move-
ment from life to death were linear, rather than a movement of return, all
things would be swallowed up in death. Now, this argument, it would seem,
is proven spurious later on when Socrates shows that philosophy opens up
a realm of separateness that is alone with itself and apart from this opposi-
tional relationality. But I do not think the argument is defeated so much as
shown to belong to a different order. Relational opposites and the movement
between them of generation and destruction are indeed what governs the
realm of coming to be; but there is a prior, more radical separateness that is
not addressed by this argument, perhaps even a more radical opposition of
apartness than this relationship of contraries can account for. To begin to
uncover this more distant otherness and difference, Plato turns to the *logos*
about *anamnesis*, about remembrance.

Socrates reminds his listeners of what they have often maintained, that all
learning is remembrance. The discussion of *anamnesis* and the parallel dis-
cussion of *lethe*, forgetting, brings to the fore the peculiar play of presence

and absence that characterizes the temporal realm. In the *Phaedo*, forgetting is defined as the loss of knowledge. In the case of recollection, this loss is deeper and more intractable than ordinary forgetting. It is in a sense an irrecuperable loss, an absence that cannot be brought to presence, at least not in time. Recollection opens the space (the stretch of the soul) for one's relationship to this more radical alterity. All learning, Socrates says, is recovery of one's own lost knowledge, the recovery of what once belonged to the knower and thus the recovery of one's originary self. It is in this sense that Plato says elsewhere that all knowledge is self-knowledge and that only a recovery of self-knowledge in its separateness from beings can rescue us from an incapacity to see beings apart from our own lenses. But it is only a recovery and this can only be successful in relationship to loss, the loss that is intrinsic to birth and being in time. This movement from loss to recovery is *anamnesis*. Recollection is about a memory that is in exile from the origin it seeks to recover. All acts of recollection occur in the context of this irrecuperable distance from the origin, an origin that can only be approached by means of a repetition of a knowledge that has never occurred and is always more prior than any beginning or coming to be. It is a memory, perhaps an impossible memory, of an irreducible otherness that can only become present indirectly by being reiterated. Philosophy is the activity of this iteration of the origin, this originary iteration. This is perhaps why the whole story Socrates tells of this originary memory is a story of *mimesis*.

Socrates's first example of recollection is the case where an *aisthesis* of one thing calls to mind some other thing we associate with it but which is not itself present to *aisthesis*. Recollection in this sense requires the provocation of sense perception but involves moving through and beyond *aisthesis* to the recovery of the *eidos*, the image or form of something, not available or no longer available to the senses. Plato's theory of forms, at least in this dialogue is tied to recollection and thus to iteration and dianoetic doubling of what it takes from bodily sensation. Thus remembrance is the moving from *aisthesis* to a kind of dianoetic imaging that is provoked by and, in that sense, dependent on perception. The second example of recollection is even more peculiar. A picture or image of Simmias calls to mind the actual, noetic image of Simmias himself. The thing, the picture, becomes an image that reminds us of the thing itself, available only as an image in the mind. With this recollection that is a kind of doubling of the image, the sense object, the picture taken as a copy, again provokes us to move beyond it toward something we have forgotten but have previously known, something in fact more original than the thing that represents it. In the third example, the example of equal things that call to mind equality itself, the issue of resemblance and the relationship

of likenesses and what is unlike, that is, the whole problem of relationality comes to the fore as what is at the heart of *anamnesis*.

In seeing through the senses things that are equal or unequal, and in fact more or less equal, Socrates asks, must we not already implicitly know equality itself which, though *aeides*, invisible, and not apparent to the senses, nevertheless is what must first of all be implicitly remembered and originally known before any perception is possible. But where, Socrates asks, does this knowledge of the invisible come from which all perception strives after but falls short of (*Phd*. 74d)? It must, Socrates argues, be a knowledge other than and separate from the sensible precisely because the knowledge we attain from the sensible is intrinsically inferior inasmuch as a likeness can never capture the being in its fullness. Socrates goes on to argue that the more or less of sensible equality and resemblance requires that we have access to the being alone by itself by virtue of which we can see things that are related to one another.

Previously we spoke of the sense of loss that belongs to mortal being and the possibility of a recovery through the philosophical pursuit of what cannot be discovered through the sensible. Here we are speaking in terms of falling short and being inferior as primary characteristics of our embodied being. It is as if the wound of birth causes the scattering of what is into a multiplicity of examples of what is that share (*koinōnia*) in some way with the original being, which nevertheless is apart from it (*Phd*. 100d6). This is one of the places where Plato is said to hold his participation theory, which became such a crucial problem in some of his later dialogues. It is an attempt once again to address the question of community and of relationality, but a relationality of another sort from the oscillating relationship of opposites that we discussed earlier. Here Plato is attempting to think of a relationality that allows for alterity. Recollection is the recovery, inasmuch as it is possible, of the source of these beings and their *koinōnia*, their being related and able to be seen in common. Socrates asks whether this means that, for example, beauty itself is present in the beautiful things that it holds in common or whether it somehow establishes this community while remaining utterly other. He says to this question: "About the way in which it happens I have no positive statement" (*Phd*. 100d9–e1). The preponderance of evidence seems to me to favor the latter alternative, though especially in matters of beauty this is a difficult question to resolve. My own hunch is that it is necessary for philosophy that the intelligible and the sensible be held apart, but that, granting this, there is nevertheless a way in which they come together. This is especially evident in the case of the soul in its relationship to the body.

Despite their original separateness, there is a way in which the intelligible and the sensible can touch each other. The soul is affected by its embodiment.

It carries forth even into Hades the *ēthos*, the disposition and character it has taken on as a result of its earthly direction. Despite Socrates insistence on sep- arateness, it is clear that the individuation of immortal souls is a result of their sensory existence. How one cares for the body affects the care for the soul. The soul becomes more or less capable of dwelling with what is excellent as a result of its orientation toward the body. The human soul is thus responsible for the habits and disposition it takes on in the way it conducts itself on the earth. Socrates says: "But now, since the soul is seen to be immortal, it cannot escape from evil or be saved in any other way than becoming as good and wise as possible. For the soul takes with it to Hades nothing but its education and nurture, and these are said to benefit or injure the departed greatly" (*Phd*. 107c8–d5). Here I only want to point out that Socrates is speaking about a kind of embodied memory that belongs to the living being and thus to the life force of the soul, which it takes with it, for better or worse, into Hades. But the reverse is also true inasmuch as the soul's *ēthos* can lead the body away from its hopeless entanglement in the tyrannizing fluctuation of the senses and bring to sensory experience a stability and guidance, as Socrates argues when he asks: "Of all the parts of a human being, do you think any is a ruler except the soul, especially if it be a wise one?" (*Phd*. 94b4–5).

At 76b, Socrates concludes the discussion of recollection by addressing explicitly the role of *logos* in the return movement from the knowledge of the intelligible to its connection with the sensible. To know is to be able to have a *logos*, an account, of what is known. But not everyone has the *logos*. In fact, Simmias worries after the death of Socrates: "There will no longer be any man living who is able to do so properly" (*Phd*. 76b). In response, Socrates points out again that this childish fear is a fear of dispersion, a fear that the soul will wander around as if "dragged by the body to things which never remain the same, and it wanders about and is confused and dizzy like a drunken person because he lays hold of such things" (*Phd*. 79c6–8). The *logos* brings the prior knowledge of the intelligible to the sensible. If this *logos* has any force, it is because the recollection we have of what is in itself is a remembrance of what exists before we are born, and if that is true, then our souls too must have previously been like the divine in having knowledge of what is alone by itself. The soul resembles (*eoiken*) the divine (*Phd*. 80a7), that is, the soul itself is, apart from the body, an *eikon* of the divine. Death is the soul's return to its divine being (Socrates's swan song). Thus it must have existed prior to birth.

Socrates declares that true *logos* can only operate on the basis of its trust (its *pisteuein, pistis, Phd*. 83a8) of this postulate. Suddenly, and for the rest of the Dialogue, philosophy becomes a matter of trust and the way this trust

nurtures and heals the soul (*Phd*. 84b). Simmias says, the philosopher must "take whatever human *logos* is best and hardest to disprove, and embarking upon it as upon a raft, sail upon it through life in the midst of dangers" (*Phd*. 85c8–d2). And Socrates, after acknowledging his concern about misology that might result from the realization that philosophy is a matter of questioning, and after insisting that this *logos* that holds open the question as the proper path to an understanding of the truth of what is to come, says: "If what I say is true, I am the gainer by believing it; and if there is nothing for me after death, at any rate I shall not be burdensome to my friends by my lamentations in these last moments" (*Phd*. 91b2–5). One might wonder why this *logos* concerning the impending future and the imminent death of Socrates must be open-ended in its commitment to truth, and one can note also that Socrates must at this point trust that Simmias and Cebes have learned in the course of their conversation to overcome the childish fear that previously led them to demand certainty from the *logos* or give way to misology. Socrates realizes perhaps that the future of one who is committed to the practice of dying can let go of the dependency on the present that dominates *aisthesis* and can open the site for a future whose end is not so much a closure as it is the space of infinite possibility.

The *Phaedo* ends with a myth. In the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates says he has come to realize that he cannot do philosophy, the greatest of all music, he cannot pursue the *logos* apart from myth, though presumably these activities too are bound together in their opposition to each other. And at the end of the *Phaedo*, Socrates makes good on this promise. He tells the myth of the earth. We saw that at the beginning of the *Phaedo* Socrates planted his feet on the ground as he recounted the story of the soul apart from the body. The conversation comes full circle now as Socrates retells what he has heard on someone's authority about the regions of the earth. This myth of the earth is a story of subterranean passages of endless depth far removed from this surface reality of ours. Here water flows uninhibited from one passage of the *chasma*, the hollow openings, to the other. These chasms of the earth are beyond the opposition of the intelligible and the sensible where things are held apart; they are filled with rivers of fire and mud and other elementary being. And the earth oscillates, causing an enormous movement where things flow in and out of each other in oscillating waves, and the other elements, the air and the wind do the same, eventually forming of themselves into seas and rivers, marshes and springs. And returning again and again to the flow from which they came.

As Socrates goes off to the bath, Crito becomes full of grief at the impending loss of the father, fearing, he says, "that we shall pass the rest of our lives

as orphans" (*Phd*. 116a7). Socrates is gentle with Crito, who appears not to have learned the joy of the swan song. But this is not because he is wrong in his conclusion that they are to be left as orphans. The whole point of the *Phaedo* is after all about how to be as human beings, as orphans who live in the face of death and who celebrate the life that has opened up for us because of the almost-forgotten memory of what has come before—in the end, an impossible memory.

Note

1. Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Plato: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), with minor changes.

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The Origins of Political Life in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*

George Harvey

I would like to begin an examination of what we find in Plato's dialogues about the origins of political life by focusing on two instances where the topic is given thematic treatment: first, in Socrates's construction of the first city in Book II of the *Republic*, and second, in the Athenian's discussion of the origins of political systems (*politeias*) in Book III of the *Laws*. The two passages present us with very different portrayals of how political life originates, differences that are fundamental to the question of how we view human nature and the status of political life in relation to it. Our examination of these two accounts will show that many of their differences can be explained by the fact that they are each different *kinds* of account. The account in the *Republic* considers the founding of cities as more of a theoretical question, where the dialectical context places specific constraints on the kind of account that Socrates can offer. By contrast, the Athenian's account in the *Laws* appeals to history to trace the origins of political life, and unlike Socrates in the *Republic*, his interlocutors appear willing to accept whatever account represents his actual views. As we will see, these differences need to be taken into consideration when we try determine what these dialogues tell us about Plato's position on this topic.

Socrates's First City in *Republic* II

The account we find in *Republic* II marks the beginning of Socrates's defense of justice as something that is both good in itself and for its consequences. The construction of the city begins with Socrates's observation that none of us is self-sufficient, and his further suggestion that this is the sole "principle [ἀρχὴν]" on which all cities are founded (*R*. II.369b6–7). From this, Socrates proposes to construct a city "in theory [τῷ λόγῳ]," guided by what he and his interlocutors recognize as needs within themselves (*R*. II.369c9–10). The

most basic of needs are for food, shelter, and clothing, so the city at a minimum includes a farmer, a builder, a weaver, a shoe-maker, and a physician. Each of the five members of the city provides one type of good in a quantity sufficient for meeting the needs of all the participants. This is based on the idea that it is easier for an individual such as a farmer to devote all of his time to producing one type of good than it is to mind his own business, dividing his time between farming, weaving, building, and shoe-making without associating with others (*R.* II.369c7–370a4).[1] A city (*polis*) (*R.* II.369b7) is thus broadly defined as any arrangement where many people gather to exchange goods that satisfy the needs of individuals.

Because individual human beings differ "in nature [τὴν φύσιν]" from one another, (*R.* II.370a7–b2) and arts place demands on the time of those who wish to practice them correctly, goods are best produced in a cooperative arrangement wherein each individual practices just one art, free from the demands of any other occupation (*R.* II.370c3–5). This results in a much larger city, one where citizens possess skills in more specialized fields of art (*R.* II.370c7–e3). Socrates recognizes the need to import at least some of the goods from other cities. Craftsmen therefore must produce more goods than is required to meet their own demands in order to have a surplus to offer in trade, and to cover the needs of merchants, sailors, retailers, and wage laborers (*R.* II.371a4–5). In addition, a currency becomes necessary for the purposes of trade in the marketplace (*R.* II.371b8–9). Even with these additions, life in this city is rather modest. The inhabitants live on a simple diet, even with the addition of such delicacies as olives, cheese, and various desserts (*R.* II.372c4–d1). They produce clothing and shoes exclusively with a view to protecting wearers from the elements, as they are not to be worn during the summer (*R.* II.372a5–b1). The inhabitants sing hymns to the gods, enjoy sex, but bear only as many children as the city can accommodate without falling into poverty or war (*R.* II.372b8–c1), and they will live to a ripe old age, bequeathing the same life to their children (*R.* II.372d1–3).

Glaucon responds to Socrates's description by calling it a city suitable for pigs (*R.* II.372d4–5). His interest is to eliminate the hardships found in such a life by introducing luxury items, including furniture, delicacies, oils and perfumes, and prostitutes, as well as painting, embroidery, gold, and ivory (*R.* II.373a1–8). Inclusion of these items results in a greater expansion of the city both in size and in the range of arts practiced. With this expansion comes the recognition that it can only sustain itself through conflict with other cities. This leads to the introduction of an army with which to wage war, giving rise to a class of citizens distinct from the goods-producing craftsmen. Socrates allows the city to be expanded in these ways, but only by first declaring that

his city is the "true [ἀληθινὴ]" one, comparing to Glaucon's luxurious city as a healthy city to one with a fever (*R*. II.372e6–8).

From the outset, we are aware that this first city is a city in theory, one that is not intended to represent a city that ever actually existed.[2] However, the principle on which the city is created, that human beings lack self-sufficiency, explains the coming into being of all cities, theoretical or actual. The purpose of the city is to provide each of its citizens with necessary goods, and all of the city's developments are aimed at achieving this end. A good city is one that possesses an arrangement that achieves this in the best possible way. In this case, the best arrangement is one that distributes work in a way that makes the best use of its population and maximizes the production of necessary goods. Once the degree of specialization reaches this optimal limit, there is no further stage of development that will make the city better. That Socrates believes that such a limit is attained in the first city is implied by the fact that once established, the city goes from one generation to the next without significant changes in size or in the kinds of arrangements involved in the production of necessary goods.

It is only later, in Book V, that Socrates observes the disparity between what is grasped in theory and what is achievable in practice (*R*. V.472e–473a), but his awareness of this difference tells us that the construction of a city in theory will omit much having to do with the way in which cities are actually instituted in practice. It does not take into account, for example, the amount of time required for these developments to take place. It gives little attention to factors such as geography, climate, or the occurrence of events like war, disease, or natural disasters that are not part of the city's internal structure but could alter or disrupt this process of development. Another limitation is reflected in Socrates's identification of a lack of self-sufficiency as the founding principle. Socrates identifies what he finds in himself and his interlocutors as a feature of human nature (*R*. II.369b6–7). This raises the question of whether one can look to the characters of human beings raised in a city-state to determine the needs and desires that motivate the transition from prepolitical to political life.

In considering the question of whether Socrates's account provides us with a straightforward explanation of why human beings live under political arrangements at all, much depends on how we interpret his endorsement of his account as one that follows the implications of its founding principle— that is, that human beings lack self-sufficiency. If it is taken to imply that on Socrates's view, individuals are incapable of obtaining the goods necessary for survival, then political life would be a necessary consequence of our natural limitations. However, by considering the context in which he

introduces his account, one can arrive at a different interpretation of this denial of self-sufficiency, one that holds that political life, while preferable to the prepolitical, is not necessary for human survival.

In the *Republic*, Socrates is given the task of defending justice as something that is both good in itself and for its consequences against the popular view that justice is only good for its consequences (*R*. II.357e–358a). The popular view holds that when considered in its own right, justice is not a good at all. This is made clear in Glaucon's account of how justice comes into being (*R*. II.358e–359b). On this view, human nature is such that doing injustice is good. Justice is an agreement whereby individuals avoid the harms brought upon them by the injustice done by others. The account thereby establishes that justice is not an inherent good, but is instead a compromise: each individual enjoys the benefits of the agreement only by giving up what is good to human beings by nature.

The position from which Glaucon challenges Socrates thus places certain constraints on how Socrates can proceed. Because the conception of human nature as naturally benefited by injustice is central to the popular view, its advocates[3] would be on their guard against any defense of justice that operates on a fundamentally different conception of human nature. For this reason, Socrates could not explain the origins of political life by, for example, an innate altruistic impulse.

What about Socrates's denial of self-sufficiency, presented as the founding principle for all such associations? At first glance, the notion that human beings depend on others to obtain the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter also seems to contradict the popular view that the primary motivation for entering into political arrangements is advantageous but not something necessitated by our natural limitations. The willingness of his interlocutors to proceed on this basis implies that they find nothing in Socrates's principle that is at odds with the popular conception of human nature. This is possible only if the principle is interpreted in a way that is consistent with the assumptions underlying the popular view. The popular view fully recognizes that the prepolitical phase of human life is not desirable for most individuals and can allow that human beings do have basic needs that are obtained more easily through cooperation, but it does rule out the notion that they cannot survive apart from such arrangements. On the contrary, Glaucon identifies the "true man [ἀληθῶς ἄνδρα]" as one who possesses such abilities that he does not need to enter into any contractual arrangement in which he agrees not to do injustice (*R*. II.359b1–4).

If we take Socrates to be aware of this, then we should interpret his claim about our lack of self-sufficiency as consistent with the popular view. Such an

interpretation would hold that our lack of self-sufficiency means that human beings mutually benefit from cooperative arrangements in the production of necessary goods, but not that these arrangements are necessary for survival. On this interpretation, Socrates's founding principle reflects the fact that human beings are not perfectly adapted to their surroundings and must rely on the crafts in order to obtain necessary goods.[4] Since the crafts must be practiced in a certain way in order to maximally benefit from them, political life is preferable to life in solitude.[5]

From this angle, we begin to appreciate the degree to which Socrates's first city stays within the limits set by the popular view. It shares with Glaucon's account the view that political life is preferable but not necessary. Both positions depict human beings as motivated by self-interest in participating in political society. Disagreement emerges only when Socrates completes his account of the first city, implying that human desires have a natural limit in the acquisition of necessary goods such that political development reaches its end when this is achieved with maximum efficiency. In objecting that this is a city suitable for pigs, Glaucon is not merely registering his distaste for such a life, but is also reasserting the popular conception of human nature as possessing desires that are not limited to necessary goods.

Socrates's endorsement of the first city should be seen in this same light. His calling it the "true" city in the face of Glaucon's objection can be taken to mean that he regards his city as the one that is directly implied by the founding principle, at least as he interprets it. It is a rejection of the idea that the principle accounts for desires for goods beyond what is necessary, as the advocates of the popular view would have it. But in disagreeing with Glaucon about what is implied by the founding principle, Socrates need not be seen as giving an unqualified endorsement of the view that the principle is the sole or even the primary explanatory factor in the origins of political life.[6]

The Origins of Constitutions in *Laws* III

The Athenian's account of the origin of political systems (*politeiai*) in Book III of the *Laws* differs from Socrates's account in the *Republic* in that it draws from accepted tradition. This difference in approach results in an account that differs in content from the Socratic account on many important points. Of equal importance is the fact that the Athenian's stated purpose in describing the origins of political systems is to come to some understanding of their nature, and in doing so, he is free of the kinds of constraints placed on Socrates by his interlocutors. In passages in Book II that clearly recall

Socrates's defense of justice in the *Republic*, the Athenian argues that the life of the just is more pleasant and more profitable than the life of the unjust (*Lg.* II.660e–664c), even when the unjust are given wealth, health, power, strength, courage, and immortality (*Lg.* II.661d–e). When Book III of the *Laws* begins, the Athenian's interlocutors, Clinias and Megillus, are in agreement with him about the nature of justice and the role of political life in the achievement of happiness.

The Athenian proposes that the best way to examine political systems (*politeiai*) (*Lg.* III.676a1) is to consider first how they came into existence. By adopting a perspective that encompasses an infinitely vast period of time, the Athenian claims that one is able to observe every conceivable change in political systems, and that one can also determine the extent to which human beings have lived under some sort of political organization (*Lg.* III.676b3–5). These periods of political activity are bounded in time by the occurrence of cataclysmic events such as floods, plagues, and many other causes that result in the almost total annihilation of the human race. The interlocutors agree that these events represent the truth in tradition (*Lg.* III.677a1–2), and the Athenian adds the further claim that these conditions engendered all the features of present-day life, including cities, political systems, arts, laws, and both great vice and great virtue (*Lg.* III.678a7–9).

In what follows, we are asked by the Athenian to picture what the effects of such a cataclysm would be on the human race (*Lg.* III.677a8–9).[7] While the human race is threatened by a variety of events, the Athenian considers the case of a cataclysmic flood. Since cities are located on plains or near coastlines and rivers, they would be annihilated along with the vast majority of the human population (*Lg.* III.677c1–2). The only survivors would be a small and scattered population of shepherds who live at or near the tops of mountains and avoid the effects of the rising levels of water. Another major consequence of the flood is the loss of almost all the arts, including the art of politics (*Lg.* III.677c4–7, 678a3–5).

Between cataclysmic events human beings live under primitive conditions for "countless millennia [μυριάκις μύρια ἔτη]" (*Lg.* III.677d1) without the benefit of the lost arts. In the present age, and presumably in all such cycles, the rediscovery of the arts is a relatively late development, taking place in the last "one to two thousand years [χίλιαἢ δὶς]" (*Lg.* III.677d2). Life in the postcataclysmic era is not entirely free of arts, however. Shepherds maintain their flocks, which provide a steady supply of meat and milk (*Lg.* III.678e10–679a4), and the survivors also possess knowledge of the arts of pottery and weaving—arts that provide clothing, shelter, bedding, and other basic goods. These arts are not human innovations; rather, they are divine gifts to

man, reflecting the god's intention to allow the human race to survive and develop even in the harsh conditions produced by cataclysmic events (*Lg.* III.679a4–b3).

Life for the widely dispersed survivors is one where scarcity is not an issue. Instead, the very abundance of basic goods and the divinely endowed skills makes life in isolation sustainable. This isolation gives rise to an affection toward others (*Lg.* III.678c5–6, e9–10). The material conditions are such that one's needs are met with relative ease, and there is no desire, let alone the opportunity, to obtain goods beyond what is necessary for survival. Without gold and silver, no one is either rich or poor, and conflicts between individuals do not arise (*Lg.* III.679a1–c6). Under these conditions, there is no violence or crime and there are no feelings of jealousy or envy between men. No one in this age possesses complete virtue (*Lg.* III.678b1–4), but as a result of these living conditions, the Athenian holds that people in this period possess characters that are superior to what is prevalent in civilized times (*Lg.* III.679e1–3).

Without the art of politics, individuals in this age live by the guidance of "ancestral law [πατρίοις νόμοις]" (*Lg.* III.680a6–7). The Athenian claims that this arrangement constitutes something of a political system, a system of "lordship [δυναστείαν]" (*Lg.* III.680b2) that compares the rule of the Cyclopes, where each man lays down the laws for his wife and children with no regard for the conduct of his neighbor (*Lg.* III.681b1–e4).[8] The next stage in the development of political systems occurs when several family clans merge to form a larger community. It is only at this stage that agriculture is introduced, and the construction of stone walls as protection against wild animals marks the first stage at which communities are bound to geographical territories. Laws come into existence at this stage because the rules governing each household varies. When merged into a larger community, it becomes necessary for representatives of each family to review the rules governing each household and select ones suited for common use (*Lg.* III.681c7–d5). These representatives are the first lawgivers, who are responsible for the creation of "a sort of aristocracy [ἀριστοκρατίαν τινὰ]" or "kingship [βασιλείαν]" (*Lg.* III.681d3–4).

The Athenian's account of the origins of political life differs from Socrates's in many ways. The Athenian's use of tradition offers a perspective on political developments over time, and does so with an awareness of how these developments are affected by external factors. From this perspective, we see that the form human life takes is largely determined by causes beyond human control. This perspective also allows us to consider the possibility that political life represents only a small portion of the time human beings live in.

By contrast, Socrates's account in the *Republic* gives very little consideration to the possibility of prepolitical life, and it traces the development from the most primitive arrangement to what Socrates calls the true city by considering only technical innovations that are the results of human endeavor.

The Athenian's choice in approaching the topic by considering vast periods of time appears to be with a view to making a larger point, as it highlights the degree to which human existence is subject to the whims of chance events and reminds us of the insignificance of all human endeavors in the face of the forces of nature. The Athenian's approach anticipates remarks in Book IV, where he identifies the primary factors that determine the course of human affairs (*Lg*. IV.709a1–d9). To explain his provocative assertion that "no man ever legislates [οὐδείς ποτε ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲν νομοθετεῖ]" (*Lg*. IV.709a1–2), the Athenian says that human affairs are determined first by god, and secondarily by the influences of chance (*tychē*) and opportunity (*kairos*) (*Lg*. IV.709b7). Human expertise (*technē*) (*Lg*. IV.709c1) is third, having the capacity to achieve a desired end only when the other factors permit it. He applies this directly to the case of politics, stating that for a state to live in happiness, certain environmental conditions must first be met, and only then is it possible for "a legislator in possession of the truth [τὸν νομοθέτην ἀληθείας ἐχόμενον]" (*Lg*. IV.709c8) to bring about such an end. In this way, the Athenian's account delivers on its promise to provide an account of the causes behind changes in political systems (*Lg*. III.676c6–8).

Another way the Athenian's account differs from Socrates's is in its positive portrayal of prepolitical life. Clearly, the good character born of innocence in this stage invites comparison with the extremes of vice and virtue possible in civil society. Doing so raises the question of which mode of life the Athenian regards as better for human beings. Everything would seem to depend on how we understand the difference between what each life has to offer in terms of the best ethical character one can achieve. Political life includes many corrupting influences, but also the possibility of virtue. Prepolitical life, by contrast, is one in which a naive goodness is ensured by the absence of anything that would corrupt the soul. He describes this good character as resulting from two distinct causes: the absence of wealth and poverty that give rise to violence and crime, and an unsophisticated attitude toward what is believed about gods and men and what is said to be good and bad (*Lg*. III.679b7–c8). These factors indicate that the resulting good character is something all individuals come to possess because of the environment in which they live, and unlike the state of virtue attainable in city life, this character does not represent an achievement born from a deliberate attempt to cultivate the soul.

Examination of the origins of political life in the *Republic* and *Laws* reveals a number of points on which they differ. Many of these, as we saw, can be explained by the differences both in the respective approaches they take to the topic and in the specific purposes these accounts are meant to serve in the context of the dialogues in which they appear. For example, we can now appreciate more fully the constraints placed on Socrates in presenting the first city once we see the Athenian's alternative account: the latter is precisely the kind of account that Socrates could not offer even if it represented his considered view of the topic, because it operates on a conception of human nature that directly contradicts the position advocated by Socrates's interlocutors. When context and perspective are taken into account, we shouldn't be surprised by the extent to which these two accounts diverge.

These differences may give us grounds for considering one of the two accounts as a more accurate reflection of Plato's position. Specifically, the features that are distinctive of the Athenian's account in the *Laws* might suggest that it is to be favored over the Socratic account in the *Republic*. For one thing, it takes a much broader perspective on the topic of political life, considering not only the inherent capacities and desires of human beings, as does the Socratic account, but also the role of factors beyond human control, such as the impact of natural forces and divine influences. In a similar vein, the Athenian clearly attempts to ground his account in what he and his interlocutors take to be accepted facts that describe the actual conditions in which political life emerges, whereas Socrates offers no factual basis for his identification of the founding principle of all cities. Where Socrates also assumes that human capacities and desires are relatively fixed, such that the motivations for participating in a political arrangement by prepolitical human beings can be discovered by mere introspection, the Athenian's account is open to the possibility that prepolitical human beings are at some basic level very different from ourselves, not only in their ability to obtain all the goods necessary for survival without relying on cooperation from others, but also in their ethical character and outlook.

While this breadth of perspective and openness to these possibilities may lead us to conclude that the Athenian's account is authoritative and one that more accurately reflects the views of its author, there are two qualifications to consider. First, the Athenian's account offers few details to explain *why* human beings develop the arts and eventually form political communities. His account suggests that the flourishing of family clans leads to an increase in population, which in turn gives rise to the first collective settlements. Perhaps an important but unmentioned factor has to do with the benefits of specialization and mutual cooperation that figure more prominently in

the Socratic account. It may therefore be the case that the developments in political life result from a combination of these factors. If so, there remains the question of determining their relative importance.

The second point has to do with the Athenian's remarks about the quality of life in the prepolitical age. We may come to accept that in prepolitical times humans have all of their basic desires met, enjoy good mutual relations, and exhibit comparatively good ethical characters (albeit short of complete virtue). But in doing so, what do we mean by saying that such people are happiest? Something very much like this question is given consideration in another dialogue. In the *Statesman*, the Myth of the Reversed Cosmos (*Pol.* 268d–274e) presents us with two distinct cosmic ages. In one, human beings receive direct care from the gods; in the other they are left to govern their own affairs. There are many important differences between the age of divine governance in the *Statesman* (also referred to as the Age of Cronus) and the Athenian's description of the prepolitical ages, but they both provide us with a set of circumstances in which all human desires are easily satisfied (*Pol.* 271d–272b). The Visitor juxtaposes the age of Cronus with the age of Zeus (the cosmic age in which humans rely on the arts to obtain everything they need or want) and asks whether human beings are happier in the former or the latter (*Pol.* 272b). We find the answer by first determining how human beings in the age of Cronus use their considerable leisure time: if they spend it in pursuit of philosophy, then it is the superior age; if instead they spend it enjoying stories and amusements, then the superior life is to be found in the age of Zeus (*Pol.* 272b–d). While we do not receive a final answer to this question in the *Statesman*, the Visitor's posing of it implies that our assessment of the quality of life cannot be exclusively in terms of how our desires are satisfied. Thanks to our divine herdsmen, desire-satisfaction among human beings in the age of Cronus is optimal, but for the Eleatic Visitor this alone does not decide the question of the relative happiness of human beings living in that era.

The Eleatic Visitor's ability to see that the question of human happiness is not determined by the satisfaction of basic desires provides us with an important perspective from which we can reconsider the Athenian's claims about prepolitical life. It also allows us to take a similar stance toward Socrates's endorsement of the first city as both true and healthy, in that it appears based entirely on the fact that citizens in the first city have limited desires that are easily met through cooperative arrangements in the production of goods. To follow the Visitor's lead, we will have to consider human happiness in much broader terms than either Socrates or the Athenian does in their respective accounts.

Notes

1. This is the only place where Socrates hints at the possibility at life outside a political arrangement. It will be helpful to keep it in mind when considering the Athenian's description of life that precedes the establishment of political arrangements in the *Laws*.

2. While the possibility that a city very much like the *kallipolis* may have existed in the distant past is raised in the *Timaeus* (see especially *Ti.* 26c–e), no such suggestion is to be found in the *Republic* about either the *kallipolis* or this first city. To the contrary, Socrates later insists that the construction of a city in theory is worthwhile even if it cannot be realized in practice (*R.* V.472e–473a).

3. While Glaucon and Adeimantus are sympathetic to Socrates's position even as they defend the popular view, the same cannot be said of Thrasymachus. While there are significant differences between the popular view and the positions taken by Thrasymachus in Book I, both endorse the idea that injustice is good for human beings (*R.* I.348b–e). For Thrasymachus, this would imply an endorsement of the account of human nature Glaucon offers on behalf of the popular view.

4. The reliance on the crafts as a means for obtaining necessary goods figures prominently in both the Athenian's account in the *Laws*, but also in myth of the reversed cosmos in the *Statesman* (*Pol.* 268d–274e), where the Eleatic Visitor sets our dependence of the arts in the present cosmic period against the age of Cronus, in which human beings are perfectly acclimated to their surroundings as a result of direct divine involvement.

5. This also explains why Socrates is does not stop with the minimal arrangement consisting of five or six citizens, which represents an improvement over solitary life but is clearly inferior to arrangements where there is greater specialization.

6. Socrates's calling the first city 'healthy' seems to anticipate his later analogy in Book IV between health and justice. His use of the term suggests that the first city is the right kind of good (i.e., good in itself and for its consequences), but since health is a property of the body and not the soul, it is possibly Plato's signal to the reader that Socrates has not properly identified what it is that makes a city good.

7. In this respect, the Athenian's account is just as speculative as Socrates's, but the difference remains in that the Athenian takes his account to be a reasonably accurate description of a series of events that actually took place at some point in the distant past.

8. Unlike the Cyclopes, the characters possessed by the heads of these households ensures that the established laws, while varied according to the natural differences in psychic dispositions of individuals (see *Lg.* III.681a7–b7), are basically good.

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Being in Late Plato

Eric Sanday

This chapter examines the shift in Plato's account of the *eidē* or 'forms' from the *Republic* to the *Parmenides*. Forms in the *Republic* are characterized in terms of perfection, purity, and changelessness, with the form being an ulti-mate explanatory principle for being-X. Participants, while being-X, are also capable of not-being-X, either through qualitative change and coming-to-be, or through external changes in perspective or opinion, by which they "appear [φανήσεται]" not-X (*R.* V.479a7). The form is treated as prior to participant and as prior to mixture with what would deny what it is. It is intrinsically changeless and not subject to changes in appearance.

In the *Parmenides*, the account of form shifts to accommodate the types of admixture demanded for combination with and division from other forms. In the Fifth Hypothesis, forms are subject to determinate "bonds of being and not-being," which permits the form to present itself as an object of discursive knowing, being-X, -Y, and -Z, and not-being not-X, not-Y, and not-Z. Forms are still treated as pure and perfect, but now with the power of gathering together intelligible bonds of being and not-being. Thus, in the *Parmenides*, forms are the gathering source *and* the gathered terms subject to the admixture; they are that by which true speech is explained. In this chapter, I argue that the "turning of the soul from becoming to truth and being" (*R.* VII.525c) announced in the *Republic* is partially fulfilled through the account of veridical speech in the *Parmenides*.

Forms and Participants

At the end of *Republic* V, elaborating on his claim that there will be no respite from faction and hardship in cities until philosophers rule as kings (*R.* V.473c–480a), Socrates distinguishes the philosopher from the nonphilosopher in virtue of their respective orientation toward forms and participants. The so-called lovers of sights, like philosophers, love the intel-ligible character of things—their beauty—but the nonphilosophers love

intelligibility improperly, loving the instances of intelligibility and disregard-ing the sources of that intelligibility. Whereas the philosopher loves what is purely and perfectly beautiful, such as the form of "the beautiful itself [αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν]" (*R*. V.476b), the lovers of sights love the beautiful in *koinōnia* or 'community' with such things as actions, bodies, and other forms in which the beautiful presences itself. The lovers of sights love "the many and merely apparent [φανταζόμενα πολλά]" (*R*. V.476a) instances of beauty, and, by fail-ing to see the beauty of what has intelligibility on its own terms, they suffer from a disordered relation to being.[1]

The key distinction is between the autonomy of the beautiful itself and the dependent meanings, which are subject to "becoming."[2] For example, an act is subject to becoming insofar as the same act manifests beauty in one relation and vice or ugliness in another. The act of contributing one's property to the common use of others can manifest beauty, but the same act in another rela-tion, perhaps in the context of a criminal enterprise, is vicious and dissolute. The being of the act depends on the relation in which it is nested, and it is thereby subject to what Socrates calls *koinōnia* and becoming. *Being* beauti-ful in this way cannot fail to imply *not being* beautiful, and it is therefore subject to becoming. Thus, though the philosopher and nonphilosopher may love the same thing, such as beauty, the nonphilosopher loves beauty in the wrong way, assigning primacy not to beauty but to the things and acts (and so on) that instantiate beauty, refusing to believe that there is a beautiful itself distinct from these things, actions, and contextual relations. The philosopher distinguishes between beautiful things, actions, or people, and the beautiful itself. What is needed for a waking, philosophical life is an understanding of the difference between being itself and the thing subject to becoming.

Socrates further divides form and participant into ontologically distinct "ones" on the basis of a division between powers of "thought [διάνοια]" (*R*. V.476d–478e). He defines a "power [δύναμις]" by the things "on which [ἐπί]" it depends and what it "accomplishes [ἀπεργάζεται]" (*R*. V.477d); pow-ers that accomplish different things depend on different things. Knowledge, ignorance, and opinion accomplish different things: "knowledge [γνώμη]" accomplishes something "unerring [ἀναμάρτητος]" (*R*. V.477e); "opinion [δόξα]" accomplishes something fallible, and "ignorance [ἀγνωσία]" effec-tively accomplishes nothing. These are therefore three distinct powers that depend on three different (i.e., ontologically distinct) sorts of ones. "Knowl-edge [γνῶσις] is dependent on what is [ἐπὶ μὲν τῷ ὄντι γνῶσις ἦν]," which is "complete" and "unmixed" and "always remains the same in the same respect [ἀεὶ μὲν κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσαν]" (*R*. V.479a). Ignorance depends "on what is not [ἐπὶ μὴ ὄντι]"[3] and what "could not correctly be addressed

as some one [thing] [ἕν τι] but rather [must be addressed as] nothing [μηδέν]" (*R*. V.478a–c). Opinion is situated between knowledge and ignorance; it is intermediate between complete being and complete nonbeing (*R*. V.477a). The objects of opinion, therefore, "are double [ἐπαμφοτερίζειν]" (*R*. V.479b–c): "for these [objects] are ambiguous, and it is not possible to think [νοῆσαι] solidly that they are or are not, or both or neither" (*R*. V.479c).[4]

Consider the way 'being' is used in these passages. The objects of opinion, participants, are *between* being and nothingness in the sense that their determinacy is equivocal. The object of opinion, for example the beautiful participant, 'is' in the sense that it *is beautiful*. The participant's being beautiful does not fall short of being, any more than two apples fall short of being two. But the object of opinion *also* 'is not,' which is to say that in some other respect the participant is (and must be) not-beautiful. The object of opinion is, therefore, between being and nothingness not in the sense that it is present and absent or generated and destroyed but in the sense that its intelligibility and determinacy are mixed. Despite being mixed, however, opinion *is* oriented toward the same object as knowledge: that is, toward beauty.[5] The key is that the object of opinion *also* 'is not': that is, it is also subject to not-being-X.

Insofar as the being of forms and participants is the same, we can see that Socrates remains within what in *Republic* VII he calls the "cave." Just as a participant 'is' in the sense of being of a certain sort, so too a form 'is' in the sense of being that sort. An action or body 'is' beautiful, and the form of beauty 'is' beautiful; both 'are' the intelligibly determinate character of beauty. The being of the participant differs from the being of the form in the sense that the participant implies being subject to not-being-X *in addition* to being-X.

The discussion in *Republic* V remains "in the cave" in the sense that the hypothesis of being remains inadequate and unexplored. Socrates is satisfied to leave the 'is' of the form and the 'is' of the participant essentially unclarified. Socrates does call the being of the form "unmixed, or pure [εἰλικρινῶς]" (*R*. V.479d), perfect, and "always remaining the same [ἀεὶ . . . κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσαν]" (*R*. V.479a2–3). He calls participants a concatenation of distinct ways of being: being-X as well as not-being-X, or beautiful as well as not-beautiful. But it tells us nothing about being-X to say that the being of the form differs from the being of the participants by virtue of the addition of not-being-X. The distinction between form and participants hinges on the distinction between the unmixed being of the form and the double being of participants, and it does not resolve Socrates's equivocation to discuss the form's being "one" and the participants' being "many."

The being of the forms is unified: "concerning all the forms [πάντων τῶν εἰδῶν πέρι]," "each is itself one [αὐτὸ μὲν ἓν ἕκαστον εἶναι]" (*R*. V.476a); forms are one in the sense of partless, not complex, and unique, not one-of-many. By contrast, participants are manifold in the sense that they are, at heart, "double [ἐπαμφοτερίζειν]" (*R*. V.479b, 479c) in the sense that there are many of them. Thus, when Socrates describes the form as "itself" and "itself one [αὐτὸ μὲν ἓν . . . εἶναι]" (*R*. V. 476a) and says that it is "completely [παντελῶς]" and "whole [ὅλως]" (*R*. V.475b) or "all [πᾶν]" (*R*. V.475b), his characterizations point to being one in contrast to the participants, which are one *and also* many. This resolves nothing because the meaning of being-one is not specified by the addition of being-many. With respect to being and being-one, the distinction between the forms and participants is not thought through; it is only indicated as work for the future.

In *Republic* VII, Socrates returns to the distinction between the double character of participants and the complete or stable oneness of forms in the "study of the one," which is the first step in the "turning the soul itself around from becoming to truth and being [αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς . . . μεταστροφῆς ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἐπ' ἀλήθειάν τε καὶ οὐσίαν]" (*R*. VII.525c).[6] Through philosophical reflection, the objects of perceptual opinion are held fast and pressed into service as what Socrates calls "thought-summoners [νοήσεως . . . παρακλητικόν]" (*R*. VII.523d8–e1).

Thought-Summoners

The prisoner emerging from the cave in *Republic* VII first glimpses the forms "through reflections" in water, slowly growing accustomed to the excessive light. The process of growing accustomed to the light takes time and effort, which Socrates suggests can take the form of the five mathematical studies of Book VII, which are ways of habituating oneself to see not things but their intelligible structure. The first of those mathematical studies is referred to as a "study of the one," in which one focuses on the manifold character of participants. Socrates asks us to see that the objects of sensation appear "sufficiently judged [ἱκανῶς . . . κρινόμενα]" insofar as each object presents itself as unproblematically one; the example he offers is a finger, which presents itself as one of many, that is, "each similarly [ὁμοίως ἕκαστος]" (*R*. VII.523c). But these self-evident ones can be subjected to comparison in terms of various shared qualities, such as size, color, shape, such that when compared in terms of, for instance, of size, one and the same thing presents a mixture of opposites. The finger "is large" and also "is small," and the mixture of large and small causes the soul to be *aporein* or "at a loss." Being hard cannot be the

same as being soft, or big the same as small, or heavy the same as light. If any of these (hard, heavy, large) is to be anything at all, it must be other than its own opposite; otherwise it would not 'be' anything at all.

The impossible testimony of sensation propels the soul by demanding explanation. The soul is led to a clarifying reinterpretation of, as Socrates says, "what is itself one [τί ποτέ ἐστιν αὐτὸ τὸ ἕν]" (*R.* VII.524e). The soul, "calling on calculation and intellect, examines whether each of the things reported [i.e., being large and being small] is one or two" (*R.* VII.524b). Once the soul singles out largeness and smallness as *kechōrismena* or 'separate' and asks what sort of thing they are, it arrives at the intelligible ones, that is, the large, small, and equal. Therefore, the larges and smalls that sensation judges to be "commingled [συγκεχυμένον]" (*R.* VII.524b–c), intellect separates out and considers on their own terms, and in so doing the "study of the one turns the soul toward the contemplation of being [μεταστρεπτικῶν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ὄντος θέαν ἡ περὶ τὸ ἓν μάθησις]" (*R.* VII.525a). The soul discovers, in the distinction between the double character of objects of sensation and the uniform character of the objects of intellect, that the object of knowledge, large itself or small itself, is not confined to the object of sensation but separate from it, exceeding and being irreducible to its perceptual instances.

The study of the one has shown us that forms are different in kind than things and people, which are subject to space and time, and it has shown that forms are intelligible on their own terms, with reference to nothing else, whereas spatiotemporal individuals are manifestly only intelligible with reference to the forms. What it means to be large, the form of largeness, is separate from what it means to be small, the form of smallness. The forms set the terms for comparison and determinate being; the forms are not, like the 'finger' we initially imagined, subject to the categories of comparison and intelligible determinacy, such as being larger and smaller. These points echo the Book V distinction between form and participant.

The Book V discussion does not provide a full account of the truth and being toward which it turns the soul, and the study of the one in Book VII only establishes the explanatory inadequacy of participant things. The necessary, categorial structure of spatiotemporal particulars has not been established, nor has there been an account of the determinate structures to which forms must be subject if they are to be capable of combination and division. We have only progressed to the point of showing that form is a special kind of 'one,' and participants, despite being subject to becoming, have certain necessary structures related to their individuality and complexity. It is not possible to go into a full account of elaboration of the world "outside the

cave" made in the *Parmenides*, and I will focus exclusively on the transformed sense of 'is' offered in the Fifth Hypothesis.

Veridical *Legein*—*Parmenides*

The Eight Hypotheses of the *Parmenides* study the senses of 'one' that separate form from participant.[7] Although commentary on these Hypotheses is widely divergent and the material itself is excruciatingly detailed, I will proceed directly to the Fifth Hypothesis. My reading focuses on the relationship between the First Hypothesis (the one, if it is) and the Fifth Hypotheses (the one, if it is not). I will leave aside the important relationship between the Second and Third Hypotheses, as well as the addendum to the Second Hypothesis. The goal in this section is only to show that the First and Fifth Hypotheses articulate the sense in which any form can be taken up in its character of being simple and unique, that is, as (a) prior to spatiotemporal individuals, and nonetheless (b) subject to the bonds of being and nonbeing by which a form becomes accessible to discursive knowing. The concluding note struck in this section is that in the *Parmenides* the distinction is drawn between the form as a simple one and the form as subject to the gathering of *logos*. The turning of the soul from becoming to truth and being, while not completed, is developed in relation to knowledge by the account of veridical *legein*.

The Hypotheses of the *Parmenides* respond to the puzzles Parmenides poses to Socrates's account of participation. The key to those objections is to reflect on the determinate intelligibility to which forms must be subject and, by contrast, the eidetic structure by which participants must be composed. Specifically, our attention should be directed at part/whole complexity, as opposed to simplicity, and individuality, as opposed to uniqueness, as a basis on which to disambiguate participants from the forms to which they are subject. The Hypotheses help answer these puzzles by displaying the form as 'one' in the sense of being partless and unique, and the participant as a one among many that is a complex whole of parts subject to place, time, disposition, relation, and a list of other characteristics tied directly to instantiation in space and time. Insofar as the hypotheses address essential structures of what it means to be a form and a participant, and how these two relate, the *Parmenides* challenges the assumptions on which the *Republic* tacitly relied.

In the *Republic*, 'being' was conceived in terms of being intelligibly of such a sort. In the hypotheses, the account of being is transformed by the introduction of 'is' that is explicitly *not* temporal (and *not* spatial), for example the 'is large' of the timeless meaning of 'exceeding in size' 'is not' subject to space and time. Furthermore, the explicitly timeless 'is' is determinate insofar as it

'is not,' for example large 'is not' small, 'is not' equal, and so on, and to this degree is subject to determinacy. The timeless 'is' is intimated in the First Hypothesis and then developed in the Fifth Hypothesis in terms of what is there called "the bonds of being and not-being."

In the First Hypothesis, Aristoteles uses the timeless 'is' in his response to Parmenides's question "Is there any way of being other than being past, present, or future?" Aristoteles says, "There is not [*ouk estin*]" (141e). Aristoteles thus identifies the being of structural ways of being, categorial ways of being, as opposed to the contingent being this-or-that of spatiotemporal things. Aristoteles is so deeply unaware of the distinction between the two types of 'is' that he draws on the necessary and universal sense of being in order to rule out its possibility.

In the Fifth Hypothesis, the timeless 'is' is taken up again as the being of the one that is not (in-time-and-space). Parmenides says that the "one that is not" must partake in *being* if we are to "say true things [ἀληθῆ λέγειν]" when we say that "the one is not [τὸ ἓν μὴ εἶναι]" (*Prm.* 161e). When we say this, we *speak truly*, and thereby we "say things that are [ὄντα λέγειν]" (*Prm.* 161e). The 'is' that says true things I am calling 'veridical speech' and defining as speech that 'says things that are,' that is, forms. For veridical to speech be able to say true things of a form, it must pick out other forms with which it is joined and divided.[8]

We see this reading borne out in the difficult passage from the Fifth Hypothesis (*Prm.* 162a–b) in which Parmenides describes the bonds of being and not-being. When we say *what* a form is, we are gathering together those specific forms by which the form, as *definiendum*, is truly articulated.[9] The veridical 'is'—the 'is' that says "true things"—binds a form to the other forms as which it is the same, and the 'is not' is a bond by which the form is bound away from those forms from which it is different. I propose that we hear in this passage the distinction between two senses of 'is': (1) 'is' refers to the bond that ties a form to other forms as which it is (definitionally) the same, and (2) 'is' indicates the form in its priority to the definitional relations to which it is subject as an object of discursive knowing. If, as Parmenides says, a form is "most of all to be," it must satisfy two simultaneous senses of being. On the one hand, the form must be prior to and directive of the gathering of other forms into the articulation of true speech, and it must be (the same as) the forms in which it is intelligibly determined and not-be (the same as) the forms against which it is determinately articulated:

> For thus would a being [i.e., a form subject to determinacy] most
> of all be and a not-being [i.e., a form that is prior to its determinate

intelligibility] would not-be, [i.e.] by a being [τὸ . . . ὂν] partaking the being of being a being [οὐσίας τοῦ εἶναι ὄν], and [by a being partaking] the not-being of not being a not-being [μὴ οὐσίας δὲ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι μὴ ὄν], if it is completely to be [i.e., to be intelligibly determinate]; but a not-being [i.e., the form prior to its participation in definitional being and not-being] [partakes the] not-being of not-being a not-being [i.e., the form prior to definitional being and not-being "is not" thereby "nothing"], and [partakes the] being of being a being [i.e., it is in some sense "something"], if the not-being [i.e., the prior form] will also completely not be [i.e., remain prior to definitional being and not-being] [οὕτως γὰρ ἂν τό τε ὂν μάλιστ᾽ ἂν εἴη καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν οὐκ ἂν εἴη, μετέχοντα τὸ μὲν ὂν οὐσίας τοῦ εἶναι ὄν, μὴ οὐσίας δὲ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι μὴ ὄν, εἰ μέλλει τελέως εἶναι, τὸ δὲ μὴ ὂν μὴ οὐσίας μὲν τοῦ <μὴ> εἶναι μὴ ὄν, οὐσίας δὲ τοῦ εἶναι [μὴ][10] ὄν, εἰ καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν αὖ τελέως μὴ ἔσται]. (*Prm.* 162a–b)

In order that the form be determinately intelligible and accessible to discursive knowing, a being (i.e., a form) must be bound to certain other forms (i.e., it must partake of being with respect to being specifically what it is) and bound apart from other forms (i.e., it must partake of not being with respect to not-being specifically what it is not). The form prior to its participation in definitional being and not-being is ambiguously characterized, for it *is* X, Y, and Z, yet it is prior to its own definitional subjection to other forms. Thus, the account of the one-that-is-not details the conditions to which any form, as a one, must be subject if it is to be known as an object of discursive *noein*, and in this sense the 'is' expresses a discrete set of forms that the form is the same as and other than. At the same time, the form is prior to and directive of the participatory relations in which it stands, and as such it 'is' something and 'is not' nothing.

Having established the participatory relations by which a form is subject to discursive knowing, Parmenides permits Aristoteles to revisit the earlier view that 'being' entails being subject to space and time, which Aristoteles had claimed in the First Hypothesis. According to that view, 'being' and 'is' are necessarily subject to space and time, and whatever is not in space and time, either past, present, or future, cannot be. Such a stance, of course, is unable to recognize the eidetic movement in which true speech reveals a form by passing through the other forms the *definiendum* 'is' and 'is not.' With the notion of eidetic movement that has just been suggested in the "bonds of being" analysis in mind, Parmenides asks whether it is possible for something in one condition to be otherwise without "changing [μεταβάλλον]" out of that condition

(*Prm.* 162b), and he asks whether its *echein* or, so to speak, its 'is' so and not-so indicates a change from one condition into another. In short, if statesmanship is theoretical and is not practical, if it is directive and not critical, if it directs by directives it conceives itself and not directives conceived by others, and so on, then must not statesmanship be in *kinēsis* or 'motion'? How so?

If being is restricted to spatiotemporal existence, this claim would make no sense. However, unrestricted to space and time, the meaning is clear. If the "one that is not," he says, "is nowhere among beings [μηδαμοῦ γέ ἐστι τῶν ὄντων]" (*Prm.* 162c), then it cannot move from place to place, rotate, or alter from itself. The one that is not in spatiotemporal motion must be 'at rest,' Aristoteles concludes, revealing himself to be still gripped by the supposition that the absence of spatiotemporal motion necessarily implies spatiotemporal rest. The provocation to which Parmenides subjects the reader, if not Aristoteles, is to conceive a non-spatiotemporal movement of veridical *legein*, through which knowledge moves, as it were, from moment to moment of what the *definiendum* 'is' and 'is not,' moving back and forth between the paired predicates that veridically articulate (positively and negatively) what it is. If nothing else, we can see that the discussion at this point enjoins us to think necessary and universally exhaustive categories to which spatiotemporal individuals are subject: that is, if not in motion, then necessarily at rest.

The necessity to which spatiotemporal individuals are subject, such as the exclusive relation of motion and rest, demonstrates that the intelligibility of individuals is articulated in terms of eidetic moments which, in the case of individual forms, sit in an ordered relationship of priority and posteriority. The moments in which statesmanship is articulated have an order, through which discursive knowing moves when it articulates knowledge. *Per accidens* this movement might refer to the temporal movement of predicative thinking on the part of the knower, who thinks or speaks a definition one part at a time in a temporal sequence. Thinking and speaking take time to articulate. However, any thinking and speaking that have hit on the truth will be guided by a simple eidetic insight, and the articulation of the form traces out the structure that is timelessly given to knowledge. *Per se*, therefore, the one-that-is-not is simply and timelessly what it is, and it (at rest) is one by one articulated into those specific forms to which it is joined and from which it is separated (in motion) as required for its instantiation as an object of knowledge. The form is twofold. On the one hand, it is prior to definitional 'is' and 'is not,' the bonds by which the form is determinately articulated. On the other hand, the form is joined, one moment after another, and separate from, one moment after another, those other forms in terms of which it is articulated. This is eidetic (not temporal) motion and rest.

The *Parmenides* thus provides an account of being as what articulates a simple form into the complex of forms that it is the same as and other than—the 'is' of veridical *legein*. The *Parmenides* also points to the eidetic motion and rest implied by veridical being. The account of veridical *legein* implies the motion and rest to which the simple form subjects its articulation while yet remaining prior, as the source, of its own articulation. The movement of scientific revelation, therefore, requires the distinction between the simple, autonomous, "what" of the form (First Hypothesis) and the series of moments (i.e., forms) in which it is truly articulated (Fifth Hypothesis) in order to explain the possibility of "saying true things [ἀληθῆ λέγειν]" of which knowledge consists. But here the *Parmenides* stops. The dialogue does not explain the dynamic in which inquiry gathers itself to the simple source of *alētheia* or 'truth' beyond this quasi-propositional content. The *Parmenides* points to but offers no account of the movement of dialectical inquiry. The necessary account of the nature of inquiry, and inquiry into natures, is still to come later dialogues.[11]

Conclusion

The meaning of being is not raised as a question in the *Republic*, though in that dialogue the stage is set for an analysis of being by virtue of the distinction between becoming and being, and by virtue of the reference to the turning of the soul from becoming to truth and being. In the *Parmenides*, the crucial distinction is drawn between the timeless structure of participants subject to the determinacy of space and time and the timeless structure of the definitional articulation of the forms as objects of discursive knowledge. In both cases, whether the eidetic structure of things subject to space and time or the eidetic structure of the objects of knowledge proper, we are talking about an 'is' and 'is not' of categorial determinacy, which is set apart from the 'is' and 'is not' of things subject to becoming. The Fifth Hypothesis of the *Parmenides* offers an account of a "one that is not," insofar as it is prior to relations of being and not-being, which is nonetheless also subject to those relations as an object of discursive knowing. The bonds of being and not-being reveal discursivity and propositional content to be posterior to the form, which is the normative source ordering the other forms in and through which a partless one is truly articulated. There is more work to be done on the meaning of being even after the *Parmenides*; the eidetic combinations and divisions are not treated as a complex whole of parts in their own right until the *Sophist*, but an important step has been taken. The *Parmenides* has provided the account the bonds of being and not-being, and of the 'being' and 'not being' of the form is prior to and guiding of those relations.

Notes

1. I set aside the question of whether the form itself, which is not subject to being what it is not, is immanent within the participant, which is subject to not being what it is.

2. I acknowledge that the beautiful itself and other forms are dependent on the Good, but constraints on length do not allow me to sort out that dependency here.

3. In these passages, Socrates uses the Greek terms *epistēmē* and *gnōsis* interchangeably.

4. We should note, returning to the beginning of the discussion of the philosopher in this section, that the lovers of sights and the lovers of the sight of truth are both construed as 'seeing' the object of their love, and that in both cases the object is construed as an individual thing present to a seeing. The distinction between the two objects is drawn neither at the level of the object nor in the seeing, although we are promised that the 'one' present to theoretical seeing is different than the 'one' present to physical seeing, and that the being beautiful of the form is different than the being beautiful of the participant. These promises are imagistically given. There is no distinction between the two given at the level of discursive understanding.

5. This reference to the nature of intelligibility is also intended to forestall a potential misunderstanding about the meaning of being. The important point is that 'being' refers to the way in which the complex of aspects of which a 'one' (i.e., form) consists are bound together. For example, the 'is' of the essential relations intended by veridical speech that gathers aspects of a form is a type of being subject to necessity and universality. The contingent relations in which we read off the complex of parts of which a spatiotemporal thing is composed, or the relations in which such a one stands, are contingent (nonveridical) aspects of the intelligibility of the object.

6. I will not here treat the sun analogy of Book VI because, despite being the next step on the path, it does not resolve any of the problems raised here about the meaning of being and being-one. It does raise questions about using the posterior, dependent images to discuss prior principles. For further reflections on the sun analogy and on the relationship between the *Republic* and *Parmenides*, see Mitchell Miller, *Plato's "Parmenides": The Conversion of the Soul* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 273n4.

7. In order to focus on the account of the combination and division of form that serves as the basis of 'true speech' in the limited space available here, several important interpretive moves must be set aside: how Parmenides's prescription for philosophical exercise leads to eight hypotheses, why we should be interpreting the subject of the first hypothesis to be form in its character of simplicity and uniqueness, the subject of second hypothesis to be the categorial structure to which spatiotemporal participants are subject, and, with respect to the third through eighth hypotheses, the transformed account of participation in the third hypothesis and the eidetic structure of appearing in the seventh hypothesis. See Sanday, *A Study of Dialectic in Plato's Parmenides* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2015).

8. Lesley Brown helpfully offers the distinction between complete/incomplete predicative senses of 'is,' according to which the incomplete use of 'is,' in which we say that something 'is,' is derivative of the normative and complete use, in which we say that something 'is' of this or that sort, or is in this or that way. The subsumption of the complete under the incomplete 'is' helpfully brackets the, to the Greeks, alien distinction between predicative and existential senses of 'being.' In place of the distinction between predicative and existential senses of 'is,' Brown, building on work done by Alexander Mourelatos and Charles Kahn, takes the 'is' of complete predicative statements to be the prior and

normative basis for the 'is' of simple existence statements. Lesley Brown, "Being in the *Sophist*," in *Plato I: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, ed. G. Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 455–478.

9. The reference to "true things" and "[characters] that are" picks up from the philosophical breakthrough of the historical Parmenides but extends that insight in a new, Platonic, direction. The historical Parmenides makes a distinction between beings that are in the realm of night and day, on the one hand, and night and day themselves, on the other. In so doing the historical Parmenides marks out the distinction between familiar things of experience and the being of the forms that are given to, and constitutive for the object of, *noein*. Plato in Fifth Hypothesis of the *Parmenides* has Parmenides single out the being of "night" and "day," i.e., the ones-that-are-not, in order to go on to describe the other characters to which they must be subject (is, is not, motion, rest, same, other) if they are to be truly spoken as the object of discursive knowing in veridical speech. The historical background is still present in the distinction between the bond of "is" (day) and "is not" (night) through which the object of *noein* establishes determinate identity, but now we are discussing the determinacy as an object of *noein* of the *being* of spatiotemporal things.

10. Mary Louise Gill inserts this negative and deletes the negative at 162a8, following the Budé edition by Diès 1923. I am following Paul Shorey and the Oxford edition; the sense seems clear. Plato, *Parmenides*, trans. M. L. Gill and P. Ryan (Bloomington, Ind.: Hackett, 1996), 170n29; Paul Shorey, "On Parmenides 162 A. B.," *American Journal of Philology* 12, no. 3 (1891): 349–353; Auguste Diès, ed. and trans., *Platon: Parménide*, vol. VIII.1 of *Platon: Œuvres completes* (Paris: Association Guillaume Budé).

11. The relationship between the simple form and the part-whole complex in which it is articulated all at once, dovetails with the elements knowledge requires of its object in the *Theaetetus*. Even if forms are not mentioned explicitly in the *Theaetetus*, the requirements that knowledge stipulates for its object will be fulfilled by forms. The problem of falsehood, which arises in the *Theaetetus* and is put aside to be taken up again in the *Sophist*, follows from the way the object of knowledge is both (a) grasped noetically and (b) articulated into parts. The possibility that what we take to be the governing source of knowledge, the *ousia* noetically grasped, will turn out to be a self-deception is a possibility cannot be excised from the human relationship to truth. A more complete account of being in late Plato would have to treat those passages thoroughly. See Mitchell Miller, "Unity and *Logos*—A Reading of *Theaetetus* 201c–210a," *Ancient Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (spring 1992): 87–111.

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Aristotle on *Physis*: Analyzing the Inner Ambiguities and Transgression of Nature

Marjolein Oele

A cup falls, a cherry tree blooms, a cat meows, a ballet dancer rests after an exhausting performance. A seemingly haphazard collection of events can, according to Aristotle, all be attributed to one principle: nature (*physis*). For Aristotle, *physis* is the cause of order (*Phys*. VIII.252a12, 17), does nothing pointlessly, and precludes chance. Simultaneously, *physis* is anything but enigmatic, abstract, and impersonal—as this driving force works not by imposing order and shape externally, but by instilling desire from the *inside* of a natural being: a being that is by nature "has in in itself a source of motion and rest" (*Phys*. II.192b17) and "stretches out" toward its own nature (*Phys*. I.192a20) so as to become itself. Thus, Aristotle's notion of *physis* enables an understanding of nature as simultaneously all-encompassing, normative, personal, and intimate.[1]

Aristotle's normative yet personal conception of *physis* stands in strong contrast with our own, modern notion of nature. For us, nature is understood by way of nonnormative, abstract laws such as gravity, which moves things externally—for example, as formulated according to quantitative Newtonian physics.[2] Although Aristotle, like Newton, takes as his starting point concrete physical observations, like falling rocks or flames reaching skyward, Aristotle's concept of *physis* does not fit within a shallow empirical "philosophy of natural science" but, instead, is part of a true "ontology of nature"[3] or a "protophysics":[4] an examination into the origins or sources (*archai*) of nature (*Phys*. I.184a16).[5] In providing this ontology of nature (protophysics), Aristotle's ideas on *physis* and metaphysics intersect; accordingly, Aristotle's concept of *physis* cannot be easily delimited. Provocatively, Heidegger, in his analysis of Aristotelian *physis*, argues that since the word 'nature' always entails an interpretation of beings as a whole, and since metaphysics articulates the truth about beings as a whole, metaphysics *is* "physics."[6] Nonetheless, Aristotle repeatedly makes a distinction between philosophy or theology and physics,

lending proof to the idea that the boundary between metaphysics and physics, aside from small transgressions, needs to be carefully considered (e.g., *Met*. VI.1025b19–1026a32).

This essay aims to specify what Aristotle's ontology of nature entails. In uncovering the meaning of *physis*, I turn to the more general and well-known definitions of *physis* as provided in Aristotle's *Physics* Books II and III.[7] But I also explore nature's specific workings, analyzing how, in *De anima*, Aristotle describes the interaction between body and soul in the phenomenon of the *pathē* or 'affections,' discussing how nature ultimately seems to demand self-realization, but also transgression. I propose that Aristotle's ontology of nature is founded on fundamentally ambiguous relationships, such as that between form and matter, soul and body, and fulfillment and movement. The tension found in those relationships manifests two orientations: on the one hand, Aristotle's vision of nature is dedicated to natural beings and their composite groundedness in both matter and form as shown in many natural movements including growth and alteration; on the other hand, Aristotle commits himself to the importance of form and its activity—active completion and self-realization—that ultimately lead to nature's self-suspension and transgression into the divine.

I. *Physis* as a Principle and Cause of Motion and Rest

> *That* nature is, it would be ridiculous to try to show, for it is clear that among the things that are, such things are many. (*Phys*. II.193a3)[8]

Aristotle's ontology of nature begins with the assumption that nature manifests itself through utter diversity of beings—in the *physei onta*, the things that are by nature. As examples of such natural diversity, Aristotle cites in the *Metaphysics* "nose, eye, face, flesh, bone, and in general, animal; leaf, root, bark, and, in general plant" (*Met*. VI.1026a1). In other works, he includes simple bodies such as earth and fire, and heaven as a whole and its parts (*De cael*. III.298a29–32). By locating nature *in* all these natural beings, Aristotle articulates the idea that nature is always the nature *of* something. In contrast to Plato's *Timaeus*, for Aristotle, nature is not an abstract, impersonal, "all-pervading demiurgic force."[9] Instead, nature is that inner driving force we reference when saying of a natural being: "That is *its* nature."[10] It is for these reasons that "the nature of a thing is a *this* and a disposition [ἕξις] into which it comes" (*Met*. XII.1070a12).

In describing nature as an *internal* source, Aristotle clearly demarcates natural beings that are "by nature" from other things. In this, Aristotle is part

of a long tradition where understanding nature means to distinguish it from its opposite:[11]

> Of the things that are, some are by nature [φύσει], others through other causes: by nature are animals and their parts, plants, and the simple bodies, such as earth, fire, air, and water . . . and all of them obviously differ from the things not put together by nature. (*Phys.* II.192b8–13)

Aristotle argues that things produced artificially, like a cloak or bed, do not have an "innate impulse [ὁρμὴν] of change" (*Phys.* II.192b18–19). Instead, they are moved externally; moreover, if they are moved by themselves, then they are moved incidentally (*Phys.* II.192b32). Distinguishing natural beings from artificial ones, Aristotle emphasizes *physis*'s internal role. Simultaneously, to the extent that artificial things are composed of natural elements, he submits that artificial beings share in natural impulses (*Phys.* II.192b20–21).[12]

In addressing what this inner nature *is*, Aristotle turns to the concepts of *kinēsis* or 'motion' and *stasis* or 'rest.' In his first definition of nature in the *Physics*, Aristotle writes, "Nature is a certain source [ἀρχῆς] and cause [αἰτίας] of being moved [κινεῖσθαι] and of coming to rest [ἠρεμεῖν]" (*Phys.* II.192b21–22). Aristotle stipulates that *physis* is a principle of motion and rest in that in which it is present essentially (*kath'hauten*) not incidentally (*Phys.* II.192b22). Nature is internal to a natural thing as truly belonging to it: nature does not cause change due to an incidental characteristic, such as the case of a doctor healing himself. It just *incidentally* happens to be that the cured patient is a medical doctor (*Phys.* II.192b28). The medical art does not essentially belong to the patient qua patient, but is incidentally connected to his or her move toward health. By contrast, the way nature allows a being to move and rest is *kath' hautos* or according to its own, embodied being.

In his definition of nature, Aristotle grants that nature not only sets things in motion, but also allows rest. Here, rest is not something that any thing can do. As Heidegger formulates eloquently: "Rest is a kind of movement; only that which is able to move can rest."[13] Rest occurs either when a body is externally constrained through a particular obstacle (*De cael.* III.300a20–30, 300b5–6) or when, due to its nature, it is able to "reach some end and form."[14] As Lang observes, "Being at rest" "is unequivocally an active infinitive" and thus "not a passive state such as an absence of motion."[15] In other words, "being at rest is for Aristotle the activity associated with being immovable in that which *may* be moved."[16]

Notably, using the above definition of *physis* as movement and rest, the passive voice[17] of the term *kineisthai* should alert us that Aristotle does not conceive of things that are by nature as self-movers, as proposed by Plato's Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, arguing the soul to be a self-mover (*Phdr.* 245c–246a). Rather, as Lang emphasizes: "Plants and animals and their parts and the elements are always moved by another."[18] The implication here is not an external other, but another natural dimension within: the "inner" mover.

Since natural beings have both a part that is moved and a part that is moving, natural things are not unambiguously themselves, but are composed of opposing forces. The discussion of matter and form in the next section will further explicate this inner split.

II. *Physis* as *Hylē* (Matter) and *Eidos* (Form)

> But since nature is twofold, and is both form and material, we must consider it as though we were inquiring about what snubness is. (*Phys.* II.194a12)

To explain this internal structural division in natural beings further, Aristotle introduces in the *Physics* the concepts of *hylē* or 'matter'[19] and *eidos* or 'form,' and their bearing on what a natural thing essentially is (*Phys.* II.193a29–31). In other words: what is the true nature *of* something? This holds consequences for understanding nature as movement: is nature defined by *being moved*—thus indicating matter to be "source and cause of being moved and of coming to rest" (*Phys.* II.192b21–22)? Or is that internal principle more like form, with *physis* being an internal source of movement and rest (e.g., *Phys.* II.192b14, III.200b12)?

Defending matter as this internal cause, Aristotle includes the position of the Sophist Antiphon, who argues that the four material elements determine *physis*. For example, a bed, when given the opportunity to sprout, gives rise to wood, not another bed (*Phys.* II.193a12–18). This seems to indicate that the bed's wooden—that is, material—character determines its nature, not its arrangement according to convention and art.

Interestingly enough, Aristotle does not simply refute Antiphon's position,[20] but argues that Antiphon overlooks something crucial: the *eidos* or 'form' that is part of one's *physis*. In support of form as internal principle, Aristotle argues we mostly use the term 'nature' when referring to something that has actually assumed a particular form, whereas something that is potentially such (e.g., flesh or bone) is not called so (e.g., a human being). Furthermore, he argues that a human being originates from another human

being, and thus this natural process is not determined solely by matter, but by the transmitted form. Finally, by alluding to the meaning of the root verb for *physis*, 'to be born' or 'to grow' and explicating that growth is always defined by its endpoint (the "to which") instead of its beginning point (the "from which"),[21] Aristotle argues that *physis* is mostly defined by the ultimate form that something receives rather than its initial matter.

Despite his insistence that "form is more *physis* than matter" (*Phys*. II.193b8), we have to underline that for Aristotle *physis* is ultimately split—is twofold. While matter may be unsatisfactory to explain a natural being's existence, the same can be said about form: without recipient matter, form has no way of 'imposing' shape. Form and matter thus refer and depend on each other: without this codependent ontological relationship the meaning of nature remains vacuous. Thus, we can speak of this relationship as being part of what Wieland calls a "pluralism of principle-systems that exist next to each other."[22]

The one who studies nature—the *physikos*—therefore needs to study matter *and* form. To study form exclusively would be to fall into the Platonic trap, taking a similar attitude toward natural as to mathematical things (*Phys*. II.193b33ff.) ignoring the underlying matter. Instead, a *physikos* must offer explanations of natural beings similar to the one provided by the definition of 'snubness,' namely a definition of concavity that is only applicable to a certain kind of matter, namely the nose (*Phys*. II.1934a7). Just as snubness includes a reference to form and matter, a *physikos* needs to give a definition of form *in relationship* to matter. This means that the natural philosopher's definition of, for example, a human being needs to include the form of a human being (i.e., its rational soul) in relationship to its particular matter (its bodily flesh and bones, etc.).

While this codependent ontological relationship between form and matter is part of the *physikos*'s study, it is not yet self-evident what this would entail in practice: in what way would matter specifically function in relationship to form, and how does form exactly need matter? To illustrate the twofold nature of *physis* and to clarify the ontological relationship between the body (a living being's matter) and soul (a living being's form), I turn next to *De anima* and its discussion of the *pathē* or 'affections.'

III. Nature at Work: Analyzing the *Pathē* or 'Affections' and the Interaction between Body and Soul

Immediately in Book I of *De anima*, Aristotle clarifies that a discussion of the "*pathē* of the soul" is incomplete without having recourse to both matter and

form as joint causes (*De an.* I.403b4–8). However, it also becomes quickly apparent that the relationship between these two key aspects of *physis* is anything but uncomplicated. Although soul is defined as the active "cause and source of the living body" (*De an.* II.415b9–10), we cannot overlook the fact that the body has its own particular role and activity transcending mere dependence on soul.

To illustrate this complicated relationship, Aristotle discusses the "*pathē* of the soul,*" asserting "with most of its *pathē*, the soul neither does anything [ποιεῖν] nor has anything done to it [πάσχειν] without the body, as with being angry, being confident, desiring, and every sort of sensing [αἰσθάνεσθαι], though thinking [νοεῖν] seems most of all to belong to the soul by itself" (*De an.* I.403a6–8).[23] While this initial definition of the *pathē* is remarkably broad and inclusive of many functions, Aristotle continues by focusing solely on those *pathē* we call emotions or passions, elucidating the crucial interdependence of body and soul:

> But all the *pathē* of the soul seem also to be with [μετὰ] the body—spiritedness, gentleness, fear, pity, boldness and joy, as well as loving and hating—for together with these the body undergoes something [πάσχει τι τὸ σῶμα]. (*De an.* I.403a17–19)

By connecting the body's affectivity (*paschein*) to the *pathē* (affections) of the soul, Aristotle brings together body and soul. Moreover, the preposition *meta* arguably does not simply express mere "concurrence" of body and soul, so that the body accompanies the soul, but remains itself external to it. Whereas *meta* may signify a loose association between two items,[24] it can also express a stronger connection, including a *causal* connection.[25] In the above passage, the preposition *meta* likely expresses the coconstitutive[26] character of the body in the *pathē* of the soul. Notably, this thicker reading does not mean that the body is the *only* cause of the soul's *pathē*, as this would explicitly go against Aristotle's general emphasis on the pluralism of principles and causes. However, this stronger reading of *meta* alerts us that the body's role in *pathos* is not just a concurrent external side effect. Rather, the body itself is integrally effecting and coconstituting the affective change that we call *pathos*. Body and soul are not two distinct identities that somehow 'combine' through formation of *pathos*; they are two different principles of *one* phenomenon.[27]

Evidence for this stronger reading of the body's coconstitution in *pathos* can be retrieved from another passage in Aristotle's text, when he argues the togetherness of body and soul in the *pathē*

is revealed when strong and obvious experiences [παθημάτων] do not lead to the soul's being provoked [παροξύνεσθαι] or frightened [φοβεῖσθαι], while sometimes it is moved [κινεῖσθαι] by small and obscure ones, when the body is in an angry state [ὀργᾷ] and bears itself in the way it does when it is angry. And this makes it still more clear: for when nothing frightening is happening there arise among the feelings [πάθη] of the soul those of one who is frightened. (*De an*. I.403a19–25)

Aristotle first argues that someone—due to a calm bodily disposition—may not feel provoked or feel the *pathos* of fear, despite being beset by strong afflictions. Conversely, when one's bodily disposition makes one frightened or more "angry," one may be provoked by obscure causes to feel fear or anger.

Some commentators hesitate to attribute to Aristotle the idea that our bodily disposition may coconstitute a *pathos* such as fear and anger, therefore arguing that Aristotle speaks about the affected person behaving *as if* one were angry or fearful. On the basis of my earlier interpretation that Aristotle *is* committed to show that the body is coconstitutive in forming the *pathē*, it follows that Aristotle would argue that the body's disposition allows for a particular *pathos*, whereas in other cases it would resist such change. Aristotle argues in other works for such a causal connection,[28] for instance, arguing that older people, due to "coldness," are more anxious (*Rhet*. II.1389b30–32),[29] whereas younger people, due to their warmer blood, are more prone to anger (*Rhet*. II.1389a9–10, II.1389b32). By articulating the *pathē* ultimately as *logoi enuloi* (*De an*. I.403a25), as "enmattered principles,"[30] Aristotle underlines precisely the crucial interdependence of body and soul.

This excursion into *De anima* has shown that the relationship between the two key aspects of *physis*—matter and form—is anything but straightforward. While it may be true that form is often defined as the "active" factor determining a being's *physis*, we cannot deny that matter's resistance or receptivity has a particular activity as well. This active dimension of matter comes forward in *Physics* I.9, where Aristotle claims that matter "longs for [*ephiesthai*]" form (*Phys*. I.192a22–25). The striving expressed in this passage underscores the dynamic, active nature of matter, making us wonder about the often-emphasized 'active autonomy' of form: if form, in natural beings, always needs matter to "inform" something, how independent can it be? Simultaneously, although matter remains dependent on form, Aristotle ascertains that matter is "almost, and in a certain respect is, a substance [οὐσία]" (*Phys*. I.192a5–9), emphasizing a more independent status of matter than is often noted.

IV. The Duality of Motion

The ambiguous, complex relationship between the two components of nature appears differently in Aristotle's analysis of the two essential components of motion in *Physics* Book III:

> Since nature is a source [ἀρχὴ] of motion and of change, and our pursuit is for nature, we must not let what motion is remain hidden. For it is necessary, being ignorant of it, to be ignorant also of nature. (*Phys.* III.200b12–14)

While Aristotle speaks in this book less about matter and form and more about the relationship between *dunamis* (potency), *energeia* (activity), and *entelecheia* (fulfillment or being-at-work-staying-itself)[31] as components of motion, his discussion bears similarities in that he assumes motion begins with an initial lack of a property—that is, lacking a particular form—and ends with the acquisition of particular form (*Phys.* I.7).[32] Moreover, Aristotle provides acknowledgment (similar to the one he made in reconciling matter and form) that *two factors*, mover and moved (*Phys.* III.200b32), are equi-primordial for catalyzing and sustaining motions so characteristic to natural beings.

In *Physics* III.1, Aristotle negotiates the task of resolving motion's unfinished, indefinite character with the sense of motion being necessary to the completion of a particular *telos* or 'goal' set in motion by the mover "which always bears a form" (*Phys.* III.202a10). For instance, while still continuing on its flight and retaining potency, an airplane flying through the air actually *passes* through various places. The full achievement of the goal of this airplane's movement—for instance, its arrival in San Francisco—would mean termination of this motion,[33] thus Aristotle must be careful to incorporate this element of completion in his definition without abandoning the idea of something being in the process of being completed.

Aristotle's definition of motion hinges on the tension and interaction between what is fully active and complete and what is only potentially:

> The being-at-work-staying-itself [ἐντελέχεια] of whatever is potentially [δυνάμει], just as such, is motion. (*Phys.* III.201a11)[34]

Interestingly, Aristotle uses an example based on *technē* or 'art'—building a house (*Phys.* III.201a18ff., III.201b7ff.)—and not nature to explain motion, possibly because the *metabolē* or the 'alteration' of something into something

else (as illustrated by building) demonstrates the remarkable, dynamic transformation a being undergoes while in motion.

The motion of building incorporates sustainment of potential—in this case the buildable (matter in the form of stones)—while simultaneously allowing for the buildable to express itself as buildable by manifesting its *entelecheia*—its full completion or fulfillment (or, in Sachs's translation, "being-at-work-staying-itself "). "Whatever is potentially" is not just any potential for a motion—for example, bricks and mortar as mere building-materials waiting to be used. Rather, "the *entelecheia* of whatever is potentially, just as such" means in the particular case of building that the bricks and mortar are actually *creating* something built. Building is a motion because the buildable remains a potency, is not used up, while, simultaneously, the buildable is completely at work. Thus, motion includes completion, but only of what is potentially qua potency. As Kosman phrases it: "Motion . . . is not the actuality of a potentiality in the sense of an actuality which results *from* a potentiality, but rather in the sense of an actuality which *is* a potentiality in its full manifestation."[35] Aristotle thus carefully situates motion "between a prior potentiality and a further actuality."[36] It is an *ateles* or 'incomplete' being-at-work (*Phys.* III.201b32–33): while potency qua potency is complete in motion, motion itself has to remain an incomplete actuality for it to remain motion.

V. *Physis*, Motion, and Fulfillment

This explication of motion allows us to delve deeper into the meaning of nature. Nature is the source of all those kinetic processes that have their ends outside themselves—like plants growing toward light, animals seeking food, human beings learning how to speak. All these motions are aimed at the active completion of the natural being in which they originate, but they themselves, as Sachs also emphasizes, are "not fused into the states of active completion toward which they are potencies."[37] This state of active completion, of pure fulfillment realizing itself, properly belongs to nature, and Aristotle writes in *De anima* that we must distinguish processes of change in which deprivation and loss play a central role (e.g., moving from ignorance to knowledge through learning) from processes that "preserve [σωτερία] that which is potential by something actual which is like it" (*De an.* II.417b4–5). Aristotle speaks of the latter processes as ones that "pertain to dispositions [ἕξεις] and nature [φύσις]" (*De an.* II.417b15–17), thereby lending further proof to the idea that nature itself, for Aristotle, is ultimately to be defined by the process of realizing oneself continuously, actively, and finding one's

end within oneself instead of diverting oneself in end-less, ultimately self-destructive, motions.

Nonetheless, we may wonder whether such a strict opposition between kinetic processes and "completely active" processes can ultimately be maintained when it comes to natural beings. Aren't all the kinetic processes that living beings pursue (seeking food, growing toward sunlight, adapting one's color to the environment, etc.) illustrative of what it means to be fully natural and being fulfilled? Conceptually, it makes sense to distinguish a movement or change from an activity such as seeing that is complete at every moment and has its own internal end (e.g., *Met*. IX.1048b23). Still, it would be odd, in the case of natural beings, to argue that the movement of seeking food is "less natural" and must be separated from the "completely natural" processes of seeing and assimilating food (strictly speaking *entelecheia*), especially since the latter depend so much on the first.

Moreover, if natural beings are composed of matter *and* form, and if studying nature implies investigating "that kind of substance [*ousia*] which in respect of its formula [*logon*] is for the most part not separable [from the matter]" (*Met*. VI.1025b26–28), then we have to call into question Aristotle's emphasis on the natural self-fulfillment of form that seems to exclude reference to the composite individual struggling to become itself by negotiating matter and form's fundamentally complex, and conceptually messy, interrelationship.[38] Another way of showing Aristotle's apparent privileging of form over individual composites is to explore his notions of reproduction and thinking, to which I turn next.

VI. Eternality and Individuality: Analyzing Nature's Transgression

By seeing *physis* as the source of self-fulfillment, this essay has arrived at the center of Aristotle's argument regarding nature: a natural being's goal is to become itself. For instance, it is in a kitten's nature to grow into a mature, healthy cat through mastering natural functions: accurately perceiving its environment, chasing mice, sleeping on laps, feeding and grooming itself, and so on. It is this internal process of self-development and constancy throughout change that allows us to speak about the cat as "its own independent being," or—speaking in Aristotelian terms—an *ousia* or 'substance' (*Phys*. II.192b33). This provides the conceptual tools to distinguish it from its environment. In *De anima* we are given more precise examples of what it means for living beings to self-actualize, including detailed accounts of processes such as nutrition, sense perception, imagination, and thinking that are part of the self-actualization of natural beings.

However, when we push this issue of self-fulfillment a bit further, an interesting problem emerges. Although it is the task of each natural being to fully develop and actualize itself, Aristotle argues in *De anima* that "it is the *most natural* [φυσικώτατον] function in all living beings . . . to reproduce their species" (*De an*. II.415a27). Through reproduction—the epitome of natural functions—Aristotle reasons, each natural being shares in the order of the *aei* or 'eternal' and the *theiou* or 'divine,' and "all things yearn [ὀρέγεται] for that, and for the sake of it do everything that they do by nature [κατὰ φύσιν]" (*De an*. II.415a30–b3). In reproduction, one transcends the numerical, existential self so as to continue nature as such (cf. *De an*. II.415b7–8). In the *Politics*, Aristotle specifies that human beings share "the natural impulse [φυσικὸν τὸ ἐφίεσθαι] with other animals and with plants to leave behind another of the same kind as oneself" (*Pol*. I.2, 1252a29–31). Aristotle thereby makes the drive behind reproduction a natural one, not *prohairesis* or 'choice.'

Paradoxically, nature seems to demand not only self-actualization as a means to actively maintain itself, but self-transcendence: one needs to overcome one's own contingent and material natural being—which is ultimately finite and destructible—in order to fully *be* oneself. This 'other' natural self is no longer an empirical self, but a continuation of oneself in and through another.

The paradox of this "most natural" movement is not only that it pushes self-actualization to the level of self-transcendence, but also that it connects nature or *physis*—as the source of movement and rest—directly to the divine, which always *is*. Thus, we are no longer speaking of nature in all its dynamic diversity and its generation and corruption, but nature unfolds itself most purely in that which transgresses yet penetrates the generation and corruption of the natural beings living here and now.

Another way this conceptual connection between nature and the divine can be established is in Aristotle's discussion of human intellect in *De anima* Book III. Aristotle argues that "in all nature" we can distinguish two dimensions: matter and the "causal and productive thing" underlying it (*De an*. III.430a13). The same applies to the (human) soul: its *nous* or 'intellect' has both a material, passive aspect, and a formative, active aspect. It is precisely this formative, active aspect of the intellect which is called "deathless [ἀθάνατον] and everlasting [ἀίδιον], and without this nothing thinks" (*De an*. III.430a26). Although I do not wish to call to mind the long commentaries that have appeared regarding the difference between *nous pathētikon* or 'passive intellect' and *nous poiētikon* or '*active* intellect,' it is important to note that the human soul (in its activity of pure understanding) embodies the divine, participating in that activity characteristic of the first unmoved mover: living and thinking (cf. *Met*. XII.1072b 25–27). Again, we have a description

of a 'natural' process—insofar as thinking is part of a human being's nature—which ultimately finds its completion in the divine. The divine aspect of our human soul is 'separable' from our body and thus, similarly to reproduction, overcomes the empirical, destructible embodied self. While transcending *physis* in the form of this 'self' here and now, the divine gives meaning and completion to *physis*—and thereby becomes, as it were, the 'ultimate' *physis*.

Conclusion

This essay has tried to show the necessary twofold relationship at the heart of Aristotle's conception of *physis*: between matter and form, between what is moved and what moves it, between being-in-motion and being-fulfilled, and so on. The relationship between *physis*'s two components is not without tension and ambiguity—as the conceptual distinction shows between (incomplete) motions that natural beings engage with, and the (complete) fulfillments that seem to be most 'appropriate' to what nature is.

In addition, the accounts of the processes of reproduction and thinking further complicate any simple conception of *physis*. *Physis* cannot unambiguously be equated with the preservation and completion of a natural being, but also has to include participation in the divine superseding each destructible natural being. Of course, reproduction and thinking are only a few examples where this tension between divine self-fulfillment and self-transcendence, as implied in the interaction between *physis* and the divine, emerges; Aristotle's analysis of the first mover in Book VIII of the *Physics* or the analysis of the contemplative life in Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* could have provided additional evidence.

The way the divine interacts with *physis* can be assessed in two ways—as an intervention that disrupts nature, or as something that allows nature to truly function, so that the divine becomes the *ultimate nature*. True to Aristotle's ontology of nature, this fascinating paradox cannot, and should not, be easily resolved. If one thing emerges most prominently from this essay, it should be that Aristotle's vision of nature is fundamentally ambiguous, and finds itself caught in productive tensions between concepts that propel each other forward in an endless spiraling circle imitative of nature's eternal movement and fecundity.

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1. Whereas in the eighth century B.C.E. *physis* meant the result of growth, Hadot writes that it later meant a "personified idea" and that "in Plato and Aristotle, *physis* with the genitive eventually came to mean what we call a thing's 'nature' or its essence." *Physis* also acquired a more general and abstract meaning. Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. M. Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 17, 19.

2. Cf. Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 2: *Plato and Aristotle* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 1990, 293; Martin Heidegger, "Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics," in *Basic Writings*, ed. D. F. Krell (London: Harper Perennial, 2008), 288.

3. Reale, *History*, 293.

4. This is Otfried Höffe's term. See Otfried Höffe, *Aristotle*, trans. C. Salazar (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 71.

5. In Wieland's view, such an inquiry into principles is practiced more than theorized about. See Wolfgang Wieland, *Die aristotelische Physik* (Göttingen: vandenHoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 53.

6. Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept of *Physis* in Aristotle's *Physics* B.1," in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 185.

7. I have omitted discussion of Aristotle's *Met.* V.4, to allow for focus on the *Physics*. Cf. Thomas Buchheim, "The Functions of the Concept of *Physis* in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 20 (summer 2001): 201–234.

8. For the translation of Aristotle's *Phys.*, I mostly rely on Joe Sachs's translation. See Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Joe Sachs (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

9. W. Charlton, "Commentary," in Aristotle, *Physics II and III*, trans. with commentary by W. Charlton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 88.

10. Ibid.

11. Cf. Wieland, *Die aristotelische Physik*, 231, and Heidegger's list of dichotomies. Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept," 183.

12. More ambiguities could be raised with regard to the relationship between *physis* and *technē*. Cf. Walter Brogan, "The Intractable Relationship of *Physis* and *Technē*," in *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays*, ed. D. Hyland and J. P. Manoussakis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 47.

13. Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept," 189.

14. Philoponus, *On Aristotle on the Soul*, trans. P. J. van der Eijk (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 19b, 23.

15. Helen Lang, *The Order of Nature in Aristotle's* Physics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 48.

16. Lang's emphasis; ibid., 49 (citing *Phys*. III.203a3–4).

17. Ibid., 41–44.

18. Ibid., 44.

19. Heidegger in his notes on *physis* in Aristotle emphasizes that "matter" does not mean "raw material," but the "capacity" or the "appropriateness for" something (Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept," 214). Cf. also Sachs, "Glossary," in Aristotle, *Physics*, 249.

20. Cf. Christopher Long, *The Ethics of Ontology: Rethinking an Aristotelian Legacy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 29.

21. See also *PA* 641b33–36: "Seeds are seeds of what they grow into."

22. Wieland, *Die aristotelische Physik*, 57.

23. Unless otherwise indicated, I will mostly rely on Sachs's translation of *De an*. with some emendations.

24. E.g., Hett translates: "Probably all the *pathē* of the soul are associated with the body." Aristotle, *On the Soul*, with an English translation by W. S. Hett (1936; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

25. Liddell and Scott include *meta* with the genitive in the meaning of 'by aid of' (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* [1843; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 1108). Fortenbaugh references *meta* in this sense of causation. W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 11.

26. Cf. Heidegger, who writes that "in the phenomenon of *pathos*, the *soma* is co-constitutive, namely as that, which carries in itself the possibility of being-in-a-world." M. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, *GA* 18 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002), 204.

27. For other factors involved in the causation of *pathos*, see Aristotle's *Rhet.* II.2–11.

28. Cf. Aristotle's discussion in *PA* IV 677a17–19, where the phenomenon of bile is explained through the necessity of matter rather than through final causality. Furley addresses the distinction and equation of material and efficient causality, and cites *GA* 778a29–b1 as evidence for subsuming both matter and form in the efficient cause. D. J. Furley, "What Kind of Cause Is Aristotle's Final Cause?," in *Rationality in Greek Thought*, ed. M. Friede and G. Striker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 72.

29. Cf. *PA* II.4, 650b27.

30. Aquinas translates *logoi enuloi* as material principles (Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's* De anima, Lecture II, 22, 10). This means that the *pathē* are ultimately grounded in matter, and do not just merely 'refer' to matter, as translators such as Ross and Hicks have it. Cf. Aristotle, *De anima*, trans. with notes by W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Aristotle, *De anima*, trans. R. D. Hicks (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1991).

31. Sachs warns against translating *entelecheia* as 'actuality,' as is commonly done, since that term "refers to anything, however trivial, incidental, transient, or static, that happens to be the case." Sachs's translation shows how Aristotle fuses in this neologism the idea of completeness (*enteles*) with that of *echein* (continuity or persistence). Sachs, "Glossary," 245. Kosman suggests we should carefully distinguish energeia (and translate it as 'activity') from entelecheia (and translate it as 'fulfillment'). Cf. Aryeh Kosman, *The Activity of Being* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), vii–x.

32. Arguably, this statement cannot do justice to the complexity Aristotle provides in *Physics* I.7. For clarification, see Long, *Ethics of Ontology*, 24–29.

33. Kosman calls this the self-destructive character of motion: "For motion is the actuality of a potentiality which is aimed ultimately at an actuality *other* than the motion and fatal to it . . . Its [motion's] being is auto-subversive, for its whole purpose and project is one of self-annihilation." Aryeh Kosman, "Aristotle's Definition of Motion," *Phronesis* 14 (1969): 57.

34. Cf. also *Phys*. III.201a29, 201b5, 202a7; *Phys*. VIII.251a9.

35. Kosman, "Definition of Motion," 50.

36. Ibid., 53.

37. Sachs, "Commentary," in Aristotle, *Physics*, 79.

38. Long speaks about two different tendencies in Aristotle: one is to "affirm the ultimate hegemony of form over matter," and the other "to affirm the individual by recognizing the impossibility of doing away with matter altogether" (Long, *Ethics of Ontology*, 37).

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Human *Logos* in Aristotle

Ömer Aygün

What, if anything, is it about human language that distinguishes it from nonhuman communication? The Theory of Displacement claims that human language is distinguished by the ability to imagine or describe what is beyond the here-and-now, beyond spatiotemporal immediacy.[1] Yet the spatiotemporal mediacy of the content of a message seems neither necessary nor sufficient for qualifying as an example of human language: It is not necessary because human language is uniquely able to express *modal* features that are not characterized by any *spatiotemporal* property; it is not sufficient either since many other animals issue signals that can be hardly considered as expressions of immediate pleasure and pain.

Below I outline an Aristotelian alternative to the Theory of Displacement that I refer to as the Theory of Relay.[2] The Theory of Relay states that human language is the unique ability to both understand and relay nonfirsthand experiences along with firsthand experiences. This theory relies largely on a number of central Aristotelian ideas besides the idea that language is unique to, and definitive of, human beings: While all animals have a share of firsthand experience, some are further capable of *understanding* nonfirsthand experience on perceiving the expression of another animal; strikingly these animals do not or cannot *relay* this nonfirsthand experience to still others; conversely, some animals, for instance imitative animals, are capable of *relaying* nonfirsthand experiences, but without *understanding* them. According to the Theory of Relay, the remaining slot is where human language lies: the capacity for both understanding and relaying nonfirsthand experiences as well as firsthand ones.

The first part of this essay describes three essential features of human language according to Aristotle. The second part uses these features to flesh out the Theory of Relay and draw its implications with regard to truth, the rate of information propagation, and major human institutions. Finally, the third part tries to show how, according to Aristotle, human claims to define, explain, and legislate rely on human language as defined by the Theory of Relay.

I. Features of Human Language

We begin with a very quick review of nonhuman communication according to Aristotle. Voice is a meaningful sound uttered by an animal, but not by any part of it and not for any reason. Voice is produced by a specific bodily substrate, namely the "pharynx," and for the sake of communicating with another animal. Just as uttering voice is essentially different from uttering mere sound, hearing voice as such is fundamentally different from mere acoustic stimulation. For the cooperation implied in voice is injunctive and imperial in character. Hence verbs for hearing are often verbs for obeying. Whereas an animal may hear a *sound* perfectly and even relay it without understanding it, as some imitating bird species do, an animal hearing *voice* as voice is compelled, not to relay it, but to understand it—that is, to obey it. Furthermore, voice is typically a veiled threat or promise made toward another animal. Hence, the voice producing animal must take into account its interlocutor: it must grasp and address the other animal in its own terms— its own fears and desires—in order to make an offer threatening or enticing enough that the other animal cannot refuse. Thus, we may say that, insofar as it involves voice, nonhuman communication assumes imperative (*prostaktikē*) and the subjunctive (*hypotaktikē*) moods.

How is human language any different from voice? Aristotle's scattered remarks about human language may be summarized by three crucial features: mediation, articulation, and ambiguity.

a. Mediation

Human language is mediated. First, *logos* is composite,[3] not simple. It has parts and its material is "voice" (*GA* V.786b22).[4] Second, *logos* is conventional,[5] not natural. It is irreducible to its parts or to a mere series of natural voices.[6] And third, most importantly, *logos* is symbolic.[7] The parts of *logos* are meaning-less. In the formation of human speech, voices are not only selected, but also fundamentally modified and evacuated of their inherent and natural meaning. The material of *logos*, strictly speaking, these nonnatural, meaningless, special voices are *grammata*, 'letters.'[8] So "*logos* is composed of letters through voice" (*PA* II.660a3–4). Even further, letters are distinguished among themselves: "The voice *and the larynx* send forth the vowels, and the tongue and the lips the consonants, of which language is constituted" (*HA* IV.535a29–b1; my emphasis). Letters are meaningless in and of themselves; a name or a word is a meaningful unit composed out of meaningless parts (*De int*. 16a19–21).[9]

Aristotle has a four-layered way of differentiating a letter. He distin-guishes a letter from sounds, from voices, from vowels if it is a consonant

(or from consonants if it is a vowel), and finally from other vowels if it is a vowel (and from other consonants if it is a consonant). For instance, the letter *t* heard or produced as a letter is determined in a fourfold way: *t* is not a rattling (not a sound); it is not a cry (not a voice); it is neither *a* nor *e* nor *i*, and so on (not a vowel); it is neither *d* nor *s* nor *l*, and so on (not any consonant). It is this tight determination that makes a letter irreducible to any *stoikheion*, 'uniform voice.' Learning a new language thus involves not only a new quantitative range of our phonatory equipment, but also a qualitative recalibration: uttering new letters requires a new cooperation between the larynx, the lungs, or the lips and tongue. Even at the apparently rudimentary level of sound production, the acquisition of a new language demands an extensive rehabituation of the body.

Letters involve a fundamental semantic, as much as physiological, modification of voice, a shift in one's relation to desire, to meaning and to others. To learn to speak is not to add cries and shouts in ever more subtle combinations, it is to recharge voice at its natural roots. Even to supply the material which *logos* will further articulate, one must not only learn to reorchestrate one's respiration, larynx, tongue and lips, but, most importantly, one must be able to 'redefine' one's relation to the most elemental pleasures and pains. Just as animal voice is possible by neither inhaling nor exhaling, by neither fleeing nor pursuing, here the basic material of *logos* requires that one *not* emit voice, that one neither invoke nor threaten others. To learn letters is to fundamentally modify one's behavior in order to learn to commit the voice and silence of one's body to others. This is why language is ethical and political all the way down to its material.

One cannot emphasize enough the significance of Aristotle's recognition that letters are meaningless (*De int.* 16a19–21). Voice is meaningful through and through. Voice is a natural outer 'organ' intended to 'organize' others. Letters, however, precisely evacuate meaning from voice, revert the natural reorganization of voice, and *stop* invoking others for the sake of the animal's own desire. It is on the foundation of such negation that *logos* can be mediated in a strong sense by means of letters and that a letter can have a function without having a meaning. In order to see this function, we must move beyond the level of the material of *logos* and step into the process of its articulation.

b. Articulation

To stress the importance of the level of 'letters' for understanding human language is not to impose the twentieth-century linguistic concept of 'dual patterning' or of 'double articulation' onto Aristotle's work. For, literacy,

grammatikē, is a paradigmatic kind of knowledge in Aristotle himself. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, literacy is given as an example of a disposition or positive state (*hexis*): it is by performing literacy that one becomes literate (*EN* II.1105a20). Literacy then is not merely a matter of reproduction and imitation as when a nightingale learns a song:

> One may in fact write letters by chance or with the support of another. One will then become literate only when, while writing letters, one does so in a literate way, that is, according to the literacy in oneself. (*EN* II.1105a22–26)

While voice hearing and uttering was simply natural, literacy is certainly not simply natural; while sound hearing and relaying was fundamentally mimetic, literacy is here distinguished from all kinds of repetition.

Sure enough, Aristotle has a well-defined technical term for articulation: *diarthrōsis*.

> Voice and sound are different, and language [διάλεκτος] is a third. No part ever emits voice apart from the pharynx; thus, those that have no lungs, never utter; but language is the *diarthrōsis* of voice by means of the tongue. (*HA* IV.535a27–b1; see also 536a32–b4)

Diarthrōsis is a term used in Aristotelian biology for the process of differentiation in the embryo (*GA* II.744b11).[10] So could there be a parallel between the articulation of *logos* and the formation of the embryo? On a lower level, voice is comparable to an element, since both lack *logos*: the voice of a crying baby is already too meaningful to be integrated *into* a meaningful whole, just as fire is ever too complete to be proportioned into the growth of an organism. On the higher level, *logos* is comparable to the organic body: just as the organic body is irreducible to an agglomerate of elements (*stoikheia*) and instead needs an intermediate level of articulation into nonuniform parts, similarly *logos* is irreducible to a series of natural 'uniform voices' (*stoikheia*) and requires the intermediate level of articulation into highly determined, 'modified,' and meaningless units, namely letters. So, just as elements cannot account for organic articulation, voice cannot account for the linguistic articulation. In both cases, articulation goes beyond mere uniform units.

c. Ambiguity

The necessarily ambiguous character of human language shows up regularly in Aristotle's work. The very opening lines of the corpus distinguish

between homonyms and synonyms. Homonyms are mere namesakes, beings who share a name only; so, a man and a portrait may be both called 'a living being'; yet this usage would be equivocal, for a man and a portrait are not 'a living being' in the same sense. Synonyms, however, share both a name and what is means to be that being; for instance, a man and an ox are both called 'a living being' in a univocal way, for in both cases what it is for an ox and a man to be a 'living being' is the same.

This is the crucial point: since it is mediated through meaningless parts, human language makes homonymy possible and even unavoidable. The very possibility of a mismatch between synonyms and homonyms stems from the mediated, articulated, and essentially ambiguous character of *logos*. *Logos* situates us in an unavoidable gap between names and beings: since *logos* is conventional, we can always address beings homonymously, with respect to their name only. *Logos* is essentially ambiguous, even when all of its parts are properly understood. One cannot fail to 'understand' the sound of the wind if one 'understands' all its parts, just as one cannot fail to 'understand' the bark of a dog as long as one grasps what each of its slight nuances 'signifies'; yet, as many Aristotle readers know all too well, one can fail to understand a *logos* while perfectly understanding all of its parts.

Just as ambiguity and disambiguation mean something different in the context of *logos* than in sound and voice, understanding and misunderstanding mean something different here. Since humans understand *logos* by taking it *in a certain sense*, necessarily it is possible both to interpret the same letters in different meanings, and to rephrase one same meaning in different letters. To hear a voice is to be moved by its meaning, while the semantics of *logos* is fundamentally exposed to paraphrase, interpretation, and translation by a mediator—a Hermes or a *hermēneus*. The mediation of *logos* through meaningless parts frees or detaches meanings from sounds, makes homonymy possible, and thus makes adequate understanding, univocal communication, and functional community not a given, but a continual task.

II. The Theory of Relay and Its Implications

Being mediated, articulated, and ambiguous, language enables and destines us to understand and relay experiences neither the sender nor the receivers have had or may ever have. This is why language is received *as language* neither by a memorization and repetition of its form as in hearing sound, nor by obedience to its content as in hearing voice. As an expression of pain and pleasure, voice always signifies a firsthand experience, and it is fundamentally oriented toward moving its hearer, even if the hearer ends up remaining

unmoved; human language, however, is specifically oriented *not* to move its hearer, but to indicate, to propose, to make her 'believe,' 'agree,' or 'understand.' Not being confined to the imperative and subjunctive (*prostaktikē* and *hypotaktikē*) moods, language can thus be indicative (*horistikē*. This sure does not mean that human language is necessarily indicative of the truth or of the true essence of things. Far from that. Indeed, language destines humans not to truth, but to truth claims. As it is mediated through meaningless units, as it is conventional and thus necessarily ambiguous, language removes us humans from any felicitous match between voice and meaning, homonymy and synonymy, belief and truth, speaker and interlocutor. Human language is such that it is always supposed to be communal, while never overcoming the danger of devolving into private language.

This is then the wonder of *logos* in the sense of human language: that we can even *claim to understand* things that we have never experienced firsthand, about, say, the 'essence' of an ox, about 'what it is to be for an ox'; and further, 'even worse,' that we can *relay* our claims to still others. Because language is mediated by convention (i.e., it is detached from the immediate meaningfulness of pleasure and pain), and because language is articulated through letters (i.e., it is detached from the natural vocal expression of pleasure and pain), on hearing language we can understand nonfirsthand experiences without having to experience them ourselves, and we can relay a meaning without having to reproduce the exact words through which it was conveyed to us. In comparison to sound and voice, human language is the ability that makes us understand nonfirsthand experiences (like a voice-hearing animal, but unlike a sound-hearing animal) *and* relay them along with firsthand experiences (like a sound-hearing imitating animal, but unlike a voice-hearing animal).

This Theory of Relay has three implications. The first is that, once the communicating parties possess this ability, the rate of information relay should increase exponentially. Since there is no relay among bees, the scout bee who has found a resource must inform other bees directly one by one, hence the propagation of information follows a linear growth. Both bees and the imitating bird species are thus sealed off from the wild proliferation of nonfirsthand experiences: bees do not relay them, while the birds do not understand their content when they imitate them. Among humans, however, the 'go-between' both understands and relays. So the capacity for understanding and relaying nonfirsthand experiences unavoidably boosts the speed with which the information is propagated. Since the receiver can also relay the message without having to undergo the experience firsthand, the propagation of information increases exponentially.

The second implication is that, once the communicating parties possess this specifically human ability, there is no control over the truthfulness of the messages. Having this capacity, a human being is indeed able to express nontruths, willingly or unwillingly, with or without care; but more interestingly, having this capacity, a human being views her human interlocutors as possibly conveying something they have not experienced either. Hence, as Aristotle quotes from Euripides, "if there are persuasive false designations among mortals, you should also admit the contrary, that disbelieving the true befalls mortals."[11] One is exercising her ability to understand and relay nonfirsthand experiences not only when she says "Socrates was executed in 399," but also when she says "Socrates was *not* executed in 399." Similarly, one is necessarily drawing on one's capacity to understand and relay nonfirsthand experiences when one says that Socrates's execution was the right thing to do, that it was not the right thing to do, that the world was created in six days, that it will come to an end, that there are igneous rocks on the surface of the moon, or that all lines contain an infinite number of points. In a way, we are all 'go-betweens.'

The third implication of the theory is that this ability has indeed the potential to bring unlimited numbers of individuals together around real or imagined communities through a potentially infinite variety of discourses. Not being confined to firsthand experience, human language is indicative (*horistikē*) of a level of generality and universality irreducible to any tactical cooperation whether it be imperative or subjunctive (*hypotaktikē* or *prostaktikē*) and thus able to foster all sorts of human expressions of nonfirsthand experience: narratives of creation, of afterlife, of apocalypse, but also historiography, oracles, utopias, genealogies, claims to nobility, sophistry, philosophy, and the necessary accumulation of information in science.

Yet *logos*, even in the sense of 'sentence,' is not necessarily declarative (*apophantikos*) according to Aristotle: "Not all *logos* is declarative, but the *logoi* to which truth or falsity belong. For instance, a wish [εὐχὴ] is a *logos*, but it is neither true nor false" (*De int.* 16b33–17a4). So, besides the imperative and the subjunctive moods that characterize voice, and besides the indicative mood of *logos*, this function corresponds to the fourth classical mood in ancient Greek: the optative (*euktikē*).[12] In this function human language assumes the mood of a wish or a prayer whose object is by definition something never experienced or even never to be experienced firsthand. Unlike voice, this is the mood of a genuine desire *disengaged* from moving, as odd as this may seem from the viewpoint of nonhuman animals. This is the specifically human mood of wishful thinking, of hoping, of goodwill, of saluting, of cursing, of greeting and remorse.[13]

III. Embodiments of Human Language

Now let us see whether our interpretation of human language according to the Theory of Relay lines up with three crucial occurrences of specifically human *logos* in Aristotle's corpus.

a. Human Predication (*Categories* 1)

We have already seen how ambiguity is not accidental to human language, but an essential component of it. Consequently, we have suggested that disambiguation, interpretation, 'hermetic' activity, and hermeneutical activity remain a continual task in human language. Thus, humans are able to disengage from their firsthand perspectives in order to claim to access the 'essence' or 'form' of *beings other than themselves*. This is how humans can claim to understand and to formulate not only the pleasant or painful aspects of, say, an ox, but *what it is to be* an ox, the '*logos* of being' of an ox—an idea that by definition no human can gather from firsthand experience.

This seems confirmed in the opening of the *Categories*:

> Those whose names only are common, but whose *logos* of being [λόγος τῆς οὐσίας] according to this name is different, are called homonyms, such as 'animal' for both the human being and the representation; for if one supplies what is it for each of them to be animal [τί ἐστιν αὐτῶν ἑκατέρῳ τὸ ζῴῳ εἶναι], one will supply a particular *logos* [ἴδιον λόγον] for each. Those whose names are common and whose *logos* of being according to this name are also common are called synonyms, such as 'animal' for both the human being and the ox; for each of these are addressed [προσαγορεύεται] with the common name 'animal' and their *logos* of being is the same. For if one supplies the *logos* of what it is for each to be animal, one will supply the same *logos*. (*Cat*. 1a1–13)

Having *logos*, we are able to claim to address other beings not only from our own perspective as determined perceptually or practically ("This is black [to me]," "This is dangerous [to me]," etc.), but from *their* own perspective: "This as such is a living being." In other words, if we had no *logos* and thus no claim to access the essence of beings from a third-person perspective, in Protagorean fashion all our predications would be expressions of subjective, accidental, momentary aspects, all our addresses would be homonymous, and there would be neither any sense of *ousia* nor any appeal to the principle of noncontradiction.[14]

b. Human Experience (*Met.* I.1)

That human language gives us access beyond firsthand experience is also cor-
roborated by human claims to give causal accounts. To paraphrase a famous
passage from the *Metaphysics*:

> Animals are by nature born having sensation [and "that which has
> sensation also has pleasure and pain"][15] . . . Thus the others live by
> impressions and memories [firsthand experience], and have but a
> small share of experience. But the human kind [lives] also by art
> and reasoning [καὶ τέχνῃ καὶ λογισμοῖς] . . . Indeed we see people
> of experience succeeding more than those having *logos* without
> experience; the reason is that experience is familiarity with the
> particulars, but art of universals . . . Nevertheless we consider that
> knowing and acquaintance belong to art rather than to experience
> and take the artisans to be wiser than people of experience in that
> wisdom rather follows knowing in all cases. For the former know
> the cause while the latter do not. (*Met.* I.980a27–981a28)

Note here the specifically human kinds of errancy: the many ways in which
humans fail while possessing a causal account, and the myriads of ways in
which humans may be incorrect in their account. The rest of the passage
highlights that human language entails not only the ability to understand,
but also and necessarily the capacity to relay:

> Thus [master craftsmen] are wiser not because they are practi-
> cal, but because they have a *logos* and know the causes. As a
> whole, a sign of knowing and not knowing is the ability to teach
> [διδάσκειν], and hence we think that art rather than experience is
> scientific knowledge; for [artists] can teach while the others cannot.
> Further, we do not consider any of the senses to be wisdom. They
> are indeed our chief sources of acquaintance with particulars, but
> they do not tell the reason [τὸ διὰ τί] for anything, as for instance
> why fire is hot, but only that it is hot. (*Met.* I.981b5–13)

Granting access beyond sensation, thus beyond pleasure and pain, and
beyond the particular practical necessities of life, *logos* connects us with disin-
terested wonder and innovation, and the leisurely satisfaction of our natural
desire for knowledge, which is to say the satisfaction of our *philosophia*.

Then, just as the *Categories* passage, this opening chapter of the *Metaphys-
ics* seems to corroborate the Theory of Relay: for better or for worse, *logos*

as human language enables us to understand and relay even that which is beyond actual or even possible of firsthand experience—whether it be essential predication or causal accounts.[16]

c. Human Community (*Pol.* I.1)

Finally we may read the following most famous passage from the *Politics* in light of the Theory of Relay:

> It is clear why the human being is a political animal in a greater degree [μᾶλλον] than any bee or any gregarious animal. For nature, as we say, does nothing in vain, and among animals the human being alone has *logos*. Voice is indeed a sign [σημεῖον] of the painful and of the pleasurable, and so is possessed by other animals as well (for their nature has developed so far as to have sensation of the painful and pleasant, and to signify [σημαίνειν] these to others), yet *logos* is for showing [δηλοῦν] the advantageous and the harmful, and thus the just and the unjust; for it is peculiar to humans in distinction from the other animals to have the perception of the just, the unjust and other qualities, and it is community [κοινωνία] in these that makes a household and a city. (*Pol.* I.1253a10–18, VII.1332b5–6)

Here human language is the ability to understand and relay advantages and harms never experienced firsthand, to even indicate justice and injustice. Thus in practical matters, human language does not simply demand obedience under a direct order (a 'prostactic,' i.e., an imperative), or under a hypothetical or 'hypotactic' (subjunctive) threat; human language is capable of being 'horistic' (indicative), of delimiting and defining an ethical-political realm. This realm is indeed the *polis*. Although there are many nonhuman political animals according to Aristotle, only humans have a *polis*. Although all political animals, including wasps, ants, and bees, are characterized by common work (*HA* I.488a7–10), a *polis* proper seems to be fundamentally irreducible to a 'workshop,' a 'household,' an 'alliance,' a 'corporation,' or a 'body politic':

> Yet it is clear that if one goes further in unifying the city, it is will not be a city at all. For in its nature, the city is a multiplicity [πλῆθος]; if further unified it will become a household, and further it will become a single human being . . . And a city consists not only of many people, but also of people differing in kind. Because a city does not come to be from similar people; for a city and an

alliance [συμμαχία] are different things. An alliance is of value by
its quantity—since the alliance is naturally for the sake of military
strength—just as a weight would be worth more if it weighed more,
whereas the parts which are to make up a unity must differ in kind.
(*Pol*. II.1261a18–25)

Conclusion

In this essay, I gathered Aristotle's scattered remarks on human language in
order to sketch a theory about what is specific to human language as an alter-
native to the current Theory of Displacement. I formulated this as a Theory
of Relay stating that human language is the capacity to understand and relay
nonfirsthand experiences as well as firsthand experiences. I questioned the
explanatory power of the theory first by drawing its implications and then
by discussing how well it is corroborated by Aristotle's major passages on
human *logos*.

   This outline of the Theory of Relay is, to be sure, in need of a survey of
Aristotle's concept of 'experience' (*empeiria*). Otherwise, concepts of 'first-
hand' and 'nonfirsthand' remain as vague as the concepts of 'here' and 'now'
used in the Theory of Displacement. Furthermore, of course, our theory is in
need of experiments to be designed and conducted. This suggestion reflects
what might be seen as a virtue of our theory, namely that it is falsifiable: if
a nonhuman animal species is found to understand *and* relay content it has
not experienced firsthand, then our theory fails. And in that case, one may
suspect this animal species of suffering from, and enjoying, all the challenges
and vicissitudes of human life and history.

   Nonetheless, one can see how Aristotle's works themselves are products of
his ability to understand and relay both firsthand experiences and contents
beyond any actual or even possible firsthand experience. For the Aristotelian
corpus contains the amazing wealth of observation and data collectorship
found in Aristotle's philosophy of nature or 'second philosophy,' even as his
'first philosophy' attempts to make claims, such as the principle of noncon-
tradiction, which are so universal that they cannot be based on, or exhausted
by, any firsthand experience whatsoever.

Notes

   1. Hans-Georg Gadamer seems to agree with the Theory of Displacement. See Ga-
damer, "Man and Language," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge (Berke-
ley: University of California Press, 1976), 59–68. For a presentation of the Theory of
Displacement see, for instance, Hockett, "The Origin of Speech," *Scientific American* 203
(1960): 89–96; D. Bickerton, *Adam's Tongue* (New York: Hill and Wang / Farrar, Straus

and Giroux), 2009; D. Bickerton, "On Two Incompatible Theories of Language Evolution," in *The Evolution of Human Language: Biolinguistic Perspectives*, ed. B. Larson, V. Déprez, and H. Yamakido (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 199–210; Robbins Burling, *The Talking Ape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37; Kathleen R. Gibson, "Talking about Apes, Birds, Bees, and Other Living Creatures," in *The Evolutionary Emergence of Language: Evidence and Inference*, ed. R. Botha and M. Everaert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 217–218; Tetsuro Matsuzawa, "What Is Uniquely Human? A View from Comparative Cognitive Development in Humans and Chimpanzees," in *The Primate Mind*, ed. F. B. M. de Waals and P. F. Ferrari (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 304–305.

2. This essay is a synthesis and follow-up of my previous work on Aristotle's account of human language in *The Middle Included*—Logos *in Aristotle* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2017), especially 178n106. The inability of honeybees to relay messages is suggested by Karl von Frisch in *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees*, trans. Leigh Chadwick (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 43, 55–56; see also Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971), 53; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 77.

3. Cf. *Poet*. 1456b35, 1457a2, 11, 14, 23.

4. *Prob*. XI.898b31. See also *Cat*. 4b34–35.

5. Cf. especially *De int*.16a26–29; see also *De int*. 20–21; 4, 16b33–17a2; *Rhet.*, I.1376b1ff.; *An pr*. I.50a19; *Rhet.* I.1376a33; *Pol.* III.1280b11, *NE* V.1133a30, and V.1134b33.

6. Cf. Plato's *Tht.* 206e–208e.

7. Cf. *De int*. 16a28 and 16a3–4; even *PA* II.660a7; *GA* I.722b12; *Meteor.* II.360a26; *Pol.* IV.1294a35.

8. See also *Poet*. 1457a10–12; *Prob.* 895a4–14. Most significantly, the sounds of "beasts" are characterized as *agrammatoi* in *De int*. 16a27.

9. See also *Poet*. 1457a10–12; *Prob.* 895a4–14.

10. See also *HA* VII.583b23. For *adiarthōtos*, see also *HA* VI.579a24.

11. Euripides, *Thy*. (Fr. 396, Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta), quoted in *Rhet.* II, 23, 1397a.

12. For a fuller discussion of wish, prayer, and the optative mood in Aristotle's philosophy, see Ömer Aygün, "Wishful Thinking: Prayer, Wish and Chance in Aristotle" (forthcoming); see also Ömer Aygün, "L'être humain, animal précaire," in *Aristote, L'Animal politique* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2017), 121–137.

13. Contemporary accounts of the 'Theory of Mind' seem to corroborate the Theory of Relay. The 'Theory of Mind' is indeed a crucial, although not exhaustive, example of the capacity for understanding and relaying nonfirsthand experience, since my ability to think that you have a mind and are thinking of *x* requires my preliminary access to something that by definition is not and cannot be my firsthand experience.

14. See *Met*. IV.1007a20–23.

15. The passage quoted here is *De an*. II.414b4–7. See also *De an*. II.413b24–25 and III.432b29–30.

16. Note that the Theory of Relay makes possible Aristotle's typical methodological procedure from what is clear and known *to us* toward what is clear and known "simply or by nature" (*An post*. I.71a1–11).

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Developing Emotions: Aristotle's *Rhetoric* II.2–11

Greg Recco

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle famously rejects the notion that the emotions are phenomena that belong to an immature stage of life and are jettisoned in adulthood (*EN* III.1104b24–26); rather, most of the virtues of character remain integrally connected to emotions. Courage, for example, is not the annihilation of fear, but some sort of good condition with respect to it. Becoming an adult does not involve the annihilation of the being that was subject to emotions, as becoming a butterfly coincides with the disappearance of a caterpillar. To be in a good condition with respect to an emotion is not to disregard or suppress it. What Aristotle calls *enkrateia*, the ability to hold down one's emotions and appetites by force, simply is not virtue (*EN* VII), though it may lead to action that outwardly resembles virtuous action.

Given that the emotions remain present even as the form of life in which they are dominant fades and the one in which reason can take on a leading role emerges, we may ask what role they play in adult life, not just by being present and less heeded than they once were, but by being essential components of the functioning and flourishing of that life. We are led to ask just what the emotions are for, why we have just the ones we do, and what relations obtain among them. Aristotle can help here, though only indirectly and, perhaps surprisingly, more in his treatise on rhetoric than in the *Ethics* or *Politics*, where the proper course of individual and societal development are nonetheless the main themes.

A few features of his catalogue of emotions in the *Rhetoric* suggest that he has this kind of question in mind. He notes that emotions are in some way ranked or ordered: anger is more characteristic of the young than of those in the prime of life; pity and indignation belong especially to those of decent character; envy is base, but admiration is noble. Thus, in general, Aristotle presents emotions as standing to one another in relations of mutual dependence and conditioning; some seem in themselves to belong to or envisage a more thoroughly adult picture of the human world, some seem to fall short

of that goal, and some, as I will propose, can be understood as necessary for us to develop such a picture.

With this somewhat loose collection of thoughts and concerns in mind, let me turn to Aristotle's text and consider individual emotions in turn: first, anger as the feeling of becoming one recognized as capable of action; second, fear and pity as the feelings of learning about the sorts of ills we are heir to, and thus of recognizing our shared vulnerabilities and dependence; third, the transition from pity to indignation as a sharpening of the sense of justice already incipient in the former; finally, admiration or emulousness as the feeling of responsibility for the development of one's own character, whatever one's fortunes may be.

Aristotle begins his discussion of emotions with anger and gives it the longest treatment. At the very start of the chapter, he offers a definition of it that sets the tone for future definitions: anger is "a desire [ὄρεξις], accompanied by pain, for apparent [φαινομένης] revenge because of an apparent [φαινομένη] slight directed against oneself or one's own, when the slighting is not fitting" (*Rhet.* II.1378a30–32). There is a lot packed into this definition, and I will return to various elements it of along the way, but to begin, I want to single out the striking doubling of the word 'apparent.' To translate these forms of the verb *phainesthai* as 'appearing' is already to embroil oneself in scholarly controversy (very usefully summarized by Nieuwenberg). A fair number of commentators, though by no means a majority, hold that Aristotle is speaking here of the public character of what is aimed at in anger; the one who is angry, they argue, is one who has been publicly slighted and so can only right this wrong in a similar way, that is, by public revenge. Indeed, Aristotle himself will point out, people are prone to become angry when they are slighted in front of those whose opinion of them matters to them, and they consider revenge more complete when its author is known (*Rhet.* II.1380b24–25).

But these are not the only phenomena of anger, and the broader story Aristotle tells encompasses both of them. What I think is most telling is what Aristotle himself chooses to focus on next. After noting briefly that anger always has a specific person as its object, he introduces a series of considerations that have as their primary focus the *imagination* of the one who is angered, rather than the public character of slighting or of revenge. He first notes that anger directed at a person is "because he has done *or was about to do* something to one or one's own" (*Rhet.* II.1378a31). Anger moves quickly and is able to insert itself between the appearance that a slight was impending and the act itself, one that cannot yet have made itself public.

Next, he tells us that

> to every anger there adheres a pleasure, that of expecting to get
> one's revenge, for it is pleasant to think one shall hit what one aims
> at . . . This is why it has been well said of anger that "far sweeter
> than dripping honey down the throat it spreads in men's hearts," for
> a pleasure goes along with it, both for that reason and also because
> they dwell on getting their revenge in thought, and the appearance
> that arises at that time produces pleasure in them, as do those in
> dreams. (*Rhet*. II.1378b2–10)

This is an astonishing and peculiar fact, and it is a very interesting choice on Aristotle's part to give the observation and the identification of its causes such a prominent place in his analysis.

We are already quite far from the notion that anger is a kind of simple tit-for-tat response to a social failure. In the first place, we now see why it is not defined as a pain, but simply as a 'desire accompanied by pain': namely, because it is always also a kind of pleasure, if a peculiar one. Just as the pain of anger can involve an apprehension of an imagined situation not yet actual, the pleasure of anger, too, is directed toward an imagined future. We must turn to the precise shape of the future that the angry person imagines in order to find the explanation for anger's soul-nourishing power and ability to transfix the sufferer in dreamlike meditation on the fantasy of revenge.

In particular, the future that is imagined can reveal what is felt to be wrong about the present situation. It reveals this by projecting a situation that is the precise converse: the one who is angered imagines being efficacious, and this in a way that makes it evident to the other. Furthermore, the kind of making-evident he imagines is the very one to which he himself is subjected by the other's action, namely, the pain of being thwarted. So, through the character of his imagined revenge, we can see that the one who is angry takes the efficacy of the other to be evident, in the mode of the pain that he feels at having his own activity thwarted. This is why the thought of revenge is doubly pleasant: in general, it is pleasant to imagine that one will be successful in hitting what one aims at, and in particular, it is pleasant to imagine being successful in this way when one's whole power of action seems to be called into question. One imagines succeeding not only in one's action, but in acting at all.

That one's whole power of action is in fact what is called into question in anger, and why it is in question, can be seen from what Aristotle notices in one of the three types of slighting, as well as from his summary of the disposition of those who are prone to anger. As for the first, let us consider the kind of slighting that spite is: "Spite is putting obstacles in the way of the wishes of another, not so that something may come to oneself, but so that

something may not come to the other" (*Rhet.* II.1378b18–20). The other two species have very similar characteristics, and in general, all fall under the definition of slighting that Aristotle gives: "Slighting is an enactment [ἐνέργεια] of an opinion with regard to what appears worthless" (*Rhet.* II.1378b10–11). In other words, it appears to the angry person that he or his affairs do not appear to be worth anything to the one who appears to be slighting him. In other words (and in the first person), the action that the object of my anger has taken or was about to take appeared to me who am now angry as the putting-to-work of an opinion that I, through the mediation of my wishes directed at actions not successfully carried out, am worthless, as are they. In order to show what makes this tortuously complex account of anger plausible, let me say a little bit about Aristotle's general remarks about the disposition to anger.

I quote:

> People are prone to anger when they are in pain, for whoever is pained aims at something; so, if anyone directly hinders him in anything . . . or not directly . . . or if anyone acts against him or does not act with him or troubles him in any way when he is in this state, he gets angry with such people. This is why the sick, the needy, those making war, those in love, the thirsty, and in general, anyone who has an appetite for something and is not succeeding is prone to anger and easily excitable. (*Rhet.* II.1379a11–18)

This description is, I think, quite compelling. And its special connection to action, especially of the sort that is not presently meeting with success is quite interesting.

To return to the initial hypothesis about the pleasure taken in imagining revenge, it is clear that part of the reason it is pleasant is that such imagining rectifies precisely what the angry person takes to be wrong with the situation: "The other will not acknowledge that I am capable of carrying out an action? My hurting him will make him acknowledge it. The other does not find me worthy of carrying out my proposed actions? My success in causing him pain will make it clear to both of us that I am." Denied success and recognition in deed, the angry person imagines a world in which he is successful and is recognized as such, and dwells in this world in thought.

To return, then, to the opening question about the variety and function of emotions: the fact that we are capable of anger looks so far like a kind of susceptibility rather than a useful power. At best, we might surmise that the pleasure of anger is useful as a kind of psychic palliative, the spoonful of

honey that makes life's bitter defeats go down more easily. But if we behave toward anger as Aristotle says we ought to behave in the study of lower animals, and do not "recoil in childish aversion from the examination of the humbler" (*PA* I.645a15–17), we might yet see what is natural and beautiful in it. Let me try to say how.

In particular, the one who is angry is exercising his power to imaginatively enter a world in which he does not yet reside. This can, of course, be a kind of desperate flight from a painful reality, but it can also be a useful exercise and development of a power necessary for effective action, namely, the power to imaginatively connect what is present and evident with the hidden springs of others' actions, that is, with how the world appears to them. In fact, this is what is already being exercised in the discernment of present, past, or future slighting; one must already be looking beyond what is given; this is not always erroneous, and is often necessary in order to enter substantially into various other important kinds of interaction. I will try to demonstrate that this is what Aristotle is thinking and will then point out a few related ideas.

Before going on, let me point out the definitions of the emotions that remain to be considered. Fear is "a pain or disturbance arising from the appearance of an impending ill that is destructive or painful" (*Rhet.* II.1382a21–22). Pity is "a pain about a destructive or painful ill appearing to strike someone who does not deserve it, and which one might expect to befall oneself or one of one's own" (*Rhet.* II.1385b11–15). Indignation is "being pained at apparent undeserved (or 'apparently undeserved') welfare" (*Rhet.* II.1386b10–11). Envy is "indeed a disturbing pain directed against welfare, but not that of one who does not deserve it, but of one who is our equal and like" (*Rhet.* II.1386b16–20). Emulousness "is a pain at the apparent presence of highly valuable good characteristics that it is possible for one to obtain in those who are like one in nature, pain not because the other has them, but because one does not oneself" (*Rhet.* II.1388a31–35). Beyond their connection to appearance and the power of imagination that underlies it, it is clear that all these emotions concern in some way how goods and ills are portioned out among people, though their respective visions of the good probably vary in significant ways.

In what follows, I trace a path through these in a much more schematic way than in the case of anger, but with the idea that what we are watching is the progressive development of the power to be moved by (at least, then, to perceive, if not also to understand) the distinctive features of the human world; the experience of the emotions seems to constitute a kind of education by means of which we enter into communication and conversation, so to speak, with the perspectives of others and learn from them.

In the case of fear and pity, this fusion of horizons is the most evident. We might call them 'vicariously dual' because of the very strong link by which Aristotle has connected them. In particular, the objects over which each of these emotions ranges are defined in terms of the objects of the other; people fear the very things that would give rise to pity were they to happen to others, and similarly, people pity others for suffering the very things they fear might happen to them.

This connection runs deeper than is immediately visible. This can be seen by contrasting in some detail the world projected by these emotions with the one that is characteristic of anger. One difference is the introduction of the notion of 'destruction' alongside pain in the definitions of both, which already indicates a broader perspective than is envisaged by anger. A strong indication is the fact that not only are pity and fear felt in implicit communion with others, but they are felt in this way *rather than* within the horizon of rivalry and its distinction of superior and inferior.

Now, aspects of that worldview characteristic of anger are certainly not entirely absent from fear and pity, as can be seen from this remark about confidence or daring: Aristotle notices that we are confident and do not feel fear "when something does not frighten our equals, inferiors, or those to whom we think ourselves superior" (*Rhet*. II.1383a31–33). So rank seems to count for something. But here, by contrast with anger, one's concern is not so much with what is fitting for another of apparently lower status, but with one's own remaining in a state appropriate to one's station. One is able to do this because one takes one's cues for how to feel about one's situation from those with whom one identifies; that is, one's primary concern is not to distinguish oneself from others. Now, none of this need happen on the level of deliberation or consciousness of duty. Rather, this confidence is a direct feeling of the whole that we catch from others; it is something we feel in implicit communion with them, or, rather, with whoever we imagine to be in that class and however we imagine them to feel.

Furthermore, as Aristotle's definitions indicate, the world in which pity and fear are possible contains an implicit reference to a kind of evaluation largely absent from anger: namely, that of desert or worth. If I say 'largely' and not simply absent, it is because of the last word of the definition of anger, which I have not yet discussed; recall that anger concerns a slight, when the slight is not 'fitting' or 'appropriate.' Again, just as confidence in the face of what does not frighten those we consider our equals shares some characteristics with the context of rivalry found in anger, but also differs from it, the notions of desert and of what is fitting are very close but not identical. What is primarily at issue in our getting angry in considering a slight inappropriate

is the status of the one doing the slighting, rather than our own not deserving such treatment. In fact, Aristotle notices something like this when he points out that being uncertain about having a certain characteristic makes one *more* prone to anger with respect to being mocked about it. He writes that people are angry

> if someone speaks contemptuously of philosophy or of personal
> beauty in the presence of those who pride themselves on them . . .
> But they are far more angry if they suspect that they do not possess
> these qualities, either not at all, or not to any great extent, or when
> others do not think they possess them. For when they really think
> that they do possess these qualities which are the subject of mock-
> ery, they pay no heed to it.

If the judgment that a slight is not fitting concerned whether we ourselves are fit to be slighted, we would be less angry, rather than, as Aristotle says, "far more angry." Somehow, it is as if we are trying to will ourselves into a world in which we really take seriously the things we are presently only defending angrily.

But even if Aristotle's substitution of the word 'undeserved' in the definitions of pity and fear for the word 'inappropriate' in the definition of anger is meant to signal this distinction, the discussions of pity and fear themselves contain almost no mention of desert as a criterion, which leads one to question just how important a role it plays in these feelings. Perhaps we always think of ourselves as not deserving the ills we suffer, such that the attribute 'undeserved' would be ampliative, rather than limiting. Even if that should happen to be true, there is one particular and, I think, very important context in which the question of worthiness is genuinely posed and indeed comes to the fore. At the very end of the chapter on pity, Aristotle makes some peculiar remarks, which I think can only be understood if we supply the missing context ourselves:

> Pity is also aroused by signs, such as the dress of those who have
> suffered and all such objects, and by the actions and the words and
> everything else that belongs to those who are actually suffering,
> such as their already having begun to die. And most of all, being
> serious in such moments excites pity. For all these things produce
> pity all the more because of appearing close, both as undeserved
> and because the suffering appears before our very eyes. (*Rhet*.
> II.1386b1–7)

With the mention of costumes, and gestures, and perhaps even props, and above all the seriousness, earnestness, or good character of the one suffering, especially while giving one's death speech, what can Aristotle have in mind here if not tragedy?

In this light, the inclusion of 'desert' in the definitions of both pity and fear makes some more sense. I say both, because both of these feelings are aroused by the performance of a tragedy; we as spectators are in a kind of strange middle realm between taking those suffering on the stage to be others (and thus meriting pity) and taking them to be imitations of ourselves (such that the ills that befall them produce fear in us, who are not actually in danger of suffering them, in our capacity as spectators). 'Unworthiness' to suffer is included in both definitions, then, because it is most prominent in the activity of viewing a tragedy, where our feelings are made all the more intense to the degree that those suffering are taken to be, and show themselves to be, serious.

That the intensification and perhaps even perfection of pity in tragedy is mentioned at the very end of the chapter is fitting, inasmuch as the discussion of indignation that follows indicates a path along which a developed sense of pity ought to lead us. The experience of pity, Aristotle holds, ought to teach us indignation. He writes: "Both [pity and indignation] belong to a decent character, for if we sympathize with and pity those who suffer undeservedly, we ought to be indignant with those who prosper undeservedly" (*Rhet*. II.1386b12–13). The word 'ought' here (and in several other similar places in the chapter) is striking, as is the association of emotions with good character; at least, it is striking in comparison with the claim Aristotle makes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that no one is praised or blamed for simply having an emotion, since emotions are natural, but for having it in a certain way. The picture in the *Rhetoric* also seems to differ in that people can be mistaken about just what emotions there are; let me consider that before returning the question about the naturalness or goodness of the emotions.

Aristotle writes: "It might seem that envy, too, is similarly opposed to pity, and very close or even identical to indignation." But he categorically rejects this identification: "Envy is indeed a disturbing pain directed against welfare, but not that of one who does not deserve it, but of one who is our equal and like" (*Rhet*. II.1386b16–20). Despite the strength of the distinction, he explains why envy and indignation might be confused, namely, that they are both are relieved by the same thing, our neighbor's being deprived of the goods that we felt pain at his having possessed. The envious and the indignant alike rejoice at this.

To the contrary of indignation, however, envy is said to belong to someone of low character. It is not obvious how to reconcile these judgments, or

the possibility of being confused about how many emotions there are, with the programmatic statement in the *Ethics* about the emotions' being morally neutral and unproblematically natural. We might take to heart what he says near the beginning of the *Metaphysics* about this kind of problem. He says: "A tangle in our thinking reveals a knot in the thing [ἡ τῆς διανοίας ἀπορία δηλοῖ τοῦτο περὶ τοῦ πράγματος]" (*Met.* III.995a30–31). To state the matter too bluntly—and I will return to this in greater detail in a few moments— the emotions are both natural and learned; anyone can feel any of them, but we learn about them and about the world by feeling them. As Martha Nussbaum put it in the case of pity and fear: "Tragedy contributes to human self-understanding precisely through its exploration of the pitiable and the fearful. The way it carries out this exploratory task is by moving us to respond with these very emotions."[1] This explains the apparent paradox: envy and indignation are not the same thing, and we are naturally capable of feeling both; but to one who is experienced in the former and relatively untried in the latter, they can seem the same. The converse, however, is not true: to feel indignation is to have one's focus trained not on the direct comparison of the other who possesses some goods to ourselves, but on the comparison between the goods and what it would take to be worthy of them, with the result that someone who knows indignation does not mistake it for envy. I think this coheres with how we usually think when we are (or think our- selves) capable of distinguishing between another's envy and his indignation. That it is more difficult to do so with regard to our own reactions is not surprising. I think the difficulty is one that Aristotle obliquely acknowledges by peppering his statements about the similarity in worldview between pity and indignation with claims that the latter is something we *should* feel if we do feel the latter. 'Should' and 'ought' indicate something that can be, and perhaps often is, otherwise.

   Concerning envy and indignation, let us note in conclusion that the dif- ference between them corresponds to something that is not particularly well differentiated in pity (much less in fear). We pity both those who appear to suffer undeservedly and those who merely resemble us; the pity may be intensified in the former case—as we might come to know in viewing performances of tragedies, where the nobility of the sufferer is presented emphatically—but the feeling is substantially the same one; and the same- ness of feeling is no accident, in that we are already disposed as spectators to identify ourselves with the protagonists. Indignation, then, would be a kind of natural outgrowth of pity where one term of this pair comes to pre- dominate. Somehow, it seems, the experience of pity itself would have to show us clearly what it, in its initial form, obscures, such that we could come

to recognize that if we feel pity, we ought to feel indignation. If it cannot do this by itself, perhaps the information could come from somewhere else, from something that is neither pity, nor envy, nor indignation.

While there is nothing particularly wrong with indignation, as there apparently is with envy (or at least with an exclusive focus on it), both emotions differ from the last emotion Aristotle discusses, emulousness or admiration, in something like the same way that anger differs from fear and pity. We noted earlier that anger finds fault with the wrongness of the one doing the slighting, while fear and pity react to the undeserving character of the one suffering ills. In introducing this final emotion, Aristotle puts the difference in similar terms. To repeat: "Emulousness is a pain at the apparent presence of highly valuable good characteristics that it is possible for one to obtain in those who are like one in nature, a pain not because the other has them, but because one does not oneself."

Aristotle does not have much to add to this initial characterization, and I will not add much myself, except to note that it does not answer the questions I posed at the beginning of this essay. On the one hand, this kind of admiration seems to require a particularly mature stance toward the world, where we view the question of how good things are distributed among people as a matter primarily for our own action with regard to ourselves ("minding our own business," as Socrates has it in the *Republic*). On this account, Aristotle would have placed anger first and admiration last as a sign of their respective places within the development of the person. On the other hand, the spontaneous imitation of what appears beautiful, the way we make our own what appears, so to speak, only at the far horizon of what we are able to see of the world, is a feature of every stage of life, from the most serious and adult attempt to reform our character in the face of an overwhelmingly compelling person, through the pleasure we take in stories, back even to the simplest childhood games, where we show already that we do not live entirely in the present, but freely and joyfully let things show us the possibility of another world. In this latter sense, the emotions would not be the painful path of pilgrimage that unfortunately embodied creatures like ourselves must tread in order to become who we were meant to be, but the free, cooperative creation of the whole realm of human significance, born in the boiling of the blood and perfected in speech and sweet persuasion.

Note

1. Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 390.

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Hontina tropon gignetai philos: Genesis versus
Alteration in the Forming of Friendships

John McCumber

At *On Coming-to-Be and Passing Away* I.4, Aristotle contrasts two sorts of
change, alteration and genesis:

> There is 'alteration' when the substratum is perceptible [αἰσθητοῦ
> ὄντος] and persists, but changes in its own properties . . . But when
> nothing perceptible persists in its identity as a substratum and
> the thing changes as a whole . . . such an occurrence is no longer
> 'alteration.' It is a coming-to be [γένεσις] of one substance, and a
> passing-away of another. (*GC* I.319b9–11)

My question here will be: which of these models of change applies to the
forming of a friendship? The question is important, for unless we can answer
it, we remain where Socrates found himself in the *Lysis*: "I do not even know
how one man becomes the friend of another [ὄντινα τρόπον γίγνεται φιλος
ἕτερος ἑτέρου]" (*Ly*. 212a).

Mediating Aristotle's views on friendship through Cicero, Diogenes,
Montaigne, Nietzsche, and Carl Schmitt in *The Politics of Friendship*,[1] Jacques
Derrida formulates what he at one point calls "minimal friendship," the friend-
ship invoked in the formula *ō philoi oudeis philos*.[2] These words, attributed to
Aristotle by his ancient biographer Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* V.21), occur sur-
prisingly often in the canonical discourses on friendship that Derrida considers
in this book. They are usually rendered as "O my friends, there is no friend."

But that is paradoxical: if there are no friends, to whom does Aristotle
address his words? The general view, suggests Derrida, is that he must be
saying that there are no true friends; its addressees are indeed friends, but
not 'truly.' So there are different kinds of friendship, and only one of them is
'true.' This is what Cicero called the "sovereign and master-friendship."[3] In
his own account of friendship at *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII and IX, Aristotle

calls it "friendship of the good" (*EN* VIII.1156b7). For him, this kind of friendship gives the philosophical master-concept of friendship because it is the most complete form of friendship. Other kinds, including friendships of use and pleasure, can be only understood by being compared to it.

So the friends to whom the call is addressed are friends of a sort, but not true friends. But friends of what sort? And why say this to them at all? Both questions can be answered, Derrida also suggests, by seeing Aristotle's statement as a call to friendship: the friends addressed are friendly to be sure; but they are not yet related by true friendship, or "friendship of the good," and the point of the statement is to call them to that specific kind of friendship. Thus, "O my friends," Derrida writes,

> turns toward the past. It recalls, it points to that which must indeed be supposed in order to be heard, if only in the non-apophantic form of prayer: you [the addressee] have already marked this minimal friendship, this preliminary consent without which you would not hear me.[4]

This, then, is what Derrida calls "minimal friendship." Past-oriented, it is presupposed by other forms of friendship, which build on it in various ways. Minimal friends are

> friends of an entirely different kind, inaccessible friends, friends who are alone because they are incomparable and without common measure, reciprocity, or equality. Therefore without a horizon of recognition. Without familial bonds, without proximity, without *oikeiotēs* [hominess].[5]

The formation of such a friendship thus includes the stripping-away of all components of one's identity—all "common measure" with others. As Aristotle might put it, in such friendship "nothing perceptible persists in its identity as a substratum": minimal friendship comes about through genesis, not alteration.

In its lack of proximity and of sharing, and in that other forms of friendship presuppose it, Derrida's conception of minimal friendship recalls another conception of friendship, one he never mentions: Aristotle's brief and cryptic discussion at *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.5, of *eunoia*, or (as it is usually translated) 'goodwill.' This, too, is a minimal sort of friendship, because it is merely the feeling of wishing good things for another person (*EN* VIII.1155b32–1156a5). It may be directed, as in the case of competitors in an athletic

contest, toward a person whom one does not even know, to whom one has never spoken and may never speak. It arises when that person appears to be beautiful, or courageous, or some such thing. This perception of virtue or worth in another, which as an appearance may of course be mistaken, gives rise to goodwill toward the other much as 'the pleasure of the eye' gives rise to erotic desire. Goodwill, Aristotle concludes, is the *archē* of true or fraternal friendship, which does not come to be without passing through it.

Aristotle's account of goodwill differs from Derrida's account of minimal friendship in that (a) it begins with a feeling and (b) this feeling is awakened through the perception of some sort of excellence in the other. This latter point brings Aristotle's account of goodwill into accord with his account of true friendship, for the observation of virtuous actions is naturally pleasant *to the virtuous* (*EN* IX.1169b34–1170a2). In order to be impressed by the excellence of another, then, I must be excellent myself; since we are both good people, once we recognize our mutual goodwill it naturally develops into master friendship, the friendship of the good (*EN* VII.1155b34–1156a5)—a friendship founded on likeness, which Derrida calls "fraternity."

The matter is more complicated, however, for Aristotle is not talking about virtue here; he is talking about the *appearance* of virtue. What I perceive as excellent about another human being, and what incites my goodwill toward her, may have little to do with what Aristotle calls *aretē*, virtue or excellence. Good looks, for example, may incite goodwill; but they have nothing to do with human virtue, which resides not in the body but in the soul (*EN* I.1102a15–16). It is subsequent experience that decides. If my initial good impressions of someone are borne out in my later experience of her, then my goodwill was accurate; if not, it was mistaken. And if we are to take seriously the *noia* in *eunoia*, we have to say that accurate *eunoia* is what *eunoia* should be, for only accurate *eunoia* is truly *nous*.

Eunoia is thus to be defined as the *accurate* perception of excellence in another; a deluded perception is a defective case of *eunoia*. The criterion of accuracy, however, is whether *eunoia* subsequently develops into fraternal friendship. Thus, when Aristotle says that minimal friendship is the *archē* of true friendship, he is saying more than that the former is a necessary condition for the latter. He is saying that we only know what *eunoia* is when we know what true friendship is, just as we only know what an acorn is when we know what an oak is. *Philia* is then the *telos* of *eunoia*; it helps us understand *eunoia* because it is what *eunoia* will become if nothing untoward interferes—such as a defective perception at the outset.

Underlying this development of goodwill into true or fraternal friendship, in turn, must be what we can call my aspiration to excellence. In order to want

good things for another, I must value genuine excellence and so must want to see her apparent excellence turn out to be genuine. Guided by my ongoing aspiration to excellence, the making of a true friend is an alteration in me: I, in my aspiration to excellence, am the persisting substrate of the change. I thus do not come to be through my friends. Indeed, as *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.4 argues, I must not only exist but also love myself in order to love them; and true self-love, for Aristotle, is what I call "aspiration to excellence" (*EN* IX.1166a14–20). Making a friend, for Aristotle, is therefore a case of alteration.

For both Derrida and Aristotle, friendship begins in a relationship that exists prior to sharing and, indeed, prior to speech. But for Derridean minimal friendship, there are no criteria by which we can identify toward whom we feel such friendship; the other is entirely 'incomparable,' so there is no way to specify what properties she must have. For Aristotle, from the start, I know whether someone offers at least the appearance of excellence; the question, to be decided by further acquaintance, is whether this appearance is genuine or not. For Aristotle, then, *eunoia* cannot be understood except as leading, or not leading, to true friendship. For Derrida, by contrast, minimal friendship is what it is without regard to whether it develops into some other form of friendship. Both these distinctions are grounded on a more basic one: for Aristotle, forming a friendship presupposes a 'perceptible substrate' in the form of the individual's aspiration to excellence, and is therefore a case of alteration; for Derrida it presupposes nothing and is, or can be, a case of genesis.

This brings us to Plato's *Phaedrus*, for here we find the forming of a friendship treated as genesis rather than alteration. This happens in the dialogue's third speech, the Palinode, which I must discuss in some detail. It has, for our purposes, three main parts:[6] a discussion of soul as *auto kinoun* or 'moving itself' (*Phdr.* 245c–e), a great myth of the soul's fall from heaven and resurrection to the Forms (*Phdr.* 246a–250d), and finally an account of an earthly love affair (*Phdr.* 250e–256e).

The nature of soul in general is to move itself (*Phdr.* 245e). There, is to be sure, scholarly doubt about just what this means.[7] In his most detailed (though still quite short) discussion of *kinēsis* in the *Theaetetus* (*Tht.* 181b–c), Socrates mentions *alloiōsis* or 'alteration' as one form of it—so to say that soul is *to auto kinoun* could be to say that its nature is to alter itself. In the *Laws*, to 'move' something is to disturb it, and applies to musical, religious, and legal traditions (*Lg.* III.684);[8] so for soul to be a self-mover would mean for it to be a self-disturber. Such 'movement as disturbance' may be directed against even the most basic conventions of society, including the established constitution (*katatasis*) itself; and it may not merely disturb them, but overturn them. In that case, 'motion' means revolution, and self-motion means

self-overthrow—a notion the *Phaedrus* evokes in stating that as soul moves around the universe, it "changes from one form to another [ἄλλοτ' ἐν ἄλλοις εἴδεσι γιγνομενή]" (*Phdr.* 246b) and thus changes in its basic properties—a view of self-motion which Aristotle attributed to Plato.[9] True to the analogy between individual and state that motivates the *Republic* (*R.* II.368d–369a), this dimension is preserved when Plato discusses individual souls: for an individual to be 'moved' means for her to fall victim to prophetic or erotic madness (*Ion* 533d; *Phdr.* 245b).

The forming of a friendship is portrayed in the Palinode via a myth whose beginning shows the individual soul as having not one principle of motion but three, presented as a wing and two horses. The wing enables the soul to rise toward the Forms, but has shriveled to a mere stump, causing the soul to fall to the ground. The two horses, which can be broadly viewed as desires, now take over and pull the soul like a chariot across the surface of the earth. Its motion is erratic, because while one horse is good and cooperative with the driver of the chariot, the other is mean and headstrong (*Phdr.* 246b). The two horses are thus enemies. We now have in effect three souls: three principles of self-motion within a single living thing. The result is that the soul can be pulled in different directions at once, or can be suspended between alternatives—as Phaedrus himself is suspended between Socrates and Lysias, and as the smitten soul later in the Palinode will be said to be (cf. *Phdr.* 236b, 252b, 257b).

When such a soul sees a beautiful person, it may simply take after that beauty "like a four-footed beast," at the behest of the evil horse (*Phdr.* 250e). But a soul of higher quality restrains itself and experiences a very different sort of motion: it catches and holds, says the myth, a stream of particles emanating from the beauty it beholds. These particles nourish the stump of its wing, causing it to regrow (*Phdr.* 251e).

At this point, we have a story of motion from without—the stream of particles emanating from the loved one—being caught and held by the soul, thus becoming motion within—the regeneration of the "most divine" part of the soul, its wing (cf. *Phdr.* 246). The soul itself is, like a living organism, dynamic enough to capture and retain motion from outside; to appropriate that motion; and derive nourishment from it.

In this, the soul is upended:

> All the rules of conduct, all the graces of life of which [the lover
> was previously proud, he now disdains; and is ready to enslave
> himself and to lie down wherever it is allowed near the loved.
> (*Phdr.* 252a)

This self-enslavement does not last, however. The particles which the soul is not strong enough to retain within itself do not escape into the environment at large, but are reflected back to the beautiful person, by now the soul's "beloved" (*Phdr*. 255b–c). His soul, catching and holding them in turn, is affected in a way similar to, but less intense than, that of the soul itself. Lover and beloved in this way come to constitute a couple, a closed system of mutual mirroring.

This systemic closure of the loving couple means that the motion in their souls is no longer a linear, 'wandering' pursuit of sensory objects of desire, but circular interchange. As the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* will tell us, circular motion is less mobile than other kinds, for it involves no change in place, and so is more noble (*Tim*. 34a; *Lg*. X.893c). Their relatively settled motion at last brings the lovers to the quiet of the couch, where they do not succumb to their sexual attraction, but transmute it into the "ordered rule of the philosophical life." In this they have been liberated: the "power of evil in the soul has been subjected, and the power of goodness set free [ἐλευθερώσαντες]" (*Phdr*. 256b3).

This motion, as proper to the soul, is "self-motion" (*Phdr*. 245e). But there are several senses in which the individual soul in the Palinode is portrayed as *not* self-moving. Its original fall from the heavens is caused, somehow, from without. Its early, confused wanderings across the earth are also motivated externally, as its 'horses' drag it after desired objects. Even when seized by the vision of the beloved, the soul is not portrayed as a self-mover: it is a sort of mirror which catches and appropriates the motion of visual particles.

Self-motion does, I suggest, apply more clearly to the conjoined souls of the loving couple. That couple constitutes what I have called a closed system, in which each part—each individual—derives its motion from the other. Each individual is moved from without, by the desire for (or particles from) the other. It is the couple as a whole that is moved from within: the linear pursuit of desired objects becomes a circular transfer of particles.

The final step is the 'victory' on the couch, where the lovers check their physical desire and lie side by side. Here their souls finally achieve "self-mastery and good order [ἐγκρατεῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κόσμιοι ὄντες]" (*Phdr*. 256b). "Self-mastery," in the *Republic*, is sobriety—the rule, within the individual soul, of its inferior parts by reason (*R*. IV.430e–431a). As immanent to the individual soul, self-mastery here must refer to the final completion of the process, in which the lovers become self-moving as individuals outside their relationship; when one of them dies, the other is able to carry on (for the claim at *Phdr*. 256b, which says that their victory will last for their lifetimes, can hardly be promising that they will both die at the same time).

Self-mastery in the Palinode thus has a paradoxical status: all soul is inherently self-moving, but the individual in the Palinode is self-moving only at the end of the process described. The paradox can be resolved by seeing that the Palinode presents us with an account of the genesis of a soul. At the beginning we do not have a unified being of any sort, much less a soul, but merely a site of contestation among three different principles of motion; at the end we have a unified, well-ordered being that has achieved self-mastery. The transformations of the soul in this account go to its very core; not only does it become unified and so *a* soul, it is also enslaved and then liberated along the way. As it becomes a soul, it becomes a self-mover; where at the beginning it is at the mercy of particles from without, in the penultimate stage it achieves what we might call 'indirect self-motion,' in that the impetus it receives from the beloved is really its own impetus being reflected back to it, and vice versa. In the final stage, it becomes directly self-moving in that it achieves self-mastery and is able to direct itself outside the relationship. The account shows the genesis of self-motion within the individual, then: that is, it shows an individual gaining a soul.

Making a friend is thus, for the *Phaedrus*, the instilling of wholeness in the soul. Instead of being pulled in different directions by its different parts, the soul becomes a smoothly functioning whole of heterogeneous parts. This comes about via an interactive process with another human being: the loving couple constitutes a human environment for the individual soul. Only through belonging to this environment does the individual soul achieve unity with itself. In that sense the erotic experience recounted in the Palinode is constitutive for the individual human soul: without it, such a soul will be just a collection of diverse motions, not 'a' soul at all.

This entire process of liberation is, however, grounded in the Platonic metaphysics of *to kalon* or 'beauty.' Beauty, of all the Forms, is the "most apparent [ἐκφανέστατον] and most lovely [ἐρασμιώτατον]" (*Phdr*. 250d) in the sensible world. The beholder of beauty in the body of another is thus presented with an alternative: either to regard it as a purely sensory phenomenon, and operate as a beast; or to perceive its true nature as an image of Beauty itself, which leads to the kind of love affair the Palinode depicts. It is on the metaphysical level that the Phaedrus's account of making a friend as the genesis of a soul seems to be captured by what Derrida calls "fraternity": the kind of friendship that is restricted to people of a specifiable type. For though just one "god" draws the lovers upward to the Forms, polytheism has an important role here. In the Palinode's first depiction of the soul's rise to and beyond heaven (*Phdr*. 246e–247a), no fewer than twelve gods and goddesses approach the Forms, each with a retinue of human followers. When

those followers return to earth, they retain the way of life of the "god" they followed previously (*Phdr.* 252a). The beloved whom they come to find is a follower, we read, of the same god (*Phdr.* 252e–253b). What this means, then, is that there is a definite number of types of soul (*Phdr.* 271d), and the loving relationship portrayed in the Palinode can only be found by someone who shares one's soul-type. The attraction that begins the relationship then is already a case of likeness of soul, or fraternity; but only the "god" at work in it knows this.

A beautiful body is such because of its relation to the supersensible or intelligible world of the Forms, and in particular to its most apparent denizen, Beauty itself. But human beauty, for Plato, is not only or even mainly a matter of bodies. Socrates, after all, hardly has a beautiful body; yet as Alcibiades makes clear in the *Symposium*, young men found him profoundly attractive. What attracted them, of course, were his words.

Despite its hostile treatment of rhetoric, which Derrida has followed out in famous detail,[10] the *Phaedrus* does not simply dismiss beauty of speech, and resultant persuasion, out of hand. It claims merely that anyone who wants to speak "well and beautifully" must first know the truth of the subject matter (*Phdr.* 259e; cf. *Phdr.* 273b). The philosophical speech depicted in the Palinode is hardly restricted to the dialectical examination of word meanings portrayed, we will see, at its end. There is nothing to exclude from it the kind of rhetorical seduction that Socrates, through the Palinode itself, uses on Phaedrus to turn him toward philosophy. Even Diotima, who thinks Socrates gives far too high a place to *logos*, allows "beautiful words [*kaloi logoi*]" to have a role in philosophy (*Smp.* 210a).[11]

The soul in the Palinode, on first seeing a beautiful body, does not know that its beauty manifests its relationship to an intelligible world. This means, we noted, that the soul on first apprehension of a beautiful body can go in one of two directions: either straight after that body in beastly fashion or, after hesitation, upward toward the Forms. A similar, but more complex, choice is present in the case of certain words: those whose meanings are disputable. When confronted with such words, we "wander [πλανώμεθα]" intellectually. Different people "are carried [φέρεται]" by them in different directions (*Phdr.* 263a). They thus behave like the miserable chariot at the beginning of the love affair (*Phdr.* 236b, 252b, 257b); and just as the right procedure with physical beauty is not to go straight for it but to allow oneself to see it as the image of an intelligible entity, so the right procedure with such a word is not simply to use it for its seductive and intriguing sound but to look to its meaning. For both, *oxytēs* or 'acuteness' is required (see *Phdr.* 250e and 263c).

If one is to use a word correctly, Plato continues, it is necessary to perform both "collection" and "division" with respect to it: one must allow one's mind to be carried to its single root meaning, and then in a disciplined way see all the various specific meanings that it has, irrespective of how one actually intends to argue with it (*Phdr.* 265a–266b). When this happens, the resulting discourse is beautiful not merely by ornament but also in their clarity and coherence, virtues that Socrates claims for his own final definition of "madness" (*Phdr.* 265d).

Thus, proper procedure with words corresponds to proper procedure with loved ones. Indeed, the two coincide. For the attainment of self-mastery by the philosophical lovers can be seen as the victory of *logos*, or speech, over *sōma*, or 'body': the lovers on the couch decide not to consummate their relationship physically, but to love one another in words alone. At that point, they at last become true philosophers (*Phdr.* 256a).

The souls of the philosophical lovers thus come to concern themselves not with actions, but with *logoi*. Moreover, the lovers do not use these *logoi* to pursue earthly purposes but examine them on their own account, allowing themselves to be carried upward to the true meanings of those *logoi*: the Forms (cf. *Phdr.* 256aff.). Aware now of their 'true' motion as the metaphysical motion toward the Forms, they enter into that motion as their own. Their love turns into dialectic, the disciplined investigation of language; and it is no wonder that Socrates should refer to himself as a "lover" of dialectic (*Phdr.* 265c–266b).

The genesis of the soul depicted in the Palinode is thus to be understood not merely in psychological, physical, or metaphysical terms, but as a type of discourse as well. This discourse comprises both the words and arguments of dialectic and the kind of persuasion brought about by rhetoric. The main distinction between the two, emphasized by Derrida, is that dialectic requires and aims at truth. More relevant here is a corollary of this: that persuasive arguments are valid only for those possessing souls of a certain type; dialectical *logoi*, being ultimately truths about the Forms, are valid universally (*Phdr.* 249b, 271b). Any human being has a soul of a certain type, and finds certain sorts of *logoi* persuasive. A person who has not studied the soul dialectically (for which see *Phdr.* 271d) will not know why this is, and so will not know what sorts of argument would persuade people with soul-types differing from her own. Such a person will be able to speak only with others who share her soul-type, which is precisely the case with the lovers who are "following the gods" up to the Forms in the Palinode (cf. *Phdr.* 252c–253c). Someone who *has* studied dialectic, however, is in possession of what is true, and so valid for all. True language for Plato, then, is language that can be

used to talk with anyone whatsoever. For such a person, all human being are potential friends, for all have seen the Forms; that is why they are able to speak (*Phdr.* 249b–250a).

This is where Platonic friendship escapes fraternity. The reason why speech is not confined to those with similar soul-types is that all humans have seen the Forms. Since words gain meaning (and become real words) through their relation to the Forms, and in the first instance the 'most apparent' of these, Beauty, all humans are able to find beauty in the words of another. A soul may be attracted only by the bodies of certain people then; but it is capable of being attracted by the words of anyone whatsoever. The only 'similarity' in play in the latter case is only that, as human beings, both are able to speak.

But in distinguishing between being attracted by the words of another and being attracted by the body of another, we seem to have strayed rather far from the overt concern of the *Phaedrus*, which is with love affairs as opposed to friendships. This distinction, however may be overrated; for Aristotle, *erōs* is an excess of friendship, but the two do not differ in kind (*EN* VIII.1158a122–13). In Platonic terms, a contrast between the two could be formulated as follows: *erōs* begins in the pleasure of the eye, when one finds the body of another attractive. It cannot begin any other way, for our first acquaintance with other people is always sensory. Friendship, however, begins with the pleasure of the ear, when one finds the speech of another attractive. This does not make either less intense or profound than the other; each can bring about the 'genesis' of a soul. But it does make them different. We would thus have a distinction between *philia sōmatikē*, or 'bodily friendship,' and *philia logikē*, or 'discursive or rational friendship,' insofar as the former would be called, in English, 'erotic,' while the latter would be 'friendly.'

Forming a friendship (in the sense of a *philia logikē*), as the genesis of a soul, is not founded on similarity beyond the shared capacity to speak some language; it is not a kind of fraternity, but begins in something akin to Derridean "minimal friendship." Indeed, we may say that this kind of 'genetic friendship' is the reverse of deconstruction. Where deconstruction is, as Derrida puts it in *Speech and Phenomena*, a "feeling [our] way across the towards the unnameable,"[12] dialectic—and true friendship—would be feeling the way toward words.

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. G. Collins (London: Verso, 1994/1999).

2. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 236.

3. Ibid., 2.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 35.

6. I skip the Palinode's first part, the positive definition of love in terms of madness (*Phdr*. 244a–245c).

7. Cf. *GC* I.320a18 and I.322b9.

8. See also *Lg*. V.738c and d, VI.77c and 816c, and VII.797b.

9. Cf. *De an*. I.406b11–15.

10. Derrida, "La pharmacie de Platon," in *La dissémination* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972), 69–197.

11. For the role of beautiful discourse in the *Symposium*, and Diotima's denigration of it, see Drew A. Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 56–58.

12. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. D. B. Allison (1967; reprint, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 77.

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The Political Context for Virtue: Aristotle's *Politics*

Eve Rabinoff

It is common, when meeting a person for the first time, to introduce oneself by referring to one's profession, one's role in a family, one's interests, and so on. We draw on these categories as an immediate and basic answer to the question "Who are you?" We are fathers and mothers, politicians and hairdressers, rock climbers and readers. This reflects a basic facet of a person's identity: our self-definition implicitly refers to others, the communities we engage with in our various pursuits. Who we are emerges from and draws on a social, interpersonal, and political context. In a very real way, who we are depends on such a context.

I begin a discussion of Aristotle's *Politics* with this reflection because Aristotle holds that in a *very* real way, our being depends on our *political* context. Aristotle famously claims that the human being is by nature a political animal. Nearly as famously, Aristotle emphasizes how essential membership in political community is to being a human being by twice designating a person who lives outside political community as inhuman, either lesser or greater than a human being (*Pol*. I.1253a3–4), either a beast or a god (*Pol*. I.1253a26–29). Interestingly, the inhumanity of such an extrapolitical individual lies in its self-sufficiency: insofar as an individual is self-sufficient, that individual is insufficiently *human*. The implication is that, to Aristotle's mind, lacking individual self-sufficiency is constitutive of being human and living a human life. To say it otherwise, human beings are essentially dependent creatures, dependent in their very being on political community. Absent this dependency, an individual is either a beast or a god. This raises a basic set of questions: why and in what sense is the individual lacking in self-sufficiency? Why and in what sense does a person need to live in political community in order fully to *be* a person?

A preliminary answer is that the human being lacks self-sufficiency in the sense that she depends on the cooperation of others to provide for her basic material needs and for the continuation of life. Seeking the parts of the political community by looking to its beginnings, Aristotle identifies first

"a pairing together of those who do not have the power to be without each other, such as a female and a male for the sake of generation . . . and something naturally ruling and ruled for preservation" (*Pol*. I.1252a26–31).[1] These two pairs together form the household, "the kind of community organized in accord with nature for everyday life" (*Pol*. I.1252b12–14).[2]

This sort of lack of self-sufficiency, however, does not capture the uniquely *human* nature of the political animal's dependency, nor is this a need that requires *political* community to be fulfilled. There are other gregarious animals, such as bees, that work together to provide for their basic necessities, but they are not thereby political animals, according to Aristotle (*Pol*. I.1253a7–9). It is not, in other words, in virtue of our *humanity* that we are dependent on others for our sustenance; other animals are similarly dependent. And so it is not surprising that the family and the village are superseded by the city (*polis*) (*Pol*. I.1252b27–30), and that it is in this context that Aristotle introduces the notion of the human being's essential dependency (*Pol*. I.1253a1–4).

If it is not for the fulfillment of material needs that the human being is essentially dependent on the political community, in what sense is she dependent on it? In the course of discussing the different forms of government, Aristotle both confirms that it is not our material neediness that makes us political animals, and makes it clear that, instead, we are political for the sake of living *well* (*Pol*. I.1278b16–23). The city, after all, comes into being for the sake of life, but it *is* for the sake of living well (*Pol*. I.1252b29–30).[3] The establishment of the city elevates life from the merely natural pursuit of survival to the pursuit of the good, and it is thereby a condition for specifically *human* life. But this only offers a refinement to our original set of questions: why and in what sense is the individual lacking in self-sufficiency with respect to the good life? Why and in what sense does a person need to live in political community in order fully to *be* a person, that is, to live a good human life?

A third answer is that we essentially depend on political community because political community is a necessary condition for virtue. Aristotle identifies the human good as "an activity of soul in accordance with virtue" (*EN* I.1098a16–17),[4] and he considers *politikē* to be the architectonic art of the human good (*EN* I.1094b26–28). Furthermore, it may be that one particular virtue, justice, is inherently political in the sense that it can only be developed and exercised in the context of political life. This answer is recommended by Aristotle's explanation of what makes the political animal *political* as opposed to merely gregarious:

> Why a human being is a political animal, more than every sort of
> bee and every sort of herd animal, is clear. For nature, as we claim,

does nothing uselessly, and a human being, alone among the ani-
mals, has speech . . . speech is for disclosing what is advantageous
and what is harmful, and so too what is just and what is unjust . . .
and it is an association involving these things that makes a house-
hold and a city. (*Pol.* I.1253a8–18)

It is in virtue of our natural ability to communicate the just and the unjust
that our mode of community is political, not merely social. This suggests that
justice is an indelibly political virtue.

In what follows, I aim to develop and defend the proposal that the human
being is an essentially political animal because the city provides the necessary
context for virtue. It does so in three respects: first, in a mundane sense, the
city is the necessary context for virtue because it releases (some) people from
the menial pursuit of supplying the material necessities of life, enabling them
to take on the pursuit of the good life. Second, in a substantive sense, the city
enables the pursuit of virtue by initiating its citizens into the project of living
well by educating them in virtue. Third, the city enables the exercise of virtue
by providing the context within which there are others who are the appro-
priate recipients of virtue. This last respect brings in the notion that the city
is a necessary context for justice in particular, for Aristotle determines that
justice is, in one sense, the exercise of complete virtue with respect to others
(*EN* V.1129b25–33). Ultimately, it seems to me that the city is the necessary
context for virtue because the city establishes a reality in which the project of
developing virtue is both given definition and also is sustained by others who
join together to share such a project.

I

Let me begin by offering an orienting comment on the nature of the human
good at which we aim in our pursuit of the good life. As is indicated by Aris-
totle's designation of the extrapolitical individual as either a beast or a god,
human life in general is situated between the natural and the divine.[5] Aris-
totle reiterates this sentiment in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, situating human
virtue and vice between godliness and beastliness (*EN* VII.1145a15–27; see
also *Pol.* VII.1145a25–27). One thing that marks off human life from animal
and divine life is that living a good human life requires the explicit identi-
fication and pursuit of the human *telos*, fulfillment, or aim. A tree naturally
and automatically aims at and achieves its own fruition, and the divine is
complete in every moment and in every activity. But we human beings must
identify for ourselves the aim or *telos* of our lives in order to aim at it.

This is evident in the many meanings people attribute to what they all agree is the highest human good, happiness: pleasure, wealth, honor, virtue (*EN* I.1095a20–23). Exactly how a person interprets happiness will significantly determine what she aims at achieving and how she goes about living her life. Furthermore, Aristotle says in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that we ought to come to *know* what the good of our actions and our lives is in order best to achieve it (*EN* I.1094a17–26). Unlike other creatures, we will not attain our species' good without (correctly) identifying and explicitly aiming at it. Similarly, human virtue or flourishing, Aristotle tells us, is neither by nature nor contrary to nature but instead arises by means of developing habits (*EN* II.1103a23–26): unlike other creatures, we do not flourish in the absence of *self*-cultivation. If identifying and explicitly aiming at our *telos* is a distinctive mark of human life, perhaps it is this for which the human being depends on the city.

Indeed, the opening line of the *Politics* claims that all communities aim at some good, and the city is the most sovereign community, encompassing the family and the village, and it therefore aims at the most sovereign of goods (*Pol.* I.1252a1–7). Unlike the family, however, which aims at the natural good of providing for the necessities and the reproduction of life, the aim of the city is not simply put in place by nature. More precisely, the *general* aim of political life is given—the city is for the sake of living well—but the specification of that aim is not given; instead it requires interpretation. Aristotle makes this clear throughout the discussion of the various political regimes, but perhaps the most succinct expression of this thought occurs in the discussion of the best regime in Book VII, where Aristotle contends that happiness is the same in the case of an individual and in the case of a city:

> For those who regard living well as consisting in wealth in the case of one person also count a whole city as blessedly happy if it is wealthy; those who hold a tyrannical way of life in the highest honor would also claim that a city that rules the greatest number of other cities is the happiest; and if one accepts that a single person is happy by means of virtue, he will also claim that a city more excellent in virtue is happier. (*Pol.* VII.1324a5–13)

Some of these interpretations of the good life are in fact *mis*interpretations—living well requires virtue above all else, for both individuals and cities (*Pol.* VII.1)—nevertheless, the good that the city aims at is arrived at by means of a decision about what the good life consists in, in the same way that a person decides about how to live her life. In the case of the city, however, the interpretation of the good life is set up as a common aim.

The point I wish to draw from this is that, although happiness or the human good is the flourishing of human nature, it is also, in a qualified sense, a creation of human beings. This is not to say that happiness or the good life is a human construct, but that the realization of this good for any particular person or any particular community is a result of human intervention and initiative. Aristotle expresses this notion at the conclusion of the argument, in *Politics* I.2, that the city is by nature and that the human being is by nature a political animal: "So the impulse toward this sort of community [the city] is in all people by nature, but the first person to have organized one was responsible [*aitios*] for the greatest of goods" (*Pol.* I.1253a29–31). What I hope to show in this essay is that the establishment of political community is a condition both for the individual's pursuit of virtue and the good life, insofar as it provides a context that sets the terms for what the good life consists in, and also that it is the condition for the fruition of virtue, insofar as it provides the context within which virtue can most properly be exercised.

II

There are two respects in which the city provides the necessary context for the pursuit of virtue. In one sense, the city is materially necessary for the pursuit of virtue: it is in the context of the city that (some) people are released from the necessary pursuit of the continuation of life to the leisured pursuit of the *good* life. The fact of the matter is that if one must see to the work of surviving—hunting, building and maintaining shelter, and so on—one will not have the time or occasion to undertake the sorts of activities that lead to the development of virtue—fighting in battle and developing courage, helping friends, developing generosity and gentleness, and so on. For one thing, acting virtuously requires the freedom to respond to circumstances as they emerge (*EN* II.1104a8–9), and such flexibility is prevented if one must tend to the needs of the crops (for example), which operate on their own schedule. Thus, in the *Politics* Aristotle urges that those who are engaged in menial labor, and even artisans, ought to be excluded from the class of citizens in the best city (*Pol.* III.1277b33–1278a13), for they are unable to pursue virtue (*Pol.* III.1278a20–21). More significantly, the virtuous act, and the life defined by such acts, is one undertaken for the sake of the beautiful (*kalon*) (*EN* III.1115b12–13), whereas menial labor, and the life defined by such labor, is undertaken due to necessity and for the sake of maintaining life, precluding the opportunity to act for the sake of the beautiful.[6]

The city is thus the materially necessary context for the pursuit of virtue because within it the community is organized in such a way that those

suited to menial labor—whom Aristotle deems slaves (*Pol*. III.1278a11–13, VII.1329a17–26)—take care of the necessities of life for the city, and those suited to virtue are thereby free to pursue it. This implies that, whenever we talk about the pursuit of virtue, we are presupposing the city; the pursuer of virtue is necessarily a citizen.[7] In this light, it is not surprising that Aristotle both begins and concludes the *Nicomachean Ethics* with discussions of politics, arguing, in I.2, that the inquiry into the human good is "a sort of political inquiry" (*EN* I.1094b10–11), and concluding, in X.9, that "the legislators ought to encourage people in the direction of virtue and exhort them to act for the sake of the beautiful" (*EN* I.1180a5–7).

The city is the materially necessary context for the pursuit of virtue, but there is a second, more substantive way that the city is a necessary condition for the pursuit of virtue: the city's laws educate its citizens and initiate them into the project of developing virtue. Several times in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle remarks on the importance for the development of virtue of being well raised with good habits (*EN* II.1103b23–25, II.1104b11–13, X.1179b23–32). Perhaps surprisingly to the modern ear, he considers this moral rearing to be an importantly political task (*EN* X.1179b20–1180b28, *Pol*. VIII.1). In *Politics* VIII.1, Aristotle offers what appears to be a rather cynical reason for this: the lawgiver is concerned with the moral upbringing of the citizens as a safeguard for the constitution, be it just or unjust, rather than for the sake of promoting the good life (*Pol*. I.1337a11–18). But this is needn't be a cynical reason, for the form of government established is itself based on an interpretation of the good life. I suggested above that the pursuit of the good life requires interpretation, and that this is true both for individuals and for the city. In the case of the city, this interpretation about what the good life consists in serves as the basis for the city's form of government—an oligarchy is the form of government based on the pursuit of wealth on the assumption that the life of wealth is the good life, democracy is the form of government based on the pursuit of freedom, and so on. Thus the lawgiver provides an education that not only is a measure of security for the constitution, but also promotes the sort of character that the lawgiver takes to be a good, happy one (cf. *Pol*. VII.1324a5–13). The establishment of the city clears the way for its citizens to pursue the good life, and the *kind* of city that is established offers an established interpretation about what the good life *is*.

The interpretation of the good life that the city is founded on is not merely one interpretation on offer. Rather, being raised within and by the city, the citizens become habituated in ways consonant with the city's laws and thereby the values implicit in the city's interpretation of the good life. This sentiment is expressed in II.8, where Aristotle notes that "the law has

no strength to be obeyed apart from habit, and this does not come easily but through length of time" (*Pol*. II.1269a20–22).[8] The laws of the city that educates its citizens are not simply external guides to action, edicts that one obeys when one is informed of them, but habituated and habitual ways of behaving—obedience to the law results in an internalization of the norms the laws express. Aristotle makes it clear that the laws are internalized in the final chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, when he remarks:

> To obtain from childhood a correct upbringing with a view to virtue is difficult for someone not reared under laws of the requisite sort. For living in a moderate and controlled way is painful to the many, especially the young. Hence by means of laws, the rearing and the regular practices involved must have already been put into the proper order, for once these become habitual they will not be painful. (*EN* X.1179b31–1180a1)

Becoming habituated to the law reconfigures the young person's feelings of pleasure and pain, until she no longer feels pain at acting moderately (for example). Similarly, in an oligarchic society, working for the sake of a paycheck will no longer be painful, for its citizens will have been habituated to such behavior and to the norm of wealth on which it is based.

Virtue is developed through a process of habituation, but, as Aristotle's emphasis on the importance of early childhood upbringing indicates, the person pursuing virtue does not come to the project with a clean slate. Instead, a person takes on the pursuit of virtue having already been habituated in certain ways. In this respect, the development of virtue is an interpersonal project: the family bears the responsibility of raising children well so that they are in a position to develop virtuous characters. Although one is responsible for the character one develops (*EN* III.5), one does not develop one's character ex nihilo, for the circumstances within which one develops character are given in advance—and these circumstances have a direct bearing on how well equipped one will be to develop a virtuous character. Furthermore, these circumstances are, in an important respect, supplied by the city, for at a basic level, political society shapes the character of its citizens by informing its citizens through its laws about what the good life consists in. This lawful education sets the initial parameters (even if they come to be rejected) from within which any individual pursues virtue. Thus, in the opening of his discussion of justice, Aristotle says:

> The laws pronounce on all things, in their aiming at the common advantage . . . As a result, we say that those things apt to preserve

happiness and its parts for the political community are just. The
law orders us to do the deeds of a courageous person . . . and those
of the moderate person . . . and those of a gentle person . . . and
similarly also in the case of the other virtues and corruptions; the
commands the ones and forbids the others—correctly in the case
of the law laid down correctly, and in a worse way in the case of the
law laid down haphazardly. (*EN* V.1129b14–25)

The individual does not arrive at the project of developing virtue by herself;
instead she finds herself already engaged in such a project, having been initi-
ated into it by the moral education provided by the laws of the city.

III

The city is the condition for the development of virtue, both by providing the
material conditions within which virtue can be pursued and by informing its
citizens about the good life. It is also the condition for the exercise of virtue,
as I will try to show in this section. In *Nicomachean Ethics* V, Aristotle identi-
fies two basic kinds of justice: justice that is the whole of virtue exercised with
respect to others (*EN* V.1129b25–27), and justice that is a part of virtue and
concerns (primarily) fairness in relationships of exchange (*EN* V.1130a14–32).
I am concerned with the former sort of justice, and I will show that it is only in
the context of the city that the appropriate others are to be found.

That justice is virtue with respect to others already situates it within a
social context: in order to be just, there must be others toward whom one
can act justly. However, it is not just anyone toward whom the exercise of
virtue is justice. In the first place, the exercise of virtue toward one's famil-
ial others, the members of one's household is not just (in the proper sense).
This is implied by Aristotle's remark that justice "is complete because he who
possesses it is able to use virtue also in relation to another, and not only as
regards himself. For many people are able to use virtue in dealing with the
members of their household, but in their affairs regarding another, they are
unable to do so" (*EN* V.1129b31–1130a1).[9] Being virtuous toward members
of one's household does not reach the level of justice, for one may use virtue
in interactions within the household, but nonetheless lack justice. What is
deficient about the household as a context for justice?

In one respect, the reason for the lack of justice within the household is
simple. Justice and injustice revolve around the distribution and exchange
of goods, paradigmatically honor and money (*EN* V.1130b1–2, 30–32), and
such distribution and exchange is predicated on owning property or on being

the bearer of public honors. Within the household, however, there is no exchange of goods because property belongs to the household and not to the members individually (*Pol.* I.1257a19–24); neither are public honors distributed among members of the (private) household. This can only be half the story, however, for it is not clear how this absence of exchange relationships within the household explains the diminishment of the whole of justice, justice in the sense of the use of complete virtue toward others. It seems quite plausible that members of a household can be, for example, gentle toward one another, or engage in cowardly activities that harm one another, even in the absence of exchange relationships.

We can fill out the second half of the story by looking to Aristotle's criticism of Plato's *Republic* in the second book of the *Politics*. Here Aristotle criticizes Plato's argument concerning the arrangement of the community of the guardians. Plato argues that the guardians ought not to have any private possessions and ought to have all things in common for the sake of establishing the strongest possible unity within the city (*R.* V.462a–e), and Aristotle rejects the hypothesis on which this argument is based. The hypothesis, as Aristotle articulates it, is "that it is best for the city to be entirely one to the greatest possible degree." Rather, Aristotle counters, "it is evident that by advancing and becoming more of a *one* it will not *be* a city. For a city is by nature a certain kind of multiplicity; by becoming more of a one it would turn from a city into a household and from a household into a human being" (*Pol.* II.1261a15–20). The implication is that the members of a household are too strongly unified, are not sufficiently differentiated from one another, so as to count as a multiplicity. They are, instead, rather like the parts of the body that together constitute a unified, single organism. Just as both a hand and a foot, although distinct, are both *my* hand and foot, so too the individual members of the household, although distinct, belong to a single entity, the household.[10]

The more unified something is, the less justice can be found within it. Aristotle argues that one cannot commit injustice against oneself, for one who harms himself "suffers voluntarily, and no one suffers injustice voluntarily" (*EN* V.1138a12). One can *harm* oneself, Aristotle argues, but harm is not unjust unless is it suffered unwillingly, and in order to be suffered unwillingly the sufferer cannot also be the perpetrator. Thus, in the same way that it is not unjust for me to hit my own arm, even though it is painful, neither is it unjust (in the proper sense) for one family member to hit another, even though it is harmful. If this is true, and if justice is an other-regarding virtue in general, the reason justice is diminished in the household is that household others are not 'other' in the respect that would make justice a relevant

virtue. They are not really *other* at all, so to be virtuous with respect to members of one's household is rather like being virtuous with respect to oneself. Aristotle confirms this in *Nicomachean Ethics* V.6, saying, "There is no injustice in an unqualified sense toward one's own things, but one's property or offspring . . . is like a part of oneself, and nobody chooses to harm himself" (*EN* V.1134b9–12).

The household does not supply the context for justice because the members of the household are insufficiently differentiated to be recipients of the other-regarding virtue. However, it is not just *any* nonhousehold other who is the full recipient of justice. In *Politics* III.9 Aristotle points out that all that is necessary for a successful treaty or trade agreement between foreigners is that those covered by the agreement *do* no injustice, and whether or not they *are* just or unjust is irrelevant (*Pol*. III.1280a40–b5). There is justice between foreigners, but only of a superficial sort, concerning action alone and not character, and concerning the justice of trade alone, not the whole of virtue. In contrast to familial others, these foreign others, we might say, are *too* other, too differentiated to be the proper recipients of justice.

What this suggests is that justice is a political virtue, rather than a social virtue, because the city provides the context within which there are others of the appropriate sort toward whom justice in the full sense may be exercised. In his refutation of Plato's hypothesis, Aristotle draws an analogy that illustrates the nature of the unified multiplicity that characterizes the city: the city is united in the way different notes form a harmony, not a single note (*Pol*. II.1263b31–35). The city brings people together in a way that is neither too intimate nor too distant, producing others that are neither familial nor foreign.

What produces this harmony is, I submit, that the citizens share a sense of what is valuable and contribute to a shared project of living well. This serves as a shared standard against which actions may be judged to be just or unjust. Aristotle argues that living well is the same for a community as it is for an individual (*Pol*. VII.1323b29–1324a4). If living well consists in being virtuous both for a person and for a city, exercising virtue within a political community contributes to the shared project, while exercising vice detracts from it. Furthermore, exercising virtue *justifies* one's membership in a community aimed at living well—if one acts viciously, one is undermining the very reason for joining together in the first place. Aristotle criticizes oligarchies for making wealth the basis for political rule, for

> they do not state the thing that is most authoritative. If people
> came together and entered into community for the sake of possessions, they would have a share in the city exactly as much as

> they had a share of property, and the argument of the oligarchs
> would consequently seem to be strong . . . But they do so not just
> for the sake of living but instead for the sake of living well. (*Pol.*
> III.1280a 25–32)

This suggests that contributing to living well justifies one's participation in political community. By contrast, if one behaves viciously toward members of one's household, one is not undermining the reason the household exists (the perpetuation of life), and therefore, although harmful, it is not unjust to behave thus.

Behaving viciously toward fellow citizens is unjust (rather than merely harmful) because it is a behavior that violates the very principle on which the community is based. And because this principle is not fixed for the community by nature, to violate the principle is to undermine its nature as a principle of the community—to act viciously is to propose a different standard of what is good. To say it otherwise, in order for the community to continue, its principle must be actively sustained by its members. To act in a way that violates the principle both harms the recipient and is unjust because it undermines the community based on that principle.

IV

I began with the question, Why and in what sense does a person need to live in political community in order fully to *be* a person, that is, to live a good human life? The answer is that virtue—the excellent fruition of a human being—requires a context, both for its development and for its exercise, and no individual is able to establish that context by herself, for two reasons: on the one hand, every individual arrives at the project of developing virtue when it is already under way—one is already habituated by one's early education and rearing; and, on the other hand, the context of virtue is sustained only the continued participation of the members of the community.

Notes

1. Translations of passages from the *Politics* are taken, with some modifications, from Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. J. Sachs (Newburyport, Mass.: Focus, 2012).

2. Several households together form a village, which supplies needs "not of a daily sort," but presumably of the same kind as the household is formed to supply.

3. Cf. *Pol.* III.9, 1280b33–35, 1281a1–4.

4. Translations of passages from the *Nicomachean Ethics* are taken from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. R. C. Bartlett and S. D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

5. At least practical life is thus situated. The philosophical life is something akin to the divine.

6. However, Aristotle acknowledges that "there is perhaps some portion of the beautiful present in and resulting from the mere and sole activity of living, as long as the hardships that come along with life are not too great a burden. It is obvious that most human beings will endure great suffering while clinging to life, as if there is in it a certain joyfulness and natural sweetness" (*Pol*. III.1278b25–30).

7. A qualification is necessary here. Aristotle acknowledges that slaves too, if they are to be good at their work, require a sort of virtue. But their virtue is deficient to the same degree as they lack the rational capacity that is ultimately the source of virtue (*Pol*. I.1259b21–1260a24). Their development of virtue, I think it is safe to say, is the result of training, rather than the result of their own pursuit.

8. This is, Aristotle says, the most important measure a city can take to ensure its preservation (*Pol*. V.1310a14–18). Similarly, Aristotle holds that a government is best preserved if it is preserved internally, through the agreement of the citizens about the form of rule (*Pol.* IV.1294b36–40), and, at least implicitly, about the values that underlie and justify that sort of rule. Conversely, the most general cause of faction in a city is a disagreement about the basis of rule (*Pol.* V.1302a24–28).

9. It should be noted at the outset that Aristotle identifies a derivative sort of justice, *ti dikaion* or "some justice" (*EN* V.1134a29–30) holding within the household (*EN* V.1134b8–18), although, as it seems here, this is not justice in the fullest sense. Cf. Marco Zingano, "Natural, Ethical, and Political Justice," in *Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, ed. M. Deslauriers and P. Destrée (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 199–222.

10. Aristotle also considers citizens parts of the city (*Pol*. III.1274b38–41), but if the distinction between the unity of the household and the unity of the city is to be upheld, citizens must belong to the city in a manner distinct from the way members of the household belong to the household. And indeed, Aristotle identifies as parts of a household not individual members, but relationships: master and slave, husband and wife, and father and children (*Pol.* III.1253b5–7). The reason that the parts of the household are pairs, rather then individuals, may be that the wife, slave, and child are fundamentally incomplete on their own, such that only within the context of the relationship with the husband/master/father can they flourish (*Pol.* I.1260a9–14).

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Mimēsis: Plato and Aristotle on the Political Power of Tragedy

Patricia Fagan

One of the more (in)famous dimensions of ancient Greek philosophy is the discussion of artistic "censorship" in Books III and X of Plato's magnum opus, the *Republic*. In these passages, Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus discuss the formation of a just city particularly with respect to the role of poetry in forming the perspectives of the citizens. Though it is commonly supposed that Plato promotes a repressive political policy that is fundamentally unappreciative of the unique and definitive characteristics of artistic expression and that this Platonic vision is at odds with the more sympathetic and insightful view of Aristotle in his *Poetics*, I will argue on the contrary (a) that the central discussions of *mimēsis*—'imitation'—in Books III and X of the *Republic* demonstrate quite a subtle and thoughtful grasp of the distinctive characteristics of poetic expression and (b) that the perspective developed in these discussions is strongly of a piece with Aristotle's analysis of tragedy in the *Poetics*.[1] In what follows, I will discuss in turn Book III of the *Republic*, Book X of the *Republic*, and the *Poetics*, in order to discern, first, what is the distinctive character of 'mimetic' poetry in general and, second, how this character is relevant to grasping the ambivalent political significance of Athenian tragedy in particular.

I. *Mimēsis* in *Republic* III

The discussion of *mimēsis* in Book III of the *Republic* follows from the discussion of the education of the guardians in Book II. This education should aim, Socrates and Glaucon agree (*R*. II.376e), to make good guardians by teaching potential guardians to be "philosophical, spirited, swift and strong in nature."[2] The guardians' education will resemble traditional Greek education for boys, with two major components, *gumnastikē* (physical training) for their bodies and *mousikē* (training in music and poetry) for their souls

(*R*. II.376e). *Mousikē* will be applied when the guardians are children, especially as stories whose content will have to be controlled so as not to foster in the children opinions opposed to those the adult guardians should hold (*R*. II.376e–377c). Consequently, these children will not hear stories that are false, such as stories of strife among the gods, lest the opinions encouraged by a child's inability to discern the deep meaning of a story take hold in the children and be impossible to change (*R*. II.377e–378e). Instead, the stories need to portray the gods as they really are, as incapable of harm (*R*. II.380a–b), as truthful (*R*. II.382a–383a). These true stories of the gods will instill in the children a gentle character (*R*. II.376c), allowing the guardians properly to perform their functions as protectors and regulators of the new polis, not exercising their capacity for violence and their bravery against their own (*R*. II.375a–d).[3]

This discussion draws our attention to the fact that, within education, there are two parties, the educators (the tellers of stories) and the educated (the children who will be guardians). Further, education does not aim at teaching skills (such as reading or mathematics) or at providing data (such as the history of Greece); it aims instead to form the opinions and characters of the children. The education of the guardians aims to establish the ideals and inclinations through which the children, when adults, will function as guardians. These values will be put before the children, not as discursive accounts of the ethics appropriate to people who are responsible for the well-being of a city, but as stories that will portray these values in action. The children will be witnesses of the kinds of people doing the kinds of things that they themselves will be called on to do as adults, and of people doing these things in the way and for the reasons that these future guardians will perform their activities.

This conversation about poetry in the education of the guardians presupposes something significant about poetry and about the domain of *mousikē* in general: art holds a powerful place in human life. The experience of children in their openness to poetry that tells stories is one example of this human experience. Art affects us; it makes us feel things and think things. It can, moreover, reveal to us things that become part of us; it can be transformative. Art also affects us, often, without our recognizing how it affects us; in Socrates's example, the child takes up values without knowing she does so. Art's ability to affect us without our noticing it brings to light another aspect of art: it is interpretively challenging. Art means what it does not say. The child, Socrates notes, does not discern the deeper meaning of a poem, the meaning that is not explicitly uttered. Art also means more than one thing. There can be more than one deeper and unspoken meaning alongside the meaning that

does get spoken, something that comes powerfully to light when Socrates begins to interpret particular passages from the Homeric poems.

The discussion of *mimēsis* in Book III thus takes place within a context that acknowledges art as a powerful element in human life and experience; the role of *mousikē* in the education of the guardians is a function of the recognition of that power. Because art is so powerful, Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus must be careful about how they propose to use it in the education of the guardians; the future of the city rests on getting the use of poetry right.

Having established what kinds of stories will not be told, Socrates examines what kinds of poetry will be used in educating the guardians. Here he brings up the question of *mimēsis* (*R.* III.392d). Stories are purveyed, Socrates says, through simple narration (*diēgēsis*), through *mimēsis*, or through a combination of *mimēsis* and narrative. Socrates's first example of *mimēsis* is the first scene of the *Iliad*, itself an example of the combined kind of poetry (*R.* III.392e–393b). The *Iliad* begins, Socrates says, with the poet himself speaking and making no effort to have his audience believe that anyone other than the poet is speaking. Then the poet speaks as though he himself were the old man Chryses; he tries to make it seem that Chryses, and not the poet, is the speaker, "likening his speech as much as possible to that of each person he announces is speaking." To make oneself like another in voice and gesture is, Socrates says, to imitate (*mimeisthai*) that person. As part of this *mimēsis*, Socrates notes, the poet hides himself (*R.* III.393b–d).

In this initial account of *mimēsis* we see that the poet makes himself like a character in his poem and, in this likeness, hides himself, disappears from the audience's sight. The poet in *mimēsis* invites the audience to believe that the poet is not the poet, but the character he enacts.[4] For this *mimēsis* to be successful, the audience must agree to mistake the appearance of things (the *mimēsis*) for the truth of the situation. The poet tells the story and does the *mimēsis*, but the audience must accept that the character represented is the reality, the real grounds of the situation. Moreover, in *mimēsis*, the poet, in making the character real and present to us, in showing, for example, Chryses making his plea to the Achaians for the return of his daughter, makes the whole situation of Chryses at the moment of his speaking present to his audience. *Mimēsis* is not just of a character, but of a situation in a place at a time and, in the case of Chryses in *Iliad* I, with other characters.

So *mimēsis* invites us not merely to take the character enacted as the reality before us, but to take the world and the situation of that character as the reality before us. We forget ourselves in our place and situation in witnessing this *mimēsis*. *Mimēsis* has the power to affect our perception of ourselves

in the world. Or, rather, as witnesses of *mimēsis*, we are doing some *mimēsis* ourselves. We agree to be drawn into the situation the poet presents; we participate in it. The presentation of a whole situation is especially apparent in drama, the form of poetry that is, in Socrates's account, simply *mimēsis*. Drama, "taking out the things between the poet's speeches, leaves behind the exchanges" (*R.* III.394b). In tragedy and comedy there is only the poet's self-concealing likening of himself to the represented characters and their situations.

In sum, according to the conversation of *Republic* III, *mimēsis* is what poetry does when the poet conceals himself, making himself like the character he presents to such an extent that we in the audience are ourselves carried into this represented situation. We believe that the *mimēsis* is what is real and present, forgetting that we are, for example, sitting in a theater surrounded by friends, family, fellow citizens. The audience of *mimēsis* takes itself as involved in the situation enacted before it, involved with the characters enacted before it. *Mimēsis* creates an environment in which we audience members are taken out of our everyday selves and situations and into the pressing reality of the actions and the characters onstage.

II. *Mimēsis* in *Republic* X

This conversation about *mimēsis* makes one very significant argument about poetry: that poetry is politically forceful and, consequently, potentially politically dangerous. This theme is reiterated in Book X when Socrates says to Glaucon that he thinks that they have founded their city especially well with respect to poetry in that (in Book III) they agreed not to admit into the city any part of poetry that is mimetic (*R.* X.595a). In particular, Socrates says, they will keep out the tragic poets and their first leader and teacher, Homer (*R.* X.595b). The distinctive, dangerous potential of poetry becomes clear when Socrates renews the discussion of *mimēsis* and articulates the effects of mimetic poetry in a different way and with a different focus. These effects rest on two things: the authoritative position of the Homeric poems in ancient Greece and the capacity that mimetic poetry has to make its audiences identify with characters in the poems. This combination is potentially dangerous to a city and its citizens because it discourages critical reflection and participation in framing the terms through which people (citizens) understand their world and their roles in that world.[5]

Socrates notes that people praise Homer and call him the educator of Greece (*R.* X.606e); he noted earlier that people also take Homer and tragedy as knowledgeable about all the arts and about virtue and vice (*R.* X.598d).

So people take Homer and tragedy as authoritative possessors of knowledge and understanding about human life and activity whose teachings ought to be followed and, indeed, are followed. Socrates addresses a historical reality: study of the Homeric poems was, as far as we can tell, a standard activity of *mousikē* throughout ancient Greece. These poems were taken as authoritative accounts of the myths of the Trojan War and, more significantly, as providers of examples of the ethics proper to elite Greek men. Homer is the leader and teacher of tragedy at least because tragedy, like Homeric epic, concerns itself almost exclusively with heroic myth and with the presentation of instantiations of various kinds of heroic excellence.

Scholars disagree about the precise point at which the Homeric poems, products of a long and sophisticated tradition of composition in performance, took the form in which we have them. They can be dated roughly to the middle of the eighth century B.C.E., during the period that saw the development in Greece of the polis (city-state) and the idea of the *politēs* (the citizen). The *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the archaic Greek epic in general are panhellenic in their orientation; they address themselves to an audience conceived as a universally Greek audience, not to a local audience based in the particularities of any one city-state. The ideology of these poems is aristocratic and patriarchal; it justifies itself through appeals to Zeus as the universal patriarchal aristocrat par excellence, whose divine status renders patriarchy and aristocracy natural. In part, the work of Homeric epic was to rely on and help to create a sense of the self-sameness of the elites of the emerging Greek city-states, a recognition that there was such a thing as Greekness as such and a political ideology that promoted the inherited rule of elite families.[6]

At issue in the discussion of *mimēsis* and poetry in *Republic* X, then, is tragedy's representation of the heroic world with its kings and heroes and their exemplary status in ancient Greece. Socrates has already claimed in Book VIII that tragedy is a problematic art form because it can draw cities and their constitutions toward tyranny and democracy (in this context, away from timocracy and oligarchy) because tragic poets praise tyranny (*R.* VIII.568c). In Book X, Socrates explains how it is that tragic *mimēsis* is able to influence constitutions. The political power of tragedy rests on its mimetic ability to portray strong emotion. Socrates notes that what audiences especially enjoy in tragedy is the powerful experiences of the characters, particularly their lamentation. When we see the heroes onstage suffering, Socrates says, we suffer along with them (*R.* X.605d). In *mimēsis*, we audience members feel involved in the action represented onstage and so we identify with the tragic hero; we feel sympathy for him, regardless of anything he has done. Tragedy functions through the pleasure it provides its

audience by portraying and eliciting strong emotion. The characters represented in tragedy are for the most part aristocrats and kings, the old heroes of myth. Tragedy praises tyranny in that it justifies that type of regime by making kings and tyrants onstage individual characters who are worthy objects of our sympathy. Tragedy encourages its audience to develop an affective identification with one isolated particular perspective on tyranny (with Sophocles's Oedipus, for example). Tragedy does not encourage its audience to cultivate practices of critical reflection on the nature of tyranny or on political life in general; indeed, it discourages its audience from taking up the very questions that a play itself can ask.[7] Tragedy focuses our attention and our emotions on a man, this suffering man here, and not on the more abstract, more universal questions about how politics should work, how governing a city should work. Tragedy encourages us, as citizens, to look for new 'heroes' with whom we can feel sympathy and to enact our political life through feelings like sympathy and enmity. It is through its mimetic activity, its presentation of particular characters and situations onstage as real and present, its summoning of its audience into the *mimēsis*, that tragedy can have this effect.

In the *Republic* the seriousness of mimetic poetry, of tragedy in particular, derives from two things, one taken up in Book III, the other in Book X. The content and authority of tragedy, as Socrates articulates it in Book X, make the situations presented onstage politically volatile. The form of tragedy, the *mimēsis* in which the poet conceals himself to present the characters and their situations as the real terms of our experience, involves the audience in the presented action and is the ground for the audience's sympathetic identification with particular kings, tyrants, and heroes. The pleasing sympathetic particularity of tragic *mimēsis* can discourage the audience from engaging in precisely the kind of careful, rigorous thinking about politics that forms the conversation of the *Republic*.

III. *Mimēsis* in Aristotle's *Poetics*

When we look to Aristotle's account of *mimēsis* in the *Poetics*, we see a similar recognition of the seriousness of tragic poetry; as in Plato's *Republic*, this seriousness rests on tragedy's being a mimetic poetry. In Aristotle's terms, poetry in general is a function of humans' being by nature animals with logos; poetry is, above all, the art of speech, of words. Further, mimetic poetry is a function of humans' being "the most mimetic of animals" (*Poet.* 1448b8). The crafted mimetic speech of poetry is thus a manifestation of especially human capacities, one realization of what makes humans human, much as a polis is. Related to our human capacity for mimetic poetic speech, for Aristotle, is

the pleasure that we derive from *mimēsis*; this pleasure itself derives from the fact that, Aristotle says, humans learn first by imitating and take pleasure in learning (*Poet*. 1448b5–9). Let us consider the two causes, both natural, that, Aristotle argues, have brought poetry into being (*Poet*. 1448b4–5).

The first of the two causes is the fact that to do *mimēsis* is innate (*sumphuton*) in humans from childhood; indeed, humans are the animals most given to *mimēsis* (*mimētikōtaton*). Further, humans do their learning first through *mimēsis* (*Poet*. 1448b8). Our earliest experience of *mimēsis* comes when, as children (as infants, surely), we learn by trying to do the things that the people around us do: we hear our parents speak, for example, and we try to do that talking thing; we see people walking and we try to do that, too. These examples are elementary but they draw attention to some important features of *mimēsis*. First, our impulse toward *mimēsis* rests on our looking at the world as open and questioning beings, on our encountering the world with the attitude that we are not already complete and self-sufficient.[8] To learn by doing *mimēsis*, we have to enact our ability, desire, or reflex to change ourselves. Our impulse toward *mimēsis* is also a reflection of our ability to see ourselves in others; as infants we try to talk like grownups because we grasp that their activity is also an activity for us, that we are the same as these talking people in that we will talk. We become mature human beings by doing the things that mature human beings do and by getting better at doing those things. Aristotle's remarks about *mimēsis* and learning here reveal themselves to be another version of his insight in the *Politics* (I.1253a) that the human being is the *zōion politikon*: we are human beings only in relation with other human beings and only through trying to participate in human activities.

The second of the causes of the art of poetry, Aristotle says, is that "all humans rejoice in works of *mimēsis*" (*Poet*. 1448b9). Whenever we look at works of art, we enjoy the experience, regardless of what the art represents, because, for us, "to learn is a very sweet thing" (*Poet*. 1448b13). The second cause of the art of poetry is thus the pleasure that human beings take in learning, in coming to understand.[9] We learn or come to understand when we look at the works of *mimēsis*, Aristotle says, because we observe a likeness and figure out who the likeness represents (*Poet*. 1448b16).

There are a couple of things to notice in Aristotle's remarks so far. First, in *mimēsis*, what is being represented is human beings: we look at a likeness and figure out who it is. Second, the primary activity we engage in when we look at works of *mimēsis* is coming to understand, learning. That activity is productive of pleasure. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that pleasure (*hēdonē*) occurs when an animal acts to fulfill its natural potential—we take pleasure, that is, in performing the activities that are natural to us (*EN*

X.1176 a3–23). What we experience here is the pleasure of acting to ful-
fill our human potential to come to understand. *Mimēsis*, then, when we
engage in it to learn by seeing ourselves in others and others in ourselves and
when we observe its works and figure out who they are about, fulfills two
key aspects of the human being for Aristotle: we are the animal with logos
(the animal that can speak and come to understand), and we are the political
animal (the animal that is itself only in relation with others of its own kind).
Humans are the most mimetic of animals because in human *mimēsis* we real-
ize our capacities for thought and our capacities for shared life.

Aristotle notes that works of *mimēsis* can be pleasing even when we do
not recognize their subjects, because we can take pleasure in appreciating the
craft that produced the work or in the color or some such thing; in this case,
however, we do not take pleasure from the fact that the work is a *mimēsis*.
For the work of *mimēsis* to please us qua *mimēsis*, it must put us in mind of
someone we know; it must call to mind something directly relevant to us.[10]
It must speak to us. The work of *mimēsis* qua *mimēsis* directly and personally
engages its observers—they feel that it implicates them in its presentation.
Aesthetic appreciation of the skill that produced the work or the attractive-
ness of the color and proportion of the work is pleasure, but not *mimetic*
pleasure, which results from our recognition of ourselves and our experi-
ence in the work. Mimetic pleasure rests on our exercising our innate human
capacity to understand and to come to know and our human capacity to be
involved in shared experience with other humans. For Aristotle, the serious-
ness of tragedy rests in mimetic pleasure.

Poetry as a whole for Aristotle is a reflex of human nature, for, just as
mimēsis (the content of poetry) is ours by nature, so harmony and rhythm
(the form of poetry) are also ours by nature. It is evident, Aristotle says, that
poetic meters are a part of rhythm (*Poet.* 1448b20ff.). It is natural for human
beings, the animal endowed with logos, not only to have speech, but to craft
and arrange speech in patterns of syllable lengths and to make speech musi-
cal, euphonious, and tuneful. It is natural to humans, within the general
phenomenon of speech, to mark some kinds of speech as special. Poetry is
one example of such marked speech.[11] In terms of form and content, then, as
mimetic and as rhythmically and harmonically crafted, poetry is a working
out of various potentials of human nature. We humans are the *zōion poiētikon*.

The bulk of the *Poetics* contains Aristotle's analysis of one genre of this
marked, crafted, mimetic speech: tragedy. I will focus now on how *mimēsis*
works within this genre of poetry. In chapter 6, Aristotle gives his famous
'definition' of tragedy: it is "the *mimēsis* of a serious action" that, through pity
and fear, "accomplishes the cleaning out [κάθαρσιν] of such emotions" (*Poet.*

1449b24ff.). Tragedy does something: it achieves the *katharsis* of pity and fear and such emotions. The work of tragedy is to arouse pity and fear in its audience and thereby to allow the audience members to get these emotions out of their systems. The fact that *mimēsis* is the means by which tragedy does its work indicates that *mimēsis* is uniquely suited to and capable of accomplishing this *katharsis*. I want to pursue now the question, What is it about *mimēsis* that makes it the way to achieve *katharsis* of pity and fear in particular?—or, What are pity and fear, and why does *mimēsis* belong with them?

In Book II of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle provides an account of the nature and function of various emotions relevant to persuasive speech, including pity and fear. What he says there helps us to understand the intimate connection between pity and fear and *mimēsis* in the *Poetics*; consequently, I will examine Aristotle's accounts of pity and fear in the *Rhetoric* before discussing his account of these emotions in tragedy. In Book II of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle says that *eleos*, or 'pity,' is a pain at what appears to be a destructive or painful evil that happens to "someone who does not deserve it or is not responsible for it" and which we feel that "we or someone we care about" could also experience (*Rhet*. II.1385b13ff.). There are three key elements here: the evil is something that *phainetai*, or 'appears,' to us; we do not ourselves experience the evil. Second, the evil is undeserved, not, for example, an appropriate retribution. Third, we feel ourselves vulnerable to the same evil, either directly or through someone we care about. Pity occurs when we feel a fellowship with the person who is the object of our pity—we see ourselves in that suffering person. Pity occurs when we are witnesses or beholders: we are not involved in the destructive or painful situation but, through our capacity to see ourselves in others and others in ourselves, we feel ourselves implicit in this situation and the suffering because we recognize there a situation and a suffering that we could experience ourselves. We consider the victim of this evil not to deserve it, not to be responsible (she is *anaxios*); the pain is a misfortune, not something we deserve.

For Aristotle, *phobos* (fear), like pity, is a pain or disturbance that arises *ek phantasias*, or 'from the imagination,' of some immediately impending disaster. The kinds of disaster that elicit fear are the same as those that will elicit pity. No one fears what he thinks will not affect him in the near future (*Rhet*. II.1382a21–28). Fear is something that we feel *for ourselves*: a bad thing that will do harm or cause pain to us is about to happen and we tremble at the idea of that harm. In rhetoric (as in drama) it is not an enemy threatening my life that makes me fearful but talk about that enemy that awakens my imagination. The talk about the enemy tells me that I am vulnerable to my enemy (it brings my enemy to mind in a way similar to the way that *mimēsis* brings

someone to mind) and so I feel afraid of my enemy. Again, as with pity, in fear I see myself, my own vulnerability, my own experience in an appearance (an imagination, a speech) that is not me. This appearance is such that I am taken up into it and feel myself involved in what it presents as a reality of the here and now.

Tragedy is a *mimēsis* of a serious action, Aristotle says. He is insistent that the *mimēsis* is of an action and not of a character (*Poet*. 1448a1–2, 1149b36–37, 1450a21ff.). Nonetheless, as he notes, action is performed by people, so the *mimēsis* of action is *mimēsis* of "people doing things" (*Poet*. 1449b26). Poetry is also, Aristotle notes, more philosophical than history—another kind of telling of actions, "through narrating or declaring them" (*Poet*. 1449b28)—because history is about particulars and poetry is about the universal (*Poet*. 1451b5–7). As poetry, tragedy is 'about' the universal, but as tragedy, as mimetic poetry, it can only put before us this person and that person doing something; tragedy identifies for us particular people performing particular actions. Tragedy makes the particular universal.[12]

Pity and fear emerge from our feeling that we are implicit in the situation that arouses pity or fear. This sense of being involved arises, in pity, from our recognition that we are like the object of our pity. In fear we see ourselves as directly involved in the fearful situation—we feel pain at the thought that we personally are about to be harmed. Tragedy, Aristotle argues, is able to elicit both of these emotions; tragedy makes us feel involved in the serious action that is being enacted onstage. We feel involved, we feel ourselves to be part of the action, only because tragedy is a *mimēsis*, a reenactment. Tragedy thus functions by presenting a particular. The arousing of pity and fear that tragedy accomplishes can occur only if tragedy presents particulars and presents them as concretely present. As we have seen from Aristotle's accounts of pity and fear in the *Rhetoric*, we feel pity and fear at a particular situation that is real to us: we pity the woman for the deaths of her children; we fear the lurking enemy in our imagination. For tragedy to fulfill its function, the *katharsis* of pity and fear, it must make the universal particular; *mimēsis* is what does that work.

Pity and fear arise in us when we feel ourselves implied in the situation that we are witnessing. We see ourselves threatened by an impending disaster and feel fear, we see someone like ourselves suffering undeservedly and we feel pity. To arouse pity and fear tragedy needs to present us with human situations that are like human situations we could face; so, Aristotle says, the tragedy that most effectively arouses pity and fear is one in which "someone like us in virtue and justice, having great reputation and good fortune, changes from good fortune to misfortune not because of wickedness but

because of some mistake" (*Poet*. 1453a8–11). We need to recognize someone like ourselves in character, a person like us, in order to feel pity and fear at that person's change of fortune. We need to witness the change of fortune occurring because that person like us makes a mistake, is, like us, not infallible, and so suffers to an extent out of keeping with anything she has done.

Tragedy thus accomplishes its work, the arousing of pity and fear and the *katharsis* of those emotions, because it is *mimēsis*. Pity, fear, and *mimēsis*, as Aristotle shows, are all manifestations of the fundamental human orientation toward others. The human is the animal endowed with logos, the political animal; our being human makes us communicative and mutually reliant. Tragedy (for Aristotle, the highest kind of poetry)[13] exploits, enacts, and supports these uniquely human features.

Conclusion

Like Plato, Aristotle investigates the distinctive power of *mimēsis* as such— the rhetorical power of being drawn into an imitative reenactment—to persuade us of a perspective, and, indeed, a politically charged perspective. In the *Republic*, Plato draws our attention to the way that our emotions can be manipulated by mimetic performances such that we come to identify with characters of whom we should be critical. More specifically, the form of *mimēsis* actually encourages us to respond out of sympathetic emotions and not to detach ourselves in critical reflection on the content of the situations presented to us. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle continues this line of analysis, showing us in particular how *mimēsis* can have this power in our lives—can exist as such—precisely because of those same characteristics that make us political in the first place: *mimēsis* draws on our inherent sociability and on our logos. What Plato and Aristotle's accounts of *mimēsis* ultimately reveal is that the sources of political life—the proper arena for justice and for human flourishing—are also the sources for the undermining of the political world.

Notes

1. Others have criticized simplistic interpretations of these texts from the *Republic*. See, for example, Claudia Baracchi, *Of Myth, Life and War in Plato's Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). I have discussed other aspects of the account of poetry in *Republic* III in *Plato and Tradition: The Poetic and Cultural Context of Philosophy* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2013), chap. 3. Dennis Schmidt, in chap. 2 of *On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), offers an analysis of Aristotle's *Poetics* that is consonant with my analysis here, but his discussion of Plato repeats many of the traditional prejudices concerning Plato that I would criticize.

2. All translations here are my own. I use the following Greek texts: Plato, *Respublica*, ed. S. R. Slings (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003); Aristotle, *De arte poetica liber*, ed. R. Kassel (Oxford: Clarendon, 1922); Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. J. H. Freese (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926).

3. For an account of the parallel discussion of education in Plato's *Laws*, see John Russon, "Education in Plato's *Laws*," in *Plato's Laws: Force and Truth in Politics*, ed. E. Sanday and G. Recco (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 60–74.

4. Compare Plato, *Chrm*. 164d–165a, where Critias discusses human individuals who use mimetic presentation of direct speech to portray their own views as those of Apollo at Delphi.

5. See Aristotle, *Pol*. I.2, where such critical engagement—collective discussion, among "animals with *logos*," of "what is just and unjust, expedient and inexpedient" for the *polis*—is identified as the essence of distinctly "political" life. On this interpretation of the nature of politics, compare section 5, "Action," of Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

6. See chapter 3 of Gregory Nagy, *Greek Mythology and Poetics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), for a classic discussion of panhellenism in archaic Greek poetry.

7. Powerful arguments have also been made to demonstrate how, in performance, tragedy, the art form of democratic Athens, precisely worked to make the heroes and kings of myth problematic. See, for example, Richard Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

8. For a subtle account of learning that is resonant with this Aristotelian model, see chapters 1–4 of John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Free Press, 1944).

9. Compare here Aristotle, *Met*. I.980a21: "All human beings by nature strive towards knowing."

10. Compare Plato, *Phd*. 73c–e, on the experience of having an absent friend made present through a likeness or a memento.

11. I speak here generally in the terms developed by Roman Jakobson.

12. Compare Hegel's discussion of Greek sculpture in *Lectures on Fine Art II*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), section 2.

13. See *Poet*. 26, where Aristotle concludes that tragedy achieves the end of poetry more completely.

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The Hellenistic Schools

Ataraxia: Tranquility at the End

Pascal Massie

In their investigation of *eudaimonia* (happiness, human flourishing), Hellenistic philosophers uses terms that were relatively new in the philosophical lexicon: *ataraxia* or 'freedom from disturbance,' *hēsychia* or 'serenity,' *tranquillitas* and *securitas* (Seneca and Cicero's Latin translation of *euthymia*), *eustatheia* or 'stability,' *athambia* or 'quietness,' *adiaphora* or 'indifference,' and *apatheia* or 'the condition of being unmoved.'[1] What is at stake is not simply a particular development in the history of ancient philosophy. As *eudaimonia* was determined in terms of *ataraxia*, the very purpose and meaning of philosophy also changed. To be a philosopher became a matter of conquering fears and desires and philosophical schools must be judged on their ability to lead to that end. Thus, the emergence of *ataraxia* is deeply rooted in a renewed understanding of philosophy itself.

What earlier philosophers meant by *eudaimonia* is quite different from the modern view of happiness as 'enjoyment.' As a philosophical term, *eudaimonia* indicates the *summum bonnum* of human life. As Aristotle proclaims: "The human good occurs as the full activity [ἐνέργεια] of the soul in accordance with virtue, and if the virtues are more than one, in accordance with the best and most complete virtue. But also, this must be in a complete life, for one swallow does not make a spring" (*EN* I.1098a17–19).[2]

However, during the Hellenistic era three new developments occurred: (a) It is argued that one can measure a philosophical school by its ability to lead its disciples to happiness. Thus, *eudaimonia* becomes a metaphilosophical criterion. But on this count (b) both Plato and Aristotle have failed. Their followers are no closer to happiness than nonphilosophers are. (c) This situation demands that the requirements for happiness be reevaluated. For the Epicureans and the Skeptics, *eudaimonia* calls for the attainment of *ataraxia*. The Stoics held a rather similar view, although they prefer the term *apatheia*. Note that the terms are *negative* (*a-taraxia*, *a-patheia*, *a-diaphora*). Happiness is now a *release* from anxiety and disturbance. The inner conflicts of the soul have become the chief concern. Yet despite their

privative inception, *ataraxia* and *apatheia* are hardly passive; they require, on the contrary, self-mastery and fortitude. To reach *ataraxia* is to raise oneself above a condition of misery and despair, and all Hellenistic schools suspect that the author of this unpleasant condition is none other than ourselves.

I. Epicureanism: *Ataraxia* beyond Want

Epicurus's ethics derives from his reflection on the nature of unhappiness and misery. We all know what unhappiness *feels* like but, surprisingly, most of us rarely think about its nature. For Epicurus, unhappiness is a specifically human problem. No doubt, animals can suffer, they can be hurt and mistreated; no doubt, these things also happen to human beings. Yet we may *not* be injured, abused or in pain and *still* remain deeply unhappy. What, then, is missing? This question is essential for any therapy must begin by a diagnosis and an etiology. Epicurus, like Socrates, thinks that we can trace the source of unhappiness to mistaken *beliefs* concerning what is truly valuable. Thus, the task of philosophy is to extirpate wrong opinions and replace them by true beliefs.

From this standpoint, the denial of any involvement of the gods with human affairs is not just a matter of theology. In its prephilosophical sense, a happy existence—*eudaimōn*—is a life protected by a good spirit; a *daimōn* smiles on those who enjoy a blessed life, while an unhappy life is *kakodaimōn*—under the spell of an adverse spirit. The ordinary language of the Greeks links happiness (or unhappiness) with a divine dispensation. Following Epicurus, however, we must dismiss the etymology and separate semantics from causality. Once severed from divine blessing happiness becomes a human responsibility.

Pleasure is the beginning and the end of all human activities; this proposition is an axiom of Epicureanism. It may seem strange then that an ethics famously concerned with pleasure would actually seek *ataraxia*. Yet *ataraxia* is not the opposite of pleasure at all but *true* pleasure. In the *Letter to Menoeceus*, one can read the oft-quoted claim:

> It is for the sake of this, namely freedom from pain and trouble
> [*aponia*, *ataraxia*], that we act as we do. Once this condition is
> reached, any storm in the soul is quieted since the animal has no
> need to go in search of something that is lacking or to look for any-
> thing else by which he may fulfill the good of the soul and the body.
> (*Ep. Men.* 128)[3]

The claim is surprising. If pleasure is the beginning and the end, shouldn't we seek to maximize it? The idea that the *absence* of physical pain and mental trouble is equivalent to pleasure and that no more needs to be sought is frequently contested. Most people would assume that the absence of pain and anxiety constitutes, at best, only a *neutral* state, while pleasure begins with some positive stimulation. Cicero reports the argument thus:

> Epicurus did not think that there was some intermediate stage between pleasure and pain; for that state which some people think is intermediate, viz. the absence of all pain, is not only pleasure but it is even the greatest pleasure. For whoever perceives the state which he is in must in fact be in pleasure or in pain. But Epicurus thinks that the limit for the greatest pleasure is set by the absence of all pain; and although later pleasure can be varied and adorned, it cannot be increased or augmented. (*Fin*. I.38)

We cannot *not* sense: to cease sensing is to cease being. Furthermore, any state of self-awareness is either one of pain or one of pleasure. Sensation has no zero degree. Thus, the awareness of the *absence* of pain and disturbance is ipso facto an experience of pleasure. Epicurus's *ataraxia* is not simply a 'state of mind' (*pace* Striker) but a state of being that depends on the discovery of another form of pleasure, the pleasure of being rather than the pleasure of possessing or consuming. This pleasure comes from knowing one's limits.

But Epicurus goes further and claims that this experience is the *greatest* pleasure. This superlative doesn't denote *intensity* (it cannot, since "later pleasures can be varied and adorned") but *quality* (it is the pleasure that, most of all, must be sought, what is most valuable). This relates to the distinction between static and kinetic pleasures. A character in Cicero illustrates the distinction:

> "Is there pleasure in drinking for a thirsty person?"—"Who could deny that," he [an opponent of the Epicurean school] said. "Is this the same pleasure as the one we experience when thirst has been quenched?"—"No, it is of a rather different kind."—"Thirst when quenched has a static kind of pleasure [*stabilitas voluptatis*] while the other one, the pleasure of actual quenching, is in movement." (*Fin*. II.9)

In quenching thirst, one experiences the pleasure of alleviating an uncomfortable yearning; in quenched thirst, one enjoys the *absence* of the yearning.

Kinetic pleasure remains, by definition, incomplete: so long as the animal keeps drinking it is still thirsty. In kinetic pleasures one experiences the progressive lessening of pain—which presupposes that some form of pain or discomfort is still there. By contrast, katastematic pleasures are stable (rather than 'static')[4] because they repel the infinite frustration of kinetic desires. "The removal of all pain is the limit of the magnitude of pleasures. Wherever pleasure is present, and as long as it is present, a feeling of pain, a feeling of distress, or their combination is absent" (Maxim 3, *Lives* X.139). The clause "as long as it is present" indicates that the stability of katastematic pleasures is not everlasting. It is true that Epicurean texts invoke the calm bliss of the gods but, for us, the divine is a model, not a destination. The end of human life must be compatible with the human condition. Maxim 21 declares: "One who knows the limits of life knows how easy it is to provide that which removes pain due to need and that which makes the whole of life complete. So there is no need for any dealings involving struggle" (Maxim 21, *Lives* X.146).

A katastematic pleasure is not a *limited* pleasure but the pleasure of dwelling within one's own limits. 'Limit' is arguably one of the most essential notions of Epicurean ethics:

> The flesh takes the limits of pleasure as unlimited and unlimited
> time brings it about. But the intellect, considering the goal and
> limit of the flesh, and dispersing fears about the time to come,
> brings about the complete life, and we no longer need an unlimited
> time. (Maxim 20, *Lives* X.145)

The flesh craves pleasures that always fail to satisfy its want, for to any degree of intensity there is always a further degree; since unlimited desire calls for infinite time the life of the flesh is doomed to remain incomplete. It is so because of a paradox inscribed at the core of desire. Desire seeks its annihilation. This is why the satisfaction of "varied and adorned pleasures" turns into renewed frustration and the resurgence of new desires. The intensity of desire is proportionate to the pain caused by its nonsatisfaction. Pains and pleasures of this kind are not opposite but complementary. The pursuit of katastematic pleasures is an attempt at breaking this cycle.

Kinetic and katastematic pleasures are often described as two kinds of pleasure derived from different objects. At times, it seems that the Epicureans construe the pleasures of the flesh as kinetic in contrast to the katastematic pleasures of the mind. Careful examination of the texts, however, reveals a more complex scheme. The kind of pleasure that constitutes the end is not

identified with something mental by opposition to something physical, nor is it katastematic by opposition to kinetic (kinetic desires are unavoidable). Rather, the fundamental requirement is that pleasure be 'natural' and the class of natural pleasures encompasses *both* kinetic and katastematic instances. The opposite of a natural desire is an *empty* one (*kenai epithumiai*), a desire that rests on false belief and social imagination. The problem is not that some pleasures are kinetic and unstable; the problem is that we pursue ideologically constructed objects of desire. No doubt, the fulfillment of empty desires will lead us to experience *some* pleasures, but they are spurious and doomed to collapse into disappointment or sorrow.

In a sense, katastematic pleasures are the goal that kinetic pleasures secretly aspire to. To see this, we must ask whether the ultimate object of desire is really an object. Pleasure is commonly understood as delight *in* or enjoyment *of* something; it construes itself as a relation to an object. Yet, this transitivity is also what eventually turns the search for the satisfaction of desire into an experience of disappointment or frustration, since the object is either missing or is meant to be consumed and destroyed (symbolically if not literally). In either case, desire must recognize its dependence on an object that, even when consumed, remains an alterity. For this reason, most of our desires seek the impossible. Epicurus's answer consists in seeking a *pleasure without object*, a pleasure without outside; true happiness calls for self-sufficiency. This, however, is what common desire was already seeking, since no one desires unlimited frustration or recurrent unhappiness.

Ataraxia is the only form of pleasure that can put an end to the unlimited. The pleasure that is found in being (rather than in having) is beyond desire, because it is without object or, if we must still talk of an 'object,' it is not alien to the seeker anymore. Self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) is therefore the hallmark of *ataraxia*, and the search for happiness turns out to be a search for freedom. "The greatest fruit of self-sufficiency is freedom [*eleutheria*]" (Vatican Maxim 77).[5] Self-sufficiency is not a matter of withdrawing within oneself; the attainment of the end permits friendship, which is at the service of tranquility—so long as loving the friend is not identical with depending on her.

Yet how could a mortal who is necessarily a creature of desire attain self-sufficiency? If self-sufficiency is not identical to divine bliss, it shares at least one important trait with it: it is *complete*. "Unlimited time and limited time hold equal pleasure if one measures its limits by reasoning" (Maxim 19, *Lives* 145). Reason must recognize that the measure of pleasure cannot be found in its duration. Should we become immortal, there is no *reason* to assume that we would ipso facto become happier.[6] Happiness would not be increased if

death were abolished; or better, happiness would not be increased *because* the Epicureans abolish death.

Epicurus is attentive to the specific temporal character of unhappiness, its way of dwelling in the past or dreading the future. While physical pain occupies the now of its occurrence, psyche's grief lingers on frustrated desires and memories of suffering. Since the Epicurean ethics is essentially a therapy of beliefs, a student of the Garden must understand the emptiness of her fears. This is particularly true of the fear of death. It is not life that should be extended to infinity, rather it is the longing for immortality that must be removed. Epicurus can, without contradiction, claim both that "death is nothing to us for all good and bad consists in sense experience and death is the privation of sense experience" (*Ep. Men*. 124) and that "one can attain security against other things, but when it comes to death, all men live in a city without walls" (Vatican Maxim 31). The inevitability of death is the inevitability of a nonevent that will not fail to happen. "So death, the most frightening of bad things, is nothing to us; since when we exist, death is not yet present and when death is present we do not exist. Therefore, it is relevant neither to the living not to the dead, since it does not affect the former, and the latter do not exist" (*Ep. Men*. 125). The absence of an intermediate stage (a zero degree) applies not only to pain and pleasure but also to life and death. Death is never present. The end of all experience cannot itself be an object of experience, it cannot occur in any *lived* 'now.' To focus on the now is to undo the anxiety about the future. Although all compound things must eventually disintegrate, a certain form of eternity can be found within the present.

If this is so, though, how can Epicurus claim that a chief component of happiness resides in the recollection of fond memories? Plutarch's testimony is explicit: "As they say, the recollection of past blessings is the greatest factor in a pleasant life" (*Pleas. Life* 1099d); "the memory of a dead friend is pleasant on every account" (*Pleas. Life* 1105e).[7] One could object that recollection (a) doesn't agree with the goal, since it is a kind of kinetic pleasure and that (b) it could lead to opposite results: if one delights in the recollection of *past* goods, then it seems that one is ipso facto acutely aware of their actual loss. The "sweetness" Plutarch talks about should taste rather bitter. However, the appeal to memory does not contradict the temporal focus on the present and can be supported on two grounds:

First, the recollection of a past good can be used to deal with a present evil. In the *Letter to Idomeneus* Epicurus describes how he counterbalanced the pain of dysenteric discomforts with "the joy in my soul produced by the recollection of the discussions we have had" (*Ep. Id., Lives* X.22). In this case, memory is meant to ward off actual pain. Remembrance is the cause of the

present joy (or at least the assuaging of present suffering) and the ethical art is a matter of letting a happier past reemerge into the present.

Second, the Epicurean appeal to these fond memories is a matter of *reactualizing* the past. In other words, the focus on the 'now' still remains. In the present recollection, the dead friend is alive. The ethical art is a matter of letting the past merge back into the present.

II. Stoicism: *Apatheia* beyond Passion

Although *apatheia* is the Stoics' preferred term, many Epicurean claims about *ataraxia* could find a natural place in the Stoic discourse.[8] Still, the choice of terms is significant. If unhappiness is Epicurus's initial concern, the passions are the initial concern of the Stoics. 'Passions' are not simply 'feelings.' Rather, the term is used to cover a vast class of *erroneous judgments* that misrepresent what is truly valuable. 'Judgments' are assertive acts whereby we hold as true what the judgment represents. Passions then are erroneous assents to false representations. Thus, and despite a popular caricature, the Stoics do not claim that the sage would be immune from feelings or sensations.[9]

Apatheia is not imperviousness: "The wise man is free of passion because he is not disposed to them while the wicked man is 'free of passion' in a different sense, in the sense of being insensitive and cold" (*Lives* VII.117). The wretched man is a case of insensibility, not *apatheia*. The sage, conversely, is free from passions because, although she remains subject to emotions, she is not controlled by them. One is tranquil when one is capable of coping with emotions, not when one represses them. Given our embodied condition, suppressing emotions is an impossible task in the first place. The matter is to *elevate* sorrow, not to abolish it. Irrational judgments, hasty flights of imagination, superstition, and so forth confuse what is the case with our misconceptions: "It is not the things themselves that disturb men, but their judgment about these things" (*Ench.* 5). It is the *belief* that some things are terrible that terrifies us.

What's more, the Stoics recognize the positivity (and therefore desirability) of *some* feelings.[10]

> There are three good affects [εὐπαθείας]: joy, vigilance and wish. They say that joy is the opposite of pleasure, consisting in well-reasoned elation. Vigilance is the opposite of fear, consisting in well-reasoned avoidance, for the wise man will not be afraid at all but he will be vigilant. They say that wish is the opposite of appetite, consisting in well-reasoned striving . . . Falling under wish are

kindness, generosity, acceptance, and affection. Under vigilance are respect and purity. Under joy are delight, sociability, and cheerfulness. (*Lives* VII.116)

Thus, the Stoics do not advocate a life deprived of pleasure. Joy, vigilance, and wish, the three good affects (*eupatheia*) are therefore concomitant with *apatheia*. While passions enlist our best judgment to serve them, rational affects express the pleasure of being guided by reason. Seneca offers the following definition of *tranquillitas* (one of the Latin names for *apatheia*):

> The state in which the soul proceeds always in a measured and untroubled course, and is well-disposed towards itself, and looks on its own affairs happily and never interrupts this joy [*et sua laetus aspiciat et hoc gaudium non interrumpat*], but remains in this peaceful state, never raising nor depressing itself. That will be tranquility. (*Tranq.* II.4)[11]

Although a Stoic may be involved with various obligations, the tranquility she has attained stems from an unconflicted relation of the soul to itself. Once again, the term *apatheia* is misleading. In English, an 'apathetic' individual is lethargic and unconcerned, while the attainment of Stoic *apatheia* demands strenuous practice. One who has reached true *apatheia* has disentangled what is her 'self' from the multiple traps and obligations of ordinary life. It is particularly when one is at peace and ease that one must prepare oneself for unpleasant circumstances through a regimen of mental and physical exercises; it is when one has comfort and resources aplenty that one must practice fasting and deprivation.

Yet, if the Stoic sage is pleased with her life, her satisfaction is a *consequence* of having reached the end: virtue and virtue alone. Virtue is happiness and vice unhappiness. As Seneca puts it: "Virtue *per se* is sufficient for a happy life" (*Ep.* 92, 23).[12] If one were to point to a wretched virtuous person, the Stoic would have to contend either that this person is not truly virtuous or that we fail to see her true happiness. The claim that happiness is found in virtue and only in virtue is both a central tenet of Stoic ethics and one of its most controversial. Many find it hard to reconcile these terms and embrace the Stoic synthesis. It often seems that in order to do the right thing one must sacrifice one's happiness. The Stoics insist, however, that virtue is not only good, it is self-beneficent. If the agent wishes to be happy, she must desire virtue for its own sake, and if she obtains the end (virtue) she will ipso facto be happy.

At first glance, the description of happiness as harmony of the soul with itself suggests an ethics that is concerned with the cultivation of the self: if one undergoes the strenuous regimen of stoic training, it must be with the expectation of becoming a better person. To be happy is to live in agreement with oneself (while the wretched lives a life of inner turmoil). But the *homologoumenos* the Stoics are seeking is concordance with reason, and this has nothing to do with one's private rationalization; one can always put one's reason at the service of any end. In investigating and cultivating the self, one discovers a rational order that transcends the self. My own good agrees with an order that is much larger than I am. This is implied by the Stoic motto "Follow nature," which means simultaneously (a) follow your *own* nature (and since your nature is to be a rational animal, become fully rational) and (b) follow the cosmic order. These are not different natures. Chrysippus, as reported by Diogenes, wrote:

> For our natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe. Hence our aim becomes living consistently with nature, that is, in accordance with one's own nature and that of the universe, being active though in no way forbidden by the law common to all that is right reason which pervades everything and is the same as Zeus, lord of the ordering of all that exist. (*Lives* VII.88)

Nature displays a rational order, but only rational beings can become aware of this. One reaches virtue when one understands oneself as part of a greater whole and acts accordingly. Thus, the true 'care-of-the-self' entails deflating its importance.

The insistence on agreeing with a cosmic (and divine) order has been perceived as odd by some commentators. As Julia Annas puts it, "The appeal to cosmic nature does the opposite of what is required; it pulls the agent away from the kind of attachment to her own concerns which is needed for useful reflection on her final end to be possible."[13] Since the true self is reason, the ethical care-of-the-self demands autonomy; yet, the insistence on following cosmic reason seems to advocate heteronomy. At best, for Annas, the appeal to the cosmos and its divine order adds a 'prescriptive force' without which morality would dry out as a mere set of rules deprived of anything worthy of awe. Beyond this prescriptive force, the cosmic point of view would be useless. I believe, however, that this objection betrays a modern assumption that sees an unbridgeable gap between the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. If the natural world is, as the Stoics believe, fundamentally rational, to assent to it is to fulfill the agent's rational nature. The sage has reached full

understanding of her own nature, but to know oneself fully is to understand oneself *sub specie aeternitatis*. Annas's objection presupposes that the two senses of nature (human nature and cosmic nature) and the two senses of reason (agent's intellect and cosmic/divine reason) designate separate and incompatible orders when in fact they are one. Conscience (*syneidēsis*), whose regular examination is an important part of the stoic training, refers primarily to the ethical relation the agent has toward herself; but the very possibility of assessing her past actions presupposes a reference back to the norm of a *common* nature. *Syneidēsis* is a natural faculty and a spark of an order larger than the agent. Human nature is dynamic and teleological; the satisfaction of our needs may be where we must begin, but it is not where we should end. The sage who has achieved virtue hasn't stepped outside nature but has completed it.[14]

But why would such a life be *happy*? The identification of happiness with virtue remains a counterintuitive claim. It may even appear incoherent for virtue is shown to be an instrumental part of happiness while the concern for virtue requires that we value it without any reference to happiness. Happiness cannot be found in the possession of those things that are usually deemed goods (wealth and health, for instance). In that respect, virtue would correspond to the art of making proper use of these preferred 'indifferents' (a skill that most people who simply happen to be wealthy and healthy do not possess). As Nussbaum puts it: "The injunction to live in accord with nature is in large part an injunction to drop the frenzied pursuit of these pseudo-goals and to reform one's desires and preferences in the light of the recognition that they are at best highly limited tools of human functioning."[15] Yet this still doesn't establish that the virtuous life is ipso facto a happy one. If the Stoic can point to unhappy wealthy people to illustrate her contention, can we not point to unhappy virtuous ones to refute her? In which case, it would be up to the Stoics to show that in fact these people either are not unhappy or that they are not truly virtuous.

> The goal of all these virtues is to live consistently with nature. Each virtue through its individual properties enables man to achieve this. For from nature he has initial impulses (ἀφορμάς) for the discovery of what is appropriate, for the balancing of his impulses, for acts of endurance, and for acts of apportioning. Each of the virtues, by acting in concert and by its own particular properties, enables man to live consistently with nature. (Arius, 5b3)[16]

Nature, virtue, and happiness are ultimately unified in the sage. The stoic must establish that a virtuous life (and it alone) is a complete and fulfilled

one. Annas contends that all the stoics have to support this claim is an argument, developed in Cicero's *On the Ends of Good and Evil*, which aims at showing a discrepancy between the virtues, on the one hand, and all other valued things. "It is not the case that wisdom plus health is worth more than wisdom by itself alone" (*Fin*. III.44). The argument targets the Aristotelians who think that external conditions must be *added* to virtue for one to be happy. However, there is no common denominator between these things and incommensurable things cannot be added. Wisdom and wealth cannot be compared, for wealth is not a good. The sage could happen to be wealthy, but her wealth adds nothing to her virtue, since it doesn't increase her goodness and consequently cannot increase her happiness. There are, however, further grounds that can be given in defense of the Stoics' contention (*pace* Annas), and they depend on considering the Stoics' reworking of happiness in terms of tranquility, *ataraxia*, and *apatheia*.

> Disturbances of the soul produce wretchedness, while tranquility produces a happy life; and the course of disturbance is twofold, for distress and fear rest on evils that are expected, while extravagant joy and lust rest on a mistaken notion of what is good, and all these things conflict with thoughtfulness and reason. Will you hesitate to call happy the man you find undisturbed, liberated, and free from agitations so oppressive and so mutually discordant and estranged from one another? And yet, this is always the condition of the wise man: the wise man therefore is always happy. (*Tusc*. V.xv.42)[17]

The argument turns the objection on its head. One cannot truly obtain happiness without disengaging from the other nonvirtuous values since their pursuit (or, once obtained, the fear of their loss) leads to wretchedness. The advantages provided by wealth or health are never secure and the very possibility of losing them is a source of anxiety. Thus, virtue, and virtue alone, can offer the security which is an intrinsic characteristic of true happiness.

So, must we seek the good or must we seek happiness? In matters of *ultimate* end, there is no room for plurality, but the end may be multifaceted: it may appear as virtue and happiness. If we search for happiness, we discover that virtue is the right candidate, and if we attain virtue, we experience true happiness. It is so because the end has the fundamental attribute of self-sufficiency (this is a necessary attribute for whatever is not self-sufficient, by definition, depends on another, and therefore cannot be the end). The goodness of nonvirtuous valued things is relative, since it depends on their appropriate use whereas the goodness of virtue is intrinsic, thus stable. Only

virtue then passes the requirement for the end and happiness follows (as was implied from the beginning).

III Skepticism or *Ataraxia* beyond Commitment

For contemporary philosophers Skepticism belongs to epistemology. Most scholarship on the Sextan corpus focuses on the possibility of suspending judgment and the dilemma of self-referentiality (can the Skeptic articulate her own stance without contradiction?). Yet the Skeptic hypothesis is an ethical matter, and not simply because it advocates suspension of judgment in moral matters, but because the very practice of suspending judgment is an ethical act.

> The goal of the Skeptic is *ataraxia* in matters of opinion and moderation of feeling in inescapable matters. For Skeptics began to do philosophy in order to decide among appearances and to ascertain which are true and which are false, so as to become tranquil; but they came upon equipollent dispute, and being unable to decide on this, they suspended judgment. And when they suspended judgment tranquility in matters of opinion followed fortuitously. (*Outlines* I.25–26)[18]

What is wrong with Dogmatics is that they make the end dependent on some ultimate knowledge. As we saw earlier, moral education consists in replacing our false beliefs with true ones so that we may redirect our desire toward the attainment of those authentic goods (the right kind of pleasure for the Epicureans, virtue for the Stoics). Yet, as McPherran puts it, the problem is that "the root of our unhappiness is not having the *wrong* beliefs about objective values but our having any such beliefs at all; for such beliefs lead us to pursue and shun things with an intensity [*suntonos*] that only serves to *increase* our inner disturbance and so *diminishes* our happiness."[19] The Skeptic doesn't deny that some of our experiences are good, that some actions are beneficent or that some things are pleasurable, but because these experiences are fluid, it is not possible to locate good and evil in some *permanent* object that is good 'by nature.'

Why would a Skeptical life, a life in which one constantly suspends judgment, be a *happy* one? What tranquility is there in living an existence whose ultimate ground and purpose seems unfathomable? The alleged outcome of Skepticism seems to be the main reason so many people embrace Dogmatism in the first place.

The answer takes two steps. First, dogmatism has failed to deliver the tranquility it advertises. Second, the problem lies in the *intensity* of the dogmatic desire to know which causes elation and fear and, thus, disturbance.

> Those who hold the opinion that things are good or bad by nature are perpetually troubled. When they lack what they believe to be good, they take themselves to be persecuted by natural evils and they pursue what they deem good. And when they have acquired these things they experience more troubles; for they are *elated beyond reason and measure*, and in fear of change they do anything so as not to lose what they believe to be good. But those who make no determination about what is good or bad by nature neither avoid nor pursue anything *with intensity*; and hence they are tranquil. (*Outlines* I.27–28)

The contrast is between torment and elation, on the one hand (the ethos of the Dogmatist), and tranquility, on the other (the ethos of the Skeptic). The dogmatist resembles a religious fanatic whose fervor masks a deep insecurity; she engages in her quest with a vehemence that condemns her to unhappiness.

> It is not possible to be happy if one assumes the existence of anything good and evil by nature. For he who does this is tossed about with endless perturbations caused by avoiding some things and pursuing others; drawing upon himself many evils because of the goods and being afflicted by many times more evils because of his belief about evils. (*Adv. math*. 11.144)[20]

Skeptical contentment, however, will not occur without the common worries of life, whose avoidance cannot be assured. Yet the Skeptic's critical target is not about the common beliefs we use to conduct our daily existence; they provide practical guidance, provided one is aware that they simply express how things *appear* at the time and nothing more.[21] Rather, the Skeptic's target is limited to dogmatic contentions: philosophical verities professed by schools that claim to know the true nature of things. "You must remember that we do not use these phrases [i.e., statements such as "I determine nothing," or "opposed to every account there is an equal account"] about all objects universally, but about what is non-manifest and investigated in dogmatic fashion" (*Outlines* I.208). If we bracket all claims that pretend to identify what is 'by nature and universally' good or evil, there is still room

for appearances as well as for the guidance of experience and custom.[22] The Skeptic only rejects the 'strong wish with a strong inclination' that accompany dogmatic certainties. Since we must act, accepting social norms is commendable, so long as it is performed without commitment. Conventionalism, then, but conventionalism without illusions.

One of the most common objections has been to dismiss the Skeptical way of life (*agōgē*) because it impoverishes human existence.[23] Yet this ignores what the very word *skepsis* means: "The Skeptical school is also called investigative from its activity in investigating and inquiring [σκέπτεσθαι]" (*Outlines* I.7). Thus, the suspension of judgment is not a suspension of inquiry but its opposite. It is rather the dogmatic contention to have the 'last word' and to know exactly what is right and wrong that the Skeptics question, and not because this is in principle impossible (this would be a dogmatic claim), but simply because, so far, this has not been found. The absence of persuasion is not the end of inquiry but a reason to pursue it. Although there might be an external resemblance between a Skeptic and an ordinary unreflective existence, the Skeptic remains deeply committed to the Socratic axiom: the unexamined life is not worth living, but she does not identify with the thoughts she investigates.[24] Beyond unreflective existence and dogmatism another path is possible. Such a path follows an undecided 'perhaps.' "Someone who says: 'perhaps it is' implicitly posits what seems contradictory, namely 'perhaps it is not,' insofar as he refuses to affirm that it is so" (*Outlines* I.195). The inquiry occurs in the space freed by this 'perhaps.'

It is within this form of consciousness that *ataraxia may* emerge—*may*, for even this cannot be guaranteed. Although Sextus describes Skepticism as a process that leads from inquiry to equipollence, from equipollence to *epochē*, and finally from *epochē* to *ataraxia*, he is unable to assure us that the first steps will necessarily result in the attainment of the last one. Why mention *ataraxia*, then, if no belief can be held concerning its desirability and attainability? According to McPherran the quest for *ataraxia* was simply part of the general Hellenistic culture.[25] Machuca, on the other hand, argues that Skepticism does not really need *ataraxia*.[26] This later interpretation seems to be contradicted by Sextus, who declares that "it belongs to Skepticism to secure a happy life [τὸ εὐδαίμονα βίον περοποιεῖν]" (*Adv. math.* 11.140). It seems to me that even though the Skeptic is prohibited in principle from giving a *dogmatic* account of the goal, that does not prevent her from having one which can be posited (a) negatively—she can show that the dogmatic schools lead to a troubled existence and (b) positively—the Skeptic acknowledges that all our endeavors are oriented toward what appears as good.

> The Skeptic began to philosophize with the aim of deciding among appearances and determining which are true and which false, so as to become unperturbed; but he encountered an equipollent disagreement; being unable to decide this he suspended judgment. And while he suspended judgment unperturbness in matter of opinion closely followed *by chance* [τυχικῶς]. (*Outlines* I.26)

Two things are striking: first, this is a narration, not an argument. Sextus reports what (allegedly) happened.[27] Second, the relation between *epochē* and *ataraxia* is haphazard. The goal ends up being reached. Although wisdom has not been obtained *ataraxia* followed "by chance." *Ataraxia* emerges from *epochē* without necessity. Commitment to Skepticism is the result not of a conviction but of observing the inner peace that followed *epochē*. The only plausible candidate that could allow us to discriminate, not between dogmatic claims but between dogmatism and Skepticism itself, is the attainment of *ataraxia*. Thus, *ataraxia* cannot be an external consideration (*pace* Machuca). If the Skeptic is unsatisfied with the ends proposed by the Epicureans (pleasure) or the Stoics (virtue) she does not reject the notion of an end and the desirability of its pursuit. In other words, that *epochē* cannot *guarantee* the attainment of *ataraxia* is one thing; but it does not follow from this that the attainment of *ataraxia* ceases to be a valuable goal and even a metalevel criterion. But even this must be said "in a nondogmatic fashion," as Sextus is fond of repeating.

Notes

1. See Gisela Striker, "*Ataraxia*: Happiness as Tranquility," in *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 183–184.

2. Unless otherwise stated, translations are mine.

3. Striker argues that *ataraxia* is a *part* of happiness, since Epicurus distinguishes it thus: "tranquility (*ataraxia*) . . . the pleasant state of the mind, corresponding to the state of *aponia*, absence of pain, in the body" (Striker, *Ataraxia*, 185). I believe this reading is unjustified. We find in Cicero a parallel formulation which, instead of *aponia*, lists 'leisure from duty' (*ND* I.53). Instead of construing the absence of physical pain (or 'leisure from duties') as 'parts' of happiness (and one could think of other conditions), it is more plausible to conceive of them as various contributing factors of *ataraxia*.

4. Erler and Schofield point to Cicero's translation of *katastēma* as '*stabilis*' and '*in stabilitate*.' Michael Erler and Malcom Schofield, "Epicurean Ethics," in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. K. Algra, J. Barnes, J. Mansfeld, and M. Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 656.

5. B. Inwood and L. P. Gerson, *The Epicurus Reader* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 40.

6. Cicero rejects this argument. How could a pleasure that lasts longer not be preferable to a pleasure of a shorter duration, when everyone would agree that a longer pain makes us more miserable than a shorter one (*Fin.* II.88)? However, Epicurus's point is that a com-

plete life does not depend on an infinite time, while sustained pleasure is preferable to an ephemeral one. See Erler and Schofield, "Epicurean Ethics," 665; and P. Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 23–26.

7. Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 14, trans. Benedict Einarson and Phillip de Lacy (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1968).

8. Simplicius uses the complete expression "freedom from emotions and disturbance" (50:25), combining Epicurean *ataraxia* and Stoic *apatheia*. Simplicius, *On Epictetus' Handbook 1–26*, trans. C. Brittain and T. Brennan (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002), 98.

9. Even Seneca, who talks about "extirpating" and "eliminating" the passions, is clear: "You must not think that our human virtue transcends nature; the wise man will tremble, will feel pain, and will turn pale. For all these are sensations of the body." *Ep.* 71.29.

10. Inwood has a felicitous formulation: "The doctrine was not that we should be passionless but rather that '*apatheia*' is '*eupatheia*' [good feeling]." Brad Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 173.

11. Seneca, *Moral Essays*, vol. 2, trans. John W. Besore (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1935); translation modified.

12. Seneca, *Moral Letters*, vol. 2, trans. Richard Gummere (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1970); translation modified. Not all Stoics accepted this thesis. "Panaetius and Posidonius say that virtue is not sufficient [for a happy life] for there is a need for health, material resources and strength" (Diogenes, *Lives* VII.128).

13. Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 161.

14. "When they say that the final good is to live in agreement with nature, what this means, is, I think, the following, always be in accord with virtue and choose that which is in accord with nature if it is not in disaccord with virtue" (Cicero, *Fin*. III.13).

15. Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 501.

16. Arius Didymus, *Epitome of Stoic Ethics*, trans. Arthur J. Pomeroy (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999).

17. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. John E. King (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1927); translation modified.

18. Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Scepticism*, ed. Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); translation modified.

19. Mark L. McPherran, "*Ataraxia* and *Eudaimonia* in Ancient Pyrrhonism," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 5 (1989): 138.

20. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Ethicists*, vol. 3, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1960).

21. "The standards [of action] of the skeptical persuasion is what is apparent, implicitly meaning by this the appearances; for they depend on passive and unwanted feelings and are not objects of investigation . . . Thus, attending to what is apparent, we live in accordance with every day observances, without holding opinions, for we are not able to be utterly inactive" (*Outlines* I.22–23).

22. Burnyeat claims that "far from relying on the will to control ascent, the skeptic panacea . . . is to use reason to check *all the sources of belief and destroy all trust in reason itself*, thereby eliminating the very inclination to believe. The life without belief is not an achievement of the will but a paralysis of reason by itself." Myles Burnyeat, "Can the

Skeptic Live His Skepticism?," in *The Original Skeptics: A Controversy*, ed. M. Burnyeat and M. Frede (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997, 46, my emphasis. The kind of intellectual suicide that Burnyeat attributes to the Skeptics is contradicted by Sextus's insistence on pursuing inquiry.

23. A sign of this is the unusually high number of references to pigs in the accounts of Pyrrho's life. "They [pigs] seem to have no desire or impulse beyond sating hunger." James Warren, *Epicurus and Democritean Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 115; see also 141–142.

24. "The Skeptic will report that he is able (*contra* Burnyeat) to treat his own thoughts as non-identical to himself and so is able to report that 'it is thought within me—in my rational organ—that *p* is the case, but I do not believe it'" (McPherran, *Ataraxia*, 169).

25. "The aim (τέλος), then, of the Pyrrhonian lifestyle (ἀγωγή) is happiness, is *eudaimonia* (*Adv. math.* 11. 140–161), and in this Pyrrhonism was completely undistinctive, non-doctrinaire and so, uncontroversial" (McPherran, *Ataraxia*, 136–137).

26. "Neither the search for nor the attainment of *ataraxia* . . . are essential to Pyrrhonism." Diego Machuca, "The Pyrrhonist *Ataraxia* and *Philanthrōpia*," *Ancient Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2006): 111.

27. "In the present work we will give an outline of the Skeptical way of thought. To start with, we do not positively affirm any of the things to be discussed that they are just as we say they are; rather, we report descriptively [ἱστορικῶς ἀπαγγέλλομεν] on each thing according to how it appears to us now" (*Outlines* I.4).

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A Well-Ordered World: The Developing Idea of *Kosmos* in Later Greek Philosophy

Gina Zavota

In the ancient Greek world, the term *kosmos* originally referred not to the overarching structure of the universe, but to the social order most befitting the 'state,' or *polis*. In later Greek thought, however, these two meanings become more and more intertwined. This phenomenon is perhaps most clearly observable in early Stoic philosophy, with its foregrounding of both physics and ethics.[1] The shift that takes place amounts to a change of focus, whereby the two distinct contexts in which the term was used—discussions of the heavens, on the one hand, and the city and its inhabitants, on the other—become less significant. Conversely, a great deal of emphasis is placed on a particular characteristic in virtue of which the term was applied to both, namely the sense of harmony and order that is characteristic not only of the heavens but also of any virtuous state or individual. In the case of the Stoics, the notion of *kosmos* plays a pivotal role not just in their physics, but within their ethical theory as well, due to their much-discussed emphasis on 'living in accordance with nature.' It might at first seem that this mandate draws our attention away from explicitly ethical concerns and toward considerations more appropriately assigned to physics; however, both areas are components of the general inquiry into what it means to live in harmony, as one part of a larger whole. Seen in this way, Stoic ethics and physics are no more separable than the two meanings of *kosmos* as expressed in Stoic thought; in fact, the concept itself is the linchpin that holds these two disciplines together.

While this essay will focus on a discussion of Stoicism, I will begin with a brief overview of Platonic and Aristotelian usages of the term, in order to contextualize the changes that took place during the Hellenistic era. It is my hope that this study will serve not only to deepen our understanding of this important idea in later Greek thought, but also as an impetus for reconsideration of the place of harmony and balance in today's world. The Stoic understanding of *kosmos*, encompassing both the natural order and the realm

of human existence, could provide a fruitful alternative to the fragmentary view of the world that many of us hold today.

In the Platonic dialogues, three related but distinct meanings of *kosmos* can be identified. For the sake of brevity, I will illustrate these usages by means of three exemplary passages from the texts. My goal here is not to give an exhaustive account of how Plato employs the term, but rather to illustrate the distinctness of its three meanings, at least relative to their intermingling in Stoic doctrine. The first of these, which I will call the 'political' usage, figures prominently in the section of *Protagoras* where Protagoras uses the story of Prometheus bringing fire to humans to argue that virtue is teachable. While Prometheus successfully steals fire from Hephaestus and knowledge of the arts from Athena, he is unable to procure "political skill [πολιτικὴν τέχνην]" (*Prt.* 322b),[2] which is guarded by Zeus. The lack of such skill leads to constant conflict and the eventual disbanding of human communities. In the end, Zeus charges Hermes with the task of saving the human race from destruction by bringing them the qualities necessary to create *kosmos*, or order, in society: "Zeus therefore, fearing the total destruction of our race, sent Hermes to impart to men the qualities of respect for others and a sense of justice [δίκην], so as to bring order [κόσμοι] into our cities and create a bond of friendship and union" (*Prt.* 322c). Paramount among the virtues which he imparts, and which are vital for maintaining a sense of *kosmos* in the *polis*, are *aidōs* and *dikē*, which Zeus stipulates should be distributed evenly among all citizens (*Prt.* 323c–d). Given this distribution, the development of Athenian democracy seems to be a foregone conclusion.

In Book VI of *Laws*, by contrast, Plato appeals to one of the other meanings of *kosmos*, namely that concerned with a thing's ornamental or decorative qualities. While discussing the requisite duties of guards in a well-ordered society, he states that, in addition to their more typical tasks, they should also be called upon to beautify the countryside and to provide a comfortable place for the old, the infirm, and those worn out from tending the land to relax and recuperate. The warm baths and gymnasia they provide have many purposes: "Work of this and similar kinds will be both useful [ὠφελία] and ornamental [κόσμος] to a district and will also afford charming recreation" (*Lg.* VI.761d). Although Plato seems to be contrasting the aesthetic qualities of these public recreational areas with their utility, he goes on to imply that a properly ordered and sufficiently harmonious space for relaxation can be an effective treatment for exhaustion and related maladies in its own right; in fact, it is "a treatment much more profitable than a poorly qualified physician" (*Lg.* VI.761d). Providing the proper aesthetic conditions for this cure is an art as precise and valuable as that of a doctor. As with the first, political

usage, the aesthetic usage of *kosmos* pertains to order, and more specifically to a highly desirable ordering that has beneficial consequences wherever it is made manifest.

Finally, there is perhaps the best-known occurrence of *kosmos* in Plato's works, namely in the description of the creation of the universe by the Demiurge (*dēmiourgos*) in *Timaeus*. In this cosmological usage, the term is employed almost as a synonym for *ouranos*; for example, as Timaeus sets the stage for his cosmogonical discussion, he refers to "the heaven [οὐρανὸς] then or the world [κόσμος], whether called by this or by any other more appropriate name" (*Ti.* 28b). A closer examination of this section of the dialogue will illustrate the importance of harmony and proportion in Plato's conception of *kosmos*. The Demiurge sculpts the 'body' of the universe out of the four elements, which are placed in very precise *analogia*, or 'relations,' to each other. As a result, "the body of the world [κόσμου] was created, and it was harmonized by proportion [δι᾽ ἀναλογίας ὁμολογῆσαν]" (*Ti.* 32b–c). The emphasis on proper ordering and proportion (*analogia*) is even more apparent when Timaeus describes the creation of the 'soul' of the *kosmos* out of *ousia*, or 'being,' the same (*to auton*), and the different (*to heteron*). After blending the three principles together, he removes a sequence of portions of the resulting mixture whose sizes correspond to the first several powers of the numbers two and three. He then extracts a second sequence of portions corresponding in size to two different means (*mesos*) between each pair of two consecutive powers that he had sectioned off in the first pass.[3] Through this process, the celestial spheres—the visible expression of the soul of the *kosmos*—are brought into being. As with the other two usages of the term, once again it is linked to a beautiful and highly desirable sense of order and proportion, and with the excellence of character to which these qualities attest. Whether in an individual life, a state, or the universe as a whole, this order is something to strive for.

Aristotle also uses *kosmos* in a variety of ways in different texts, but even in his work we can see the distinctions between the various aspects of the concept becoming less well defined. In a similar vein to Plato's 'ornamental' usage in *Laws*, he states in Book IV of *Nicomachean Ethics* that "a magnificent man will also furnish his house suitably to his wealth (for even a house is a sort of public ornament)" (*EN* IV.1123a6–7),[4] characterizing a house as the type of ornamental possession that a wealthy man would use to demonstrate his financial status. The hallmark of such a man's magnificence is a sense of appropriateness of scale, as with the aforementioned house, the grandeur of which corresponds to its owner's level of wealth. Thus a house—or anything else for that matter—can manifest *kosmos* when it is constructed in such a

way that there is a harmony not only among the elements of its own design, but also between it and the lifestyle of its owner. Hence the 'ornamental' implications of the term indicate, for both Plato and Aristotle, a beauty that comes about through proper proportion, balance, and harmony.

Elsewhere, Aristotle employs *kosmos* in the cosmological sense, to refer to the entirety of the known universe. For instance, he argues in Book VI of *Nicomachean Ethics* that *Homo sapiens'* status as the best of the animals is not all that impressive, insofar as "there are other things much more divine in their nature even than man, e.g., most conspicuously, the bodies of which the heavens [ὁ κόσμος] are framed" (*EN* VI.1141a–b).[5] The tendency to see humans, and human reason, in the context of a larger, cosmic whole is also present in *Politics*; in Book VII, for example, Aristotle asserts that the active life is the best life, insofar as happiness consists in virtuous activity. In the case of isolated states or individuals, the requisite activity takes place between different parts of the whole, such as the various branches of government or the organ systems in the body. These interactions require no outside stimulus in order to function, or even to reach their optimal state. If this were not the case, he argues, there would be absurd consequences: "God and the universe [ὁ κόσμος], who have no external actions over and above their own energies, would be far enough from perfection" (*Pol.* VII.1325b). He concludes that the life of virtuous activity is the best choice for every individual and every state, without exception: "Hence it is evident that the same life is best for each individual, and for states and for mankind collectively" (*Pol.* VII.1325b). The perfection of the *kosmos* is thus manifested in its order and the harmonious interaction among its parts, as was the case with Plato, as well as its completeness and self-sufficiency. Here we can already see the blurring of boundaries between the application of this concept to humans, cities, and the universe as a whole. This tendency will become dramatically more pronounced in the Stoics, to whom we now turn.

Before beginning this discussion, I would like to specify that, although the focus of this work will be on the early Stoicism of Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, I will also occasionally draw on the work of Seneca and Epictetus. Although Stoic doctrine clearly did not remain static in the intervening centuries, my use of these later authors will be for the purpose of illuminating the doctrines of their predecessors; in so doing, I will not be attempting to give a comprehensive exposition of the Stoicism of their era, or of their understanding of *kosmos*. For my purposes here, I will use them in essentially the same way as I do the works of the later doxographers.

For the Hellenistic philosophers, philosophy was a complete way of life, and not merely an academic discipline. As is well known, the Stoics and

many others felt that one of the most important questions that could be answered was that concerning the best kind of life to live. The traditionally cited Stoic answer to this question is that "the goal [is] to live in agreement with nature [φύσει], which is to live according to virtue. For nature leads to virtue" (*Lives* VII.87),[6] or, in Cicero's words, "The goal is to live consistently and in agreement with nature" (*De finibus* III 26).[7] These statements will serve as our starting point in the investigation of *kosmos*, for, as we will see, the question of *physis*, and of how to live in accordance with it, is central to a thorough understanding of the concept. To further explain the notion of 'living in accordance with *physis*,' let us first consider the nature of the Stoic God. Diogenes Laertius tells us that living according to nature means living "according to one's own nature and that of the universe, doing nothing which is forbidden by the common law, which is right reason, penetrating all things, being the same as Zeus who is the leader of the administration of things" (*Lives* VII.88). Thus, the Stoics recognized a God who was immanently present in all creation through his divine reason, and who remained responsible at every moment for its development and continued organization. Furthermore, since they only accorded existence to bodies, God himself was also a body, or a material particular; he was identified with the creative, elemental Fire or *logos*, one of the two Stoic *archai*.[8] Thus God's influence on the world was exerted from within that world, in contrast to Plato's *dēmiourgos*, who existed outside the world over which he ruled.

For the Stoics, the divine *logos* or Fire pervaded everything that exists, unifying and directing it and providing a framework within which the relations among all of its parts can become apparent. As Plutarch puts it, perhaps oversimplifying the Stoic equation somewhat, "No particular thing, not even the least, can be otherwise than according to common Nature and its reason [λόγος]" (*SSR* 1050b).[9] Plutarch's fervent dislike of the Stoics notwithstanding, this citation provides evidence of some kind of close relation between God, the divine Fire, reason, and fate in Stoic thought. This is significant for our investigation because it highlights the interconnectedness of a set of principles that bridge physics and ethics in the figure of the Stoic God, the source of order and harmony in the world. These are, of course, precisely the traits that were most characteristic of the various usages of *kosmos* in Plato and Aristotle. We can thus already see the distinction between the cosmological and political contexts in which the term is employed beginning to blur.

Returning to the question, then, of what it means to live in accordance with *physis*, Diogenes Laertius tells us:

> By nature, in consistency with which we must live, Chrysippus
> understands both the common and, specifically, the human nature.
> Cleanthes includes only the common nature, with which one must
> be consistent, and not the individual. And virtue is a disposition in
> agreement. (*Lives* VII.89)

Two points are worth noting here. The first is that, at least in this account, there was a difference of opinion about which nature should be followed, the "common" nature of the universe alone, or this universal nature along with that of the individual human being. While these two are not identical, then, there must have been a close affinity between them, or else there would not have been a disagreement between these two early leaders of the Stoic school. Second, the belief is expressed here that virtue is equivalent to a disposition marked by *homologia*, or 'accordance, agreement,' with the surrounding world; this is in keeping with the desire of Plato's *dêmiourgos* as he seeks to create a *kosmos* characterized by order and harmony. The upshot of this doctrine, as Gisela Striker points out in a discussion of a similar statement in Cicero's *On the Ends of Good and Evil*, "is not that one comes to value rationality, but that one comes to value order and harmony above all else . . . [The question immediately becomes, then,] . . . Why should love for rationality—one's own rationality—be the same as love for the order and harmony of nature?"[10] To respond to this question, we should note, first of all, that both the individual and the visible world as a whole, insofar as it is infused throughout with God's presence, are characterized by rationality. As we saw above, there is an intertwining of cosmological and ethical elements in Stoic thought, so it is not unreasonable to assume that the virtuous person will value the same characteristics in his or her own life as those that the astronomer most values in the visible *kosmos*.

What Cleanthes and Chrysippus agree on is that we should look to the universal nature for moral guidance; we must live our lives in accordance with the whole of creation, not just with our own individual proclivities. That nature is essentially the manifestation of God's presence, which extends to all existing things, including individual human beings. For example, with respect to the wise, Diogenes Laertius tells us that "they are godly; for they have in themselves a kind of god" (*Lives* VII.119). In a similar vein, Seneca asks, "Why shouldn't you think that there is something divine in him who is a part of god? All of that which contains us is one and is god. And we are his allies and parts" (*Ep.* 92.30).[11] This envisioning of the relationship of individuals to the *kosmos* as one of parts to a whole has two important consequences for our investigation here. The first is that it helps clarify why a love

of harmony and proportion might be central to ethics; if *homologia* is one of the defining features of the *kosmos*, then it stands to reason that it would be equally vital to the 'ordering' of a human life as well. In other words, the excellence of the individual, the state, and the visible world as a whole will be dependent on the development of similar virtues, namely those which are present in the *kosmos* insofar as it is the visible manifestation of God's nature. Second, given God's immanent physical presence in the world, Stoic ethics is necessarily interconnected with the realm of *physis*; it does not make sense to talk about divine virtue serving as a model for human conduct without also taking the physical world into account.

The extent of the overlap between these two areas of inquiry is clear from Diogenes Laertius's listing of the various conceptions of *kosmos* in Stoic thought: "They use the term 'cosmos' in three senses: [1] the god himself who is the individual quality consisting of the totality of substance, who is indestructible and ungenerated, being the craftsman [δημιουργὸς] of the organization [διακοσμήσεως] . . . [2] they also call the organization itself of the stars cosmos; and [3] thirdly, that which is composed of both" (*Lives* VII.137–138). If this is an accurate representation of Stoic usage, then the conceptual boundaries between God and the physical universe which his divine reason has brought into existence were not all that clear-cut. This is in agreement with the Stoic belief that "the cosmos is administered by mind [νοῦν] and providence [πρόνοιαν]" (*Lives* VII.138). Examining in more detail the most prominent characteristics of the *kosmos* serves to further accentuate the interconnectedness of cosmological and ethical aspects of the theory: "The cosmos is one, and limited at that, having a spherical shape" (*Lives* VII.140); furthermore, "spread around the outside of it is the unlimited void, which is incorporeal . . . Inside the cosmos there is no void, but it is [fully] unified" (*Lives* VII.140). We know from Plato that the sphere, being the most perfect physical form, is also the most fitting shape for the *kosmos*, insofar as the latter is the most perfect physical world possible (*Ti.* 32c–34b). Here there is a stark contrast between an ordered, well-defined world within the sphere, administered by *logos*, and an unlimited, incorporeal void surrounding this realm of order. This image illustrates in striking fashion how the Stoic universe can be likened to a city, insofar as the latter typically features a complex set of interconnected systems within its walls and (at least in the time of the Stoics) a comparative void and lack of organization outside.

Katja Maria Vogt presents an intriguing exposition of this likeness, and its ramifications for Stoic ethics and political philosophy, in her book *Law, Reason, and the Cosmic City*, where she asserts, "The study of perfectly rational parts of the cosmos may help us understand the physical side of the Stoic

end, life in agreement with nature; a star's movements may exemplify what it means to enjoy an 'easy flow' of life."[12] Thus an examination of the Stoics' cosmology not only helps us gain a fuller picture of their thought, but such examination was also vital for the Stoics themselves. Their thoroughly materialist metaphysics meant that the totality of the physical *kosmos* was all that existed for them; their conceptualization of it as limited in extent, and surrounded by an endless void, further emphasizes this exclusivity. Remembering Aristotle's argument that even the isolated individual can achieve a life of virtuous activity, insofar as the requisite interactions can take place among parts of a single whole, we can conceive of the Stoics' 'life in accordance with nature' as a result of our interacting properly with that element of nature that most obviously manifests divine reason, namely the heavens. As Vogt puts it:

> There is nothing besides the stars that can impress on us an image of perfect integration into the order of nature, of perfectly regulated movement, and of a full fit into the universe as a whole. When we look at the planets, we can better understand what life, or a life, in agreement with nature is.[13]

When we look to the stars and learn from their harmony, then, we are attempting to learn from the 'experts' in the field of living harmoniously as part of a whole. Just as, in the virtuous person, reason should direct and temper the emotions and appetites, and just as the members of a community should turn to the wisest among them for leadership, we, as parts of the community of the *kosmos*, should look to its most perfect members for guidance in the conduct of our daily lives. Seneca expresses this sentiment in a different context, in which he likens the organization of the field of philosophy to that of the universe: "I only wish that philosophy might come before our eyes in all her unity, just as the whole expanse of the firmament is spread out for us to gaze upon! It would be a sight closely resembling that of the firmament" (*Ep.* 89.1). While his point here concerns the optimal way to obtain a complete philosophical education, it is still notable for its depiction of the *kosmos* as something which, while divisible into parts, acquires its true significance from the interrelatedness of those parts. The magnificence of the heavens is best appreciated when the full expanse of constellations is visible in its entirety.

   The cosmology of the Stoics can thus, to borrow the words of A. A. Long, "be described as a cosmo-biology, a system in which the basic model for understanding all natural processes is drawn from the vital functions of

living beings."[14] This unique combination of a teleologically ordered system (à la Aristotle), and a first principle that is conceived of as an intelligent, rational being who is responsible for the ordering, highlights the connection between the cosmological and the ethical. Essentially, the guiding force behind the organization of the universe is a perfect, unlimited version of our own human reason. Given this similarity, it is only natural that the qualities that make for an optimally organized world would be the same as those that lead to a virtuous, happy life or a peaceful, productive state. As is well known, the Stoics posited that every living thing naturally moves toward what is appropriate for it, and furthermore that we each do this in our capacity as a component of the ordered universe which has been created, and is still being structured, by a rational God. Thus, the manner in which each of us strives to live a good life as a member of society contributes not only to the harmony and order of the state, but also to that of the universe. In the words of Cicero, the Stoics "hold that the cosmos is ruled by the will of the gods, that it is like a city or state shared by gods and men, and that each and every one of us is a part of this cosmos. From which it naturally follows that we put the common advantage ahead of our own" (*Fin.* 3.64).

At times, it seems that the Stoics might have even gone so far as to hold that the study of cosmology was necessary for the understanding of ethics. Plutarch, for example, reports that Chrysippus stated that "there is no other, and certainly no more appropriate, way to approach the discussion of good and bad things or the virtues or happiness, except on the basis of common nature and the administration of the cosmos" (*SSR* 1035c–d). However, the extent to which Stoic ethics was dependent on physics is a matter of debate among scholars. Julia Annas has supported the position that Stoic ethics can be understood without relying on the rubric of physics or cosmology and has adeptly criticized the opposing view. For example, in *The Morality of Happiness*, she argues that "there are many problems with [this view] . . . First, it does not seem to be an *ethical* position at all. Virtue, on this view, is simply doing what is needed to conform to nature, where that is taken to be cosmic nature, understood in ways that are independent of human nature."[15] Those holding some version of the opposing position include John Cooper, who asserts, in a response to Annas, that "we have an initial appeal to nature . . . to human nature in particular—at the foundations of Stoic ethical theory."[16] After discussing the universal ordering principle inherent in the Stoics' conception of God, he concludes that "there is very clear and explicit evidence in Diogenes Laertius that Chrysippus based his account of the human good upon non-ethical premises about universal nature and how it relates to human nature."[17] Other scholars expressing this view include Striker, who

states that "the foundations of Stoic ethics are to be sought, as Chrysippus said, in cosmology or theology, and not in human psychology."[18] Long puts it even more directly, claiming that "Stoic ethics is ultimately parasitical on physics."[19]

While this debate is of great importance to scholarship in this area, I will not be able to do it justice within the context of this essay. I mention the issue primarily to illustrate that there is no consensus among scholars concerning the nature of the connection between cosmology and ethics in Stoic thought. However, my argument concerning *kosmos* does not require the establishing of a foundational relationship between the two areas of inquiry. The points I have attempted to make in this essay concern not the relationship between these two branches of Stoic philosophy, but rather the centrality of the notion of *kosmos*, and in particular the sense of *homologia* that it implies, to both of them. This naturally creates an overlap and blurs the boundaries between the two areas of inquiry, perhaps to the point at which speaking of a foundational relationship between them implies a greater degree of conceptual separation than what may have existed previously.

In conclusion, it bears mentioning that, in today's world, philosophical and cosmological inquiry are generally seen as entirely distinct, and harmony and balance are often elusive ideals. Perhaps, then, a more serious, ongoing consideration of the Stoic conception of *kosmos* is warranted, not only as a moment within the history of philosophy, but also as a notion that has much to show us even today.

Notes

1. The third main Stoic focus, logic, while no less important to a complete understanding of Stoic philosophy, does not bear on the topic of this essay and thus will not be discussed here.

2. All translations of Plato are taken from Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961).

3. Using *a* and *b* to represent two numbers, the two means in question are, first, the harmonic mean, or the number that exceeds *a* by the same fraction of *a* as that by which it is itself exceeded by *b* (e.g., 1⅓ is the harmonic mean between 1 and 2). The second mean, the arithmetic, is the value halfway between *a* and *b* (e.g., 1½ is the arithmetic mean between 1 and 2).

4. All translations of Aristotle are taken from Richard McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941).

5. In a similar vein, in Book I of *Metaphysics* he uses the term during a discussion of the Pythagoreans' belief that everything that exists is composed of number (*Met.* I.990a20).

6. Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, trans., *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988).

7. H. Rackham, trans., *Cicero: On Ends* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914).

8. The other *archē*, matter, was seen as wholly passive and inert, something which is acted on by God (see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VII.134).

9. Harold Cherniss, trans., *Plutarch: Moralia*, vol. 18, part 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

10. Gisela Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 227.

11. Richard M. Gummere, trans., *Seneca: Moral Epistles*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1917–1925).

12. Katja Maria Vogt, *Law, Reason, and the Cosmic City: Political Philosophy in the Early Stoa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 136.

13. Ibid., 145.

14. A. A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006), 259.

15. Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 160. The chapter from which this quote was taken, "The Stoics: Human Nature and the Point of View of the Universe," provides an excellent and very readable discussion of this topic.

16. John Cooper, "Eudaimonism and the Appeal to Nature in the Morality of Happiness: Comments on Julia Annas' *The Morality of Happiness*," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55, no. 3 (1995): 591.

17. Ibid., 596.

18. Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics*, 231.

19. A. A. Long, "The Stoic Conception of Evil," *Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1969): 329–343, 341.

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Searching for the 'Why': Plotinus on Being and the One beyond Being

Michael Wiitala

Plotinus is an exceptionally rich and insightful thinker, whose teachings spawned the philosophical tradition we today call Neo-Platonism. There is a tendency among contemporary scholars to think that Plotinus's philosophical orientation is significantly different from that of Plato. One such difference is that Plotinus seems to be more interested in systematically presenting and articulating a specific set of philosophical doctrines than Plato was. After all, Plotinus lived and wrote in a context in which there were a number of highly developed philosophical schools—the Stoics, Peripatetics, Gnostics, and Epicureans, to name just a few—and is interested in showing where his teachings stand in relation to these. Plato, on the other hand, is far less interested than Plotinus in situating his philosophical views in relation to those of others—although we do see some of this in the dialogues—and arguably more interested in educating his readers on how to philosophize: how to become "better dialecticians in relation to all things," as the Eleatic Stranger puts it in the *Statesman* (*Plt*. 285d).[1] Despite these and other differences between the projects of Plato and of Plotinus, in this chapter I want to focus on a point of continuity and fundamental agreement between the two thinkers: namely on their philosophical orientation toward the 'cause' (*aitia*) or the 'why' (*dioti*) of things.[2] I will argue that Plotinus's philosophical orientation, like that of Plato before him, is driven by a search for the 'why' of things and a confidence that the goal of every why-inquiry is attainable. The search for the 'why' that characterizes philosophy for both Plato and Plotinus can, I think, serve as a key to understanding Plotinus's philosophical outlook as a whole. Given the limits of this chapter, however, I will focus on only one dimension of Plotinus's thought. I will show that understanding Plotinus's project as an instance of the Platonic search for the 'why' of things can shed light on his claim that the first principle—the One or Good—is beyond being.

I. The Forms as Answering Why-Questions: Plato's *Phaedo*

In order to identify the sort of why-inquiry I am arguing is operative in both Plato and Plotinus, it will be useful to consider briefly a well-known passage in Plato's *Phaedo*, wherein the nature of inquiry into why things are the way they are is discussed in some detail. In the process of describing his "second sailing," Socrates introduces the forms as causes. He explains how as a young man he was interested in "that wisdom which they call natural science [περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίαν]" (*Phd.* 96a), for it seemed to him "splendid to know the causes of each thing [τὰς αἰτίας ἑκάστου], why each comes to be, why it perishes, and why it is [διὰ τί γίγνεται ἕκαστον καὶ διὰ τί ἀπόλλυται καὶ διὰ τί ἔστι]" (ibid.). What he names an *aitia*, a 'cause' or 'explanation,' is simply that after which his inquiry into the 'why' of things is searching.

A cause is that which answers a why-question, although we must be careful to note that an answer in this case is not a statement or account (*logos*), but rather a principle—the principle that explains why the subject of the why-question is the way that it is or has the character that it does. Socrates eventually identifies these sorts of principles as forms. He explains that he came to the conclusion that if asked, for example, why anything other than the beautiful itself is beautiful, he could safely answer that "it is beautiful for no other reason than that it participates in the beautiful itself" (*Phd.* 100c). And he thinks that one can safely make the same sort of answer to any other why-question (*ibid.*). Why is *x* large? Because *x* participates in the form Large. Why is *z* good? Because *z* participates in the form Good.

In trying to discover why spatiotemporal beings are the way they are, Socrates concludes that he was not searching for their material conditions, nor for *how* they come to be or pass away. Rather, he was interested in discovering *why* they are the way they are. Socrates is confident that for every object or state of affairs,[3] there must be some principle that explains why that object or state of affairs is the way it is or has the character it does.

II. Soul, Intellect, and the One as Answers to Why-Questions

Plotinus's philosophical framework, I contend, both displays and enacts the Platonic inquiry into why things are the way they are. The why-inquiry Plotinus undertakes prompts him to posit three principles (*archai*). Each of these three principles is a *hypostasis*, a reality about which true and false things can be said.[4] Plotinus generally calls the first and most fundamental principle the One or the Good. The first principle, according to Plotinus, is beyond being in that it is not 'some thing' (*ti*) at all (*Enn.* V.3[49].12.50–52),[5] but rather the

power (*dunamis*) from which all things emanate (*Enn*. V.3[49].15.32–33).[6] The emanation of all things from the One proceeds in an order. After the One comes the second principle, which Plotinus variously calls Intellect (*nous*), the forms (*eidē*), and being (*ousia*, *on*). Intellect proceeds from the One by attempting to understand the One (*Enn*. V.2[11].1.9–13; V.3[49].11.1–16).[7] In order to understand the One, Intellect makes the One the object of its gaze. Since the One is not an object, however, Intellect does not "attain to it [the One] in its simplicity," but "comes out continually apprehending something else made many in itself" (*Enn*. V.3[49].11.2–4).[8] The things "made many" are the forms. The forms, ordered in relation to one another, are being. After Intellect, the third principle, Soul, emanates. Unlike the One and Intellect, "Soul does not remain unchanged when it produces" (*Enn*. V.2[11].1.18). Rather, explains Plotinus, "it looks to its source and is filled, and going forth to another opposed movement generates its own image, which is sensation and the principle of growth" (*Enn*. V.2[11].1.19–21). Soul is the principle of life, growth, and change in spatiotemporal beings.

When simply stated in outline, Plotinus's philosophical framework can sound rather fanciful. What philosophical reasons could there be for positing the One, Intellect, and Soul as three principles? One such philosophical reason for positing these three principles is that our ability to engage in why-inquiries presupposes them. Consider some kind of plant or animal, a cat, for instance. What explains its bodily motion? Why does it chase that mouse? Why does it start to purr when I walk in the door? For Plotinus, this cat's soul is the most immediate answer to these sorts of questions. Soul is that which makes a living body live. Soul, in other words, is that which explains the growth, development, and movement of a given body, why that body engages in these activities at this time and those other activities at another time. Given that a living body moves itself and develops, if successful why-inquiry is possible, there must be a principle that explains why it moves and develops. Plotinus calls that principle Soul. Yet we can ask further why-questions about souls themselves. For example, what explains why the soul of a cat will typically generate a body with four legs, a head, and a tail, while the soul of an oak tree will typically generate a body with roots, a trunk, branches, and acorns? Plotinus would answer this sort of question by claiming that the form Cat and the form Oak Tree explain the differences between their respective souls. The soul organizes and unifies the motion, growth, and development of a living body, but we are still in need of an explanation of why it organizes and unifies this body in one set of ways rather than in another set of ways. The form Cat explains why the soul of a cat moves the cat's body in the ways that it does. It explains, for example, why the cat runs

after a mouse. Likewise, the form Oak Tree explains why the soul of an oak tree moves the oak tree in the way that it does. For instance, the form Oak Tree explains why the soul of an oak tree makes it grow toward the sun. Soul in an oak tree will not chase mice and soul in a cat will not make the cat grow toward the sun because the soul of each is structured according to a different form—the form Cat in one case and the form Oak Tree in the other. Plotinus sees the need to posit Soul and Intellect as principles at least in part due to his commitment to the Socratic confidence that for every object or state of affairs there must be some principle that explains why that object or state of affairs is the way it is or has the character that it does. Soul explains why spatiotemporal objects move and develop in the way they do, while the forms/Intellect explain why an object is what it is and has the character that it does.

Yet given that for every object or state of affairs there must be some principle that explains why that object or state of affairs is the way it is or has the character it does, and given that the forms are objects—each form is one of the many forms that are—one can ask why the forms themselves are the way they are. And Plotinus raises just this question: "But why these animals there [in Intellect]? For why should they be in God? Rational animals, yes; but what majesty does so great a multitude of irrational ones have?" (*Enn*. VI.7[38].8.15–17). The forms compose a structured whole, a whole in which each part—each form—calls for and necessitates all the others.[9] Considering all the forms in relation to one another, we can ask why they have the structure they do? Why are these forms related to one another in the way that they are? Why, for instance, are there forms of all irrational animals? If there were no forms of irrational animals, there could be no spatiotemporal irrational animals. The question, however, is not why there are spatiotemporal irrational animals, but why there are forms of the various irrational animals in the first place. Given that for every object or state of affairs there must be some principle that explains why it is the way it is or has the character it does, these are legitimate questions. Plotinus offers an answer by positing the One or Good as the principle that explains why the forms are the way they are (cf. *Enn*. VI.7[38].8.17ff.). The One or Good itself, however, is neither an object nor a state of affairs, but rather the "power of all things [τὸ δὲ δύναμις πάντων]" (*Enn*. V.3[49].15.32–33). Hence the One or Good can serve as the first principle that requires no further explanation, since, given that the One or Good is not an 'it,' it makes no sense to ask why it is the way it is or has the character it does. With this summary account of the structure of Plotinus's metaphysics, we are now in a position to begin our inquiry into why Plotinus claims that the forms require the One as an explanatory principle.

III. Why There Must Be a One beyond Being

Plotinus directly addresses the question of why the forms presuppose a higher-order explanatory principle in various passages of *Ennead* V. The two main passages I will focus on are found in V.3.12 and V.6.3.

In V.3.12, Plotinus criticizes the Aristotelian/Peripatetic thesis that Intellect (*nous*) is the first principle. While Plotinus agrees with the Peripatetics that Intellect is a highly unified multiplicity, he argues that the first principle—the One—cannot be a multiplicity at all. In order to appreciate Plotinus's reasons for positing the One as first principle, we should briefly consider the sort of unity he attributes to Intellect. Intellect is all the forms in relation to one another. Forms, however, do not relate to one another as portions of a random bundle or aggregate. In a bundle or aggregate, the various objects that compose it need not occupy specific positions within it.[10] In a pile of rocks, for example, the location of rock *A* in the pile makes no difference. Rock *A* could be on top of the pile, on the bottom, or anywhere in between and the pile would still remain the pile of rocks that it is. The same goes for the position of any other rock in the pile. In Intellect, however, each form occupies a unique 'position' in relation to all the others. Each form's intelligible relations to all the other forms are necessary and unchanging. The form Dog, for example, is necessarily related to the form Animal as species to genus, and it is impossible that the form Dog could be related to the form Tree in the same way it is related to the form Animal. Furthermore, the unity of Intellect also exceeds the unity exemplified by organic wholes. In the case of organic wholes, such as my body, at least some of the parts must occupy specific positions—or play specific roles—within the whole. My head, for example, cannot occupy the position of my toenail, and my toenail, likewise, cannot play the role of my arm. Yet my body can still function even if some of its proper parts are missing. For example, my body as a whole can function—although perhaps not as well—without a toenail and without an arm. In Intellect, however, every 'part'—that is, each form—occupies a specific and necessary 'position' and plays a unique and necessary role in relation to the others and to the whole. Thus, forms cannot be removed from or added to Intellect. Each form and the unique role it plays in Intellect are absolutely necessary.[11] Plotinus claims, therefore, that "the multiplicity [of Intellect] is not a plurality of compositions, but its activities are the multiplicity [τὸ γὰρ πλῆθος οὐ συνθέσεις, ἀλλ' αἱ ἐνέργειαι αὐτοῦ τὸ πλῆθος]" (*Enn.* V.3[49].12.2–3). The forms are not objects that could be rearranged, added, or removed, but rather activities, each of which would be unintelligible without the others.[12]

While each form is inseparable from every other and bears unique intelligible relations to every other, the forms are still many. And since they are many, Plotinus argues, they presuppose a higher-order principle that explains their unity. Plotinus shows why this is so by comparing the way in which any composition presupposes a higher-order principle with the way in which a number series presupposes a "one before the many." The text of this rather difficult passage reads as follows:

> But there needs to be a one before the many, [a one] from which the many [comes]: for the one is first over every number. But they [the Peripatetics] say the same in the case of number; for objects in order are the composition [σύνθεσις γὰρ τὰ ἑξῆς]; but over the things that are [i.e., the forms], what necessity is there now for there to be some one here too from which the many [comes]? [If there is not] the many will be separated from each other and will each come by chance from a different direction to their composition. (*Enn*. V.3[49].12.9–14)

In Greek mathematics, a number (*arithmos*) is a composition of enumerable units. Hence, Euclid defines 'number' as "a multitude composed of units" (*El*. VII, Def. 2). He defines 'unit' as "that according to which each of the things that are is called one [καθ᾽ ἣν ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ἓν λέγεται]" (*El*. VII, Def. 1). When Plotinus says that "there needs to be a one before the many . . . for the one is first over every number," he does not mean that when counting, we must begin by saying "one" before we can move to "two," "three," and so on. Rather, he is claiming that the ordered composition that each number is presupposes a higher-order principle that explains the unity of the composition. And in this, as Plotinus points out, the Peripatetics agree with him. For on Aristotle's account, the units that compose a number should only be considered as its matter.[13]

The structure or order (*hexēs*) in terms of which units compose a number is itself simple. The structure calls for a certain composition and is causally prior to that composition. Take the number three, for example. The number three is a composition made up of three units—one that stands in the one place, one in the two place, and one in the three place. The structure or order of the number three can be described as "the one place, followed by the two place, followed by the three place."[14] The structure is not itself a composition. It is not a unified multiplicity. Rather, the structure is a norm. Objects can only be three insofar as they are governed by this norm, that is, insofar as they can relate to one another by standing in the one place, two place, and

three place. A number is a composition (*sunthesis*) that consists of nothing other than "objects in order" (*ta hexēs*).[15] Thus, when Plotinus claims that "there needs to be a one before the many, [a one] from which the many [comes]," he means that if there are to be "objects in order," there must first be a norm that simply is that order as such.[16] This norm is the "one before the many." It must be "first" in the sense of ontologically prior: the composition cannot be without the norm, but the norm can be without the composition.

Since the forms are many and are ordered in relation to one another such that each must play a unique role in relation to the others, there must in their case too, proposes Plotinus, be a "one before the many." Any composition requires a norm to explain the way in which it is structured. The composition of forms—Intellect—is no exception. If there were no norm that governed the composition of forms, then the forms would "be separated from each other," and each would "come by chance from a different direction to their composition." The forms are such, however, that their separation from one another and their coming together from different directions by chance is utterly impossible. Only if one were to misunderstand what a form is could one think that the forms might be separate from one another or might combine from different directions by chance.

In *Ennead* V.6.3, Plotinus presents a more detailed argument for why there must be a "one before the many" in the case of the forms, which confirms the analysis I have been offering. One of Plotinus's main goals in V.6 is to show that Intellect presupposes the One. He begins V.6.3 with the following puzzle: It seems clear that nothing prevents one and the same thing from being both one and many. My body is both one and many, for example. It is one as a whole but has many parts. So what prevents the first principle from being both one and many? The text reads as follows:

> But if they [those who object to Plotinus' views on the One] are going to say that nothing prevents the same thing [τὸ αὐτό] from being many [πολλά], there will be a one underlying these [many] [ἓν τούτοις ὑποκείμενον ἔσται]; for there can be no many if there is not a one from which or in which [ἀφ' οὗ ἢ ἐν ᾧ] these are, or in general a one that is counted first before the others, which must be taken alone [μόνον], itself by itself . . . It must be alone by itself [μόνον] if it is also to be seen in other things; unless someone is going to say that its being [τὸ εἶναι] depends on its having existence [τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχειν] with the others; [but] it will not then be simple [ἁπλοῦν], and the composite of many will not be either [οὐδὲ τὸ συγκείμενον ἐκ πολλῶν ἔσται]; for that which is unable to

be simple will have no existence [ὑπόστασιν], and the composite of many will not be itself, if the simple is not . . . If, then, something is many [εἰ ἄρα πολλά τί ἐστι], there must be a one before the many. If, therefore, there is multiplicity in the thinking principle [i.e., in Intellect] [εἰ οὖν τῷ νοοῦντι πλῆθος], there cannot be thinking [τὸ νοεῖν] in what is not a multiplicity. But this [i.e., what is not a multiplicity] is the first. Thinking and Intellect [τὸ νοεῖν καὶ νοῦς], then, will be in what comes after. (*Enn.* V.6[24].3.1–15, 21–25)

Plotinus grants that one and the same thing can be both one and many. For example, he grants that there are wholes composed of parts. He argues, however, that a one-many, a composite, can only be what it is if there is a noncomposite, simple one that underlies it. This simple one must underlie the composite by being that from which or that in which the composite is. Plotinus then characterizes this simple one as something counted before the others. I will come back to the sense in which the simple one is counted. For now, let us consider two examples.

First, consider my body. It is a composite—one whole composed of many parts. All of the parts that compose my body at the moment—arms, legs, eyes, and so on—are 'in' the whole that is my body. This whole is not simply the parts that compose it. When we say that the parts are 'in' the whole, we do not mean that the parts are in themselves. Hence, when we say that the parts are 'in' the whole, we speak of the whole as something that is not reducible to the parts that compose it. If the whole has parts and so is a one-many, there must be some higher-order principle that explains why it cannot be reduced to its parts. This higher-order principle, Plotinus argues, is a noncomposite, simple one. This principle is that "from which" the composite is. To return to our example, my body as a whole is such that it can be considered qua many objects, where the many objects are its parts. Yet my body as a whole is also such that it can be considered qua one object. To consider it qua one object is to consider it as the simple one—that is, the norm—in terms of which it is structured.

As a second example, consider again a number (*arithmos*) as understood in Greek mathematics. Take the number three, for instance. It is a composite—a collection of three objects or units. All three of the objects in question are 'in' the collection. The collection of these three objects, however, is not reducible to the objects that compose it. One and many are opposites and so cannot be predicated of the same thing, at the same time, and in the same respect. Yet the collection—the number three in this case—is one, while the objects that compose it are many. In other words, 'one' can be predicated

of the collection—"this collection is one [collection]"—while 'many' cannot; whereas 'many' can be predicated of the three objects—"these three objects are many [objects]"—while 'one' cannot. The collection and the objects that compose it, therefore, are not strictly identical to one another.[17] Thus, Plotinus would claim that there must be a simple one that explains the unity of the collection. This simple one is the norm or structure in terms of which the collection—in this case, the number three—is structured. To consider the number three qua many is to consider it as the three objects that compose it. To consider the number three qua one is to consider it as the simple one or norm in terms of which it is structured.

In both of the above examples of a one-many composition, there is a simple one from which the multiplicity in the composition receives its unity. This one "from which," Plotinus claims, is "a one that is counted first before the others." It is counted first in the sense that without it the multiplicity that it unifies could not be counted. Thus, Plotinus says that it "must be taken alone, itself by itself." The simple one from which the unified one-many composition receives its unity is not counted with the many members of the composition, since they are only many because of the simple one. For "the composite of many will not be itself," explains Plotinus, "if the simple is not." Consider again the number three. It is composed of three countable objects. But the simple one or norm that makes this counting possible—which I described above as "the one place, followed by the two place, followed by the three place"—is not itself one of the three objects and so cannot be counted along with them (cf. *Enn*. V.5[32].4.11–16). Without the norm in terms of which the number three is structured, there can be no number three (cf. ibid.; *Enn*. V.3[49].11.22–23). That norm, however, is not itself one of the three objects, but is rather "itself by itself." Only because it is "alone by itself" can it also "be seen in other things." In the case of the example at hand, only because the norm in terms of which the number three is structured is alone by itself, can it also be seen in the countability of the three objects.

Now we could call the norm or simple one in terms of which a collection of three objects is structured the form Three. This form Three is different from the form Justice, the form Human Being, and so on. Hence, there are many forms. Yet if there are many forms, there must be a one from which the many forms receive their unity as Intellect. This one is what Plotinus calls the One or Good. It is not countable along with the many forms, and since all multiplicity other than the forms derives from the forms, the One is not countable along with anything at all (*Enn*. V.5[32].4.11ff.; V.3[49].11.22–23). The reason for this, explains Plotinus, is that the One is "a measure [μέτρον] and not measured [οὐ μετρούμενον], and it is not equal [ἴσον] to the others so as

to be among them [σὺν αὐτοῖς]" (*Enn.* V.5[32].4.13–15). If it were among them, he argues, there would be "something in common between it [the One] and those which are included in the count [with it] [ἐπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν συναριθμουμένων], and that something in common will be before it [the One]" (*Enn.* V.5[32].4.15–16). Hence, claims Plotinus, the One is not even 'one' properly speaking (*Enn.* II.9[33].1.1–8; VI.9[9].5.29–33).[18] That is, the One is not one thing among other things (*Enn.* V.3[49].13.4). In fact, it is not 'some thing' (*ti*) at all (*Enn.* V.3[49].12.50–52). Rather, the One is a principle (*archē*) (*Enn.* V.5[32].6.6–7; V.2[11].1.1–3).[19] It is the principle for which the question "Why are there many forms?" is searching.

IV. Conclusion

We can ask why beings are. Socrates, as presented in the *Phaedo*, is confident that our why-inquiries can be satisfied. Presumably Plato himself had a similar confidence. Plotinus also adopts this confidence, and his philosophical thought can be seen as an expression of it. That at which why-inquiries ultimately aim, however, cannot be an individual entity or a group of entities, since if it were, we could raise the further question of why that entity or group of entities is the way it is or has the character it does. Plotinus, therefore, posits the One beyond being. The One is beyond being in the sense that it is not an individual, countable object. "Since the being [οὐσίας] which is generated [from the One] is form [εἴδους]," explains Plotinus, "the One must be without form [ἀνείδεον]" (*Enn.* V.5[32].6.1–2, 4–5). "But since it is without form," he continues, "it is not being [οὐσία]; for being [οὐσίαν] must be some particular thing [τόδε γάρ τι δεῖ τῆν οὐσίαν εἶναι] . . . but it is impossible to apprehend [λαβεῖν] [the One] as a particular thing [ὡς τόδε]" (*Enn.* V.5[32].6.5–7). Given that Plotinus uses the term 'being' (*ousia, on*) to designate individual, determinate objects—the forms—the One cannot be a being. If it could, it would not satisfy our why-inquiries. The One is not a being—not an individual entity—but rather, argues Plotinus, the "power of all things [τὸ δὲ δύναμις πάντων]" (*Enn.* V.3[49].15.32–33). The One is the power that explains why the forms are the way they are. Or to use language from Plato's *Sophist*: the One is the power that each form has to affect and be affected (cf. *Sph.* 247d8–e4).

Notes

1. All translations of Plato's work in this chapter are my own, in consultation with the translations included in John M. Cooper, ed., *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

2. For this use of the term *dioti* see esp. *Enn*. VI.7[38].2.1–19.

3. 'State of affairs' in this context, and as I will be using the term throughout this chapter, means any arrangement or composition of objects.

4. As Lloyd Gerson points out, Plotinus does not reserve *hypostasis* as a technical term for the One, Intellect, and Soul, but "often speaks of the ὑπόστασις of a variety of things such as wisdom, matter, love, numbers, relations, time, motion, and so on." Gerson, *Plotinus* (London: Routledge, 1994), 3.

5. Cf. Plotinus, *Enn*. II.9[33].1.1–8; VI.9[9].5.29–33; V.5[32].6.6–7; V.3[49].11; V.3[49].13.4–5, 16–30; V.3[49].15.15–18; VI.7[38].38.

6. Plotinus characterizes the One as the *dunamis* of all things not only in *Enn*. V.3[49].15, but also at *Enn*. III.8[30].10.1; IV.8[6].6.11–16; V.1[21].7.9–10; V.3[49].16.2; V.4[7].1.24–25, 36; V.4[7].2.38; V.5[32].12.38–39; VI.7[38].32.31; VI.7[38].40.13–14; VI.8[39].9.45; VI.9[9].5.36. In *Enn*. V.3[49].15, Plotinus makes it clear that in claiming that the One is *dunamis*, he does not mean *dunamis* in the sense of Aristotelian 'potency.' Rather, the One is a *dunamis* causally prior to the actuality of form. Cf. Gerson, *Plotinus*, 35–36.

7. Cf. Plotinus, *Enn*. III.8[30].8; V.1[10].7; VI.7[38].15–16.

8. All translations of the *Enneads* are my own, in consultation with Armstrong's translation: Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. A. H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library 440–445, 468 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966–1988).

9. See *Enn*. V.3[49].15.18–21; V.5[32].1.41ff.; VI.7[38].2.30ff.

10. Cf. Aristotle, *Met*. V.1024a1–10.

11. Cf. Gerson, *Plotinus*, 48ff.

12. Cf. Plotinus, *Enn*. V.3[49].15.18–21; V.5[32].1.41ff.; VI.7[38].2.30ff.

13. Aristotle, *Met*. VII.1039a11–14; VIII.1044a3–5, 1045a7–12; XIII.1084b5ff.; cf. *Cat*. 4b20–5a37; *Phys*. IV.224a2–15; cf. Myles Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1990), 205–209; Verity Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 44ff.

14. This description is not exhaustive. Cf. Plato, *Tht*. 204b10–c2; Mitchell Miller, "Unity and Logos: A Reading of *Theaetetus* 201c–210a," *Ancient Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (1992): 94.

15. Cf. Jacob Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968), 46.

16. Cf. Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes*, 158–167; Lloyd P. Gerson, *Plotinus Ennead V.5: That the Intelligibles Are Not External to the Intellect, and on the Good* (Las Vegas: Parmenides, 2013), 125.

17. Cf. Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes*, 21–25.

18. Cf. Plotinus, *Enn*. V.3[49].11, 16–30; V.3[49].13, 4–5; V.3[49].15, 15–18; VI.7[38].38.

19. It should be noted that the One is only a principle in relation to what emanates from it. Since there is, however, no necessity that anything emanates from the One, the One is not essentially a principle. Hence Plotinus explicitly states in *Enn*. VI.8[39].8.8–9 that the One "is himself the principle (ἀρχή) of these [that emanate from him]; yet, also in another way not their principle." Cf. John Bussanich, "Plotinus' Metaphysics of the One," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 45.

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