

The Platonic Parmenides and Imitation in Plotinus

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The language of imitation is for Plotinus the greatest and most satisfactory mode of metaphysical discourse. With this tool he seeks to show that the many problems which surround his proclamation of transcendence admit of a common solution. These problems, which are very much still with those who would assert a metaphysical dimension in our lives, receive their classical form in the *Parmenides* of Plato. Of particular interest to the discussion of imitation in Plotinus are the introductory arguments of that dialogue.

The metaphysical uses of the language of imitation may find their origin in problems of negation. We are, for example, more likely to respond to primary questions about the nature of God by saying "not like" than by saying "like". Why do we not see God? Because he is a spirit, invisible. How can He be present everywhere and not be divided among the things to which He is present? Because, as a spirit, He is immaterial and hence indivisible. We may well ask, in the presence of such statements, whether "God" or "spirit", since they are described only by negation, exist at all.

Often analogies which are cast in positive form may be shown to be negative in content, so that "like" means, in fact, "not like". Such an example occurs in the analysis which Plotinus presents of the analogy offered by Socrates in the first argument of Socrates with Parmenides in the *Parmenides* of Plato.

In the "day and sail" argument (*Parmenides* 130E5-131E7) an examination is made of the language of participation¹ which Plato uses in the middle dialogues to discuss the relation between Form and particular. Socrates argues that the Form (of Largeness) is present to the many (large) particulars which participate in it as day may be present to two or more places at once. Socrates then accepts Parmenides' substitution of the image of a sail which is extended over the heads of many sailors for his own analogy of day. On the analogy of the sail, Form, it is agreed, must be divided among the particulars even as only a part and not the whole sail is present to each sailor.

It has been suggested by modern critics² that Socrates is deceived

1. Cf. *Phaedo* 101C; 102B; *Symposium* 211B; *Republic* 476D.

2. A. L. Peck, "Plato versus Parmenides", *PR* 71 (1962) pp. 159-184; K.-H. Volkmann-Schluck, "Das Wesen der Idee in Platons *Parmenides*", *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 69 (1961) pp. 34-45; J. M. Rist, "The Immanence and Transcendence of the Platonic Form", *Philologus* 108 (1964) pp. 217-232.

by Parmenides' substitution of analogy. Day, which unlike the sail is immaterial, would be indivisible. It is suggested that Plato intends the reader to see this and to conclude that it is not Socrates' argument, but his youthful naivety, which is overcome by the old and clever dean of Eleatic ontologists.

Plotinus would agree with this opinion. He poses the question (6.4 (22).7-8) how the hypostasis of Soul can be present to a multiplicity of particulars in the sensible world and yet retain its unity and identity? The images which he employs are remarkably similar to the "day" analogy; the vocabulary of division into parts is also similar.³ It is also obvious that Plotinus intends by his qualification of imagery to overcome the difficulties posed by Parmenides in this argument. A hand may exert force throughout a plank while the hand is not itself divided and distributed throughout the plank. Now let us imagine that the corporeal mass of the hand has been withdrawn and that the force remains and still exerts its influence over the plank. For the sake of the analogy, the corporeal mass of the hand is irrelevant. It is to the force exerted by the hand, not to the corporeal bulk of the hand, that the Soul is compared. Like this force the Soul may exert its influence in the sensible world without suffering a consequent division into parts.

Plotinus draws a further analogy in 6.4 (22).7. He asks us to imagine a small, luminous mass placed in the centre of a concentric sphere. The luminous mass will illumine the circumference of the sphere and yet it will remain the same one luminous mass. He asks us to imagine further that the corporeal mass of the small body which illumines the sphere has been withdrawn. It was not *qua* body, but *qua* luminous body that it shed light. The corporeal mass of the luminous body is therefore irrelevant to the analogy. We cannot, upon the removal of the body, say where the light is located;

3. The argument which is presented in this text should not lead in the direction of pantheism as is maintained by A. H. Armstrong in his early article, "Emanation in Plotinus", *Mind* 46 (1937) pp. 61-66; cf. Armstrong, *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Cambridge 1940) p. 60 and *contra* R. Ferwerda, *La Signification des Images et des Métaphores dans la Pensée de Plotin* (Groningen 1965) p. 59; for a correction of his earlier views cf. Armstrong, "Plotinus", *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Mediaeval Philosophy*, ed. Armstrong (Cambridge 1967) pp. 254-255. The dependence of 6.4.7 and 6.4.8 on the "day and sail" argument of the *Parmenides* is discussed by E. Bréhier in the *Notice* to 6.4, pp. 164-168 in his Budé edition of Plotinus, also by H.-R. Schwyzer, "Die zweifache Sicht in der Philosophie Plotins", *Museum Helveticum* 1 (1944) pp. 93-94; for the vocabulary of division cf. the occurrences of μέρος and μερίζειν in Plato *Parmenides* 130E5-131E7 and Plotinus 6.4 (22).7-8.

it is everywhere present, yet we need not say that it has lost its unity and identity.⁴

In these analogies Plotinus qualifies his imagery to show that the plank and the luminous mass are not to be considered as material or corporeal. He does this to obviate the dangers which the language of participation presents to the unity and identity of the hypostasis of Soul. *Mutatis mutandis* he is addressing the problem of Socrates in the "day and sail" argument and is avoiding the kind of substitution which would render the Form corporeal and therefore divisible among the particulars.⁵

If Plotinus is interested in the analogy of day, he turns to it, not for what day is, but for what it is not. It is not corporeal and hence it is indivisible. To say that Form is like day is to make a statement which is positive in form. On closer examination we may see that it is negative in content. If Form is described entirely by means of negation, we may well ask whether it admits only of negative predication? Plotinus speaks (3.8. (30).10) of the emanation of all things from the One. The One is not divided among the things to which it stands as cause. The spring is not lost and divided among the streams which proceed from it; the root is not lost and divided in the parts of the plant. Again the content of the analogies is negative. The spring is not the streams and the root is not the plant, though each acts as cause. The One is not the things which proceed from it. We also see that in the analogies the term of comparison opposed to the One is in each case the most powerful and august component: The one spring in the complex of spring and streams; the one root in the plant. This much in the analogies is positive in form. Then doubt ensues (26-31):

But if we take the One of the beings which truly exist, their origin and source and productive power, shall we lose faith and suspect

4. That with his image of light Plotinus is thinking of the "day" analogy of the *Parmenides* may be further proven by his statement about the One at 6.9 (9).4.10-11: "Everything that is beautiful is after that principle and from that principle, as all the light of day is from the sun". Here the image of daylight is employed to show the presence of the One to its sequents even as in the *Parmenides* the image of day is employed to show the presence of Form to the particulars. It would appear that Plotinus understands by "day", not a temporal unit, but daylight.

5. In 6.4 (22).8.19 ff. it is argued that Largeness in the Soul is indivisible as the Soul has not largeness. Obviously here Plotinus is thinking of the Form of Largeness in *Parmenides* 131E8-132B1; for the language of participation cf. 6.4 (22). 38-45; J. M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche: Studies in Plato, Plotinus and Origen* (Toronto 1964) pp. 59-60 argues that the "day and sail" argument may have influenced Plotinus (2.4 (12).9) in his reluctance to allow self-predication of the Form of Largeness.

that it is nothing? Indeed it is no one of the things of which it is the source in the sense that as nothing may be predicated of it, neither being, nor substance, nor life, it is that which is superior to all these things.

The real content of the analogies is negative. Negation is used to deny to the One divisibility among its products. The doubt arises whether negative description is sufficient. Plotinus wishes to say that it is not a thing. Yet what is it? The definition of the Form as immaterial or incorporeal may well avoid the problems posed by the language of participation. Such a definition is, however, cast in negative terms: The Form is *not* material or corporeal. We require a positive content for this definition.

The word "like", then, may be used in analogies which are positive in form, but negative in content. The use of such language may lead us to doubt the very existence of what we are talking about. Plotinus thus sees deeper problems in the use of the "day" analogy than do either Socrates or Parmenides in the Platonic dialogue. He treats that argument, not as refuting Socrates, but as stating an *aporia*, a problem which surrounds it. It is typical of his Platonism to pursue that difficulty to its limits.

The first four of the introductory arguments between Socrates and Parmenides in the Platonic *Parmenides* are (1) the "day and sail" argument (130E5-131E7); (2) the "third man" argument (131E8-132B1); (3) the argument that Form is a thought (132B3-C11) and (4) the "copy-likeness" argument (132C12-133A4). All of these may be interpreted by Plotinus as involving the problems of likeness, even if only the "copy-likeness" argument is ostensibly the argument which treats of this matter directly.

These four arguments reveal a common design. They admit of a common refutation. All are turned back through a proper understanding of imitation. The language of likeness carries with it the danger that the Form will be confused with the particulars which are said to be like it. The word "like" is ambiguous. It may describe the symmetrical relation of similarity, or the asymmetrical relation of copy-likeness or imitation. If the relation is one of similarity, then the Form must be like the particular even as the particular is like the Form. This common similarity must then be explained by positing the existence of yet another Form to explain the relation of similarity between them. This process may be carried to infinite regress.

It may be replied that, if "like" be used in the sense of imitation, since the relation is now asymmetrical, infinite regress may be obviated. The particular is like the Form, but the Form is not, in this sense, like the particular. A major question, however, remains. It

cannot be denied that similarity prevails between pattern and copy. How then does imitation differ from ordinary similarity? What new feature will render it asymmetrical in such a way that infinite regress will be avoided?

For Plotinus the answer lies in the realm of epistemology. Imitation is a pattern of association. In the *Phaedo* 72E it is contended that all our learning is really recollection. A lover is reminded of his beloved when he sees his lyre or his cloak. When we see Simmias, we recall Cebes. When we see a picture of Simmias, we recollect Simmias (73DE).

In the case of the lyre or cloak and the beloved, recollection depends upon association. When we see the one we think of the other. In the case of the picture of Simmias and Simmias himself recollection involves both association and similarity. Our recollection of Form is of this second type. Thus when we see imperfect examples of equality in sticks which only appear to be equal (in that they resemble and approximate the equality of the Form), we recollect the perfect equality of the Form of Equality (*Phaedo* 74DE).

Association is a relationship which embraces priority and posteriority. When Cebes sees the cloak or lyre of his beloved, he recollects his beloved. He knew his beloved first. He interprets the cloak or lyre after that prior knowledge. Association and hermeneutical reflection follow an asymmetrical pattern of relation. (He could, of course, interpret the beloved by his possession of a cloak or lyre, but this is not what is at issue here). The introduction of similarity does not upset the asymmetrical character of this relation. While the cloak or lyre are not like the beloved, his picture is. What renders the relation between the beloved and his picture one of imitation is not similarity, but association and interpretation.

Time need not in itself be crucial to this relation. In the *Phaedo* 75AB knowledge of Form is ante-natal and spiritual and thus precedes the sensible apprehension of particulars. Reflection upon the importance of association and interpretation will reveal that the temporal separation is not what is vital to this argument. Cebes could see the cloak or lyre and his beloved at the same time and yet interpret his belongings after his knowledge of him. The same may be true of Simmias and his picture.

Plotinus interprets (4.3 (27).25) recollection of Form in such a way that in the pattern of such recollection the priority of knowledge of Form to apprehension of particulars would not be merely temporal. Recollection would involve two states of consciousness, one addressed to Form, the other to particulars. That kind of consciousness which is addressed to the Form would be latent in the consciousness which is addressed to particulars. Recollection would occur as the

soul's potential consciousness of Form is realized in act.⁶

Imitation involves association and interpretation of sensible particulars after the knowledge of Form which is prior to the sensible apprehension of particulars in as much as it requires a different and superior form of consciousness addressed to a superior object. It is for this reason that the same people may look at the same painting and some will interpret it after the intelligible model and experience love of the true model while others will see it as a mere likeness of a sensible model (2.9(33).16.43-48).⁷

The four introductory arguments of the *Parmenides* under consideration present the appearance of refuting Socrates by the success of Parmenides in each argument. There may be, however, another reason for this effect. The succession of the arguments is so designed that elements which are vital to the proper understanding of imitation are separated from each other and thus suppressed.

What is suppressed particularly is the pattern of association, recollection and interpretation which lie within the epistemological considerations vital to an understanding of imitation. The "day and sail" argument (130E5-131E7) is exclusively ontological and suppresses the distinction drawn in the earlier conversation of Socrates with Zeno (130A1-2) between the particulars as the things which are seen and the Forms as the objects which are apprehended by reasoning.⁸

The "third man" argument (131E8-132B1) removes important epistemological distinctions from consideration.⁹ The distinction

6. As P. Merlan remarks, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metaconsciousness* (The Hague 1963) p. 76, note 2:

When Plotinus speaks of the timeless *anamnēsis* he seems to mean that the condition of this kind of remembering should not be expressed by the formula "I remember the ideas I once saw", but by another, *viz.* "I am conscious of seeing the ideas which I have always seen, though unconsciously."

It does not appear necessary to follow Merlan in omitting the *καὶ* in line 32 (as does Harder in his translation). Without excluding this conjunction we may yet take *anamnēsis* as defining the peculiar sense of *mnēmē* which is here intended; cf. further 4.4 (28).5.1-11 and *loc. cit.* and Merlan *ibid.* pp. 58, 76; cf. 5.9 (5).5.29-34 for *anamnēsis* as directed to Forms as incorporeal objects.

7. For the Plotinian theory of art as the imitation, not of sensible, but of intelligible reality *v.* A. N. M. Rich, "Plotinus and the theory of artistic imitation", *Mnemosyne* s.4, 13 (1960) pp. 233-239.

8. Cf. A. L. Peck, "Plato versus Parmenides" *cit.* note 2 above, p. 174.

9. *Ibid.* pp. 159-174. We shall for our present purposes ignore the voluminous literature which follows upon G. Vlastos, "The Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*", *PR* 63 (1954) pp. 319-349. What is of interest here is that Plotinus anticipates the minority modern reaction to Vlastos'

between the manner in which Form and particular are apprehended is erased. Parmenides begins by using the verb "to see" both of Forms and particulars and then further misleads Socrates by gradually substituting intransitive verbs of appearance lest the distinction between sight and intellectual apprehension should again suggest itself.¹⁰

In the argument that Form is a thought (132B3-132C11) epistemological considerations are finally expunged. Socrates had argued, as we have seen, for a distinction between Forms as objects apprehended by reasoning from particulars as things which are seen. Here Parmenides plays upon the ambiguity of the Greek word *noēma* which may mean either "thought" or "object of thought". If the Form is a thought, then it must be a thought of something, i.e. yet another Form which in turn will be a thought in the sense of thought of something, so that we advance to infinite regress. This argument has two functions within the structure of the four introductory arguments under consideration, apart from its own merits. It utterly removes epistemology from the discussion of the ensuing copy-likeness argument. Also, by separating the copy-likeness argument from the "third man" argument it removes consideration of imitation from the "third man" argument.¹¹

In the copy-likeness argument (132C12-133A4), Parmenides succeeds by playing upon the ambiguity of the word "like". If the Form is like the particular as the particular is like the Form, then we must posit the existence of yet another Form to explain the similarity between Form and particular. This distinction between pattern (*paradeigma*) and copy (*homoioōma*) drawn by Socrates is obliterated by the use of "like" (*homoios*) in the restricted sense of "similar" to the exclusion of "imitating" or "copying".¹² We have been carefully prepared for this by the erasure of the epistemological considerations which are vital to the understanding of imitation.

Plotinus (1.2 (19.1) interprets the imitation of God in Plato *Theaetetus* 176B. We imitate God with our virtues. It does not follow from this, however, that our virtue is the same as God's virtue. Indeed there is reason to believe that this is not the case. For

position, cf. the selection of studies cited in note 2 above. The reaction of Aristotle and the Peripatetic tradition to the introductory arguments of the *Parmenides* is reviewed by Rist in "The Immanence etc." *cit.* above note 2.

10. "See" (δρᾶν) 132A7; "seem" (δοκεῖν) 132A2; "appear" (φαίνεσθαι) 132A7,8. The verb ἀναφαίνεσθαι (132A10) may be ironically oracular, cf. Homer *Il.* I.87.

11. Cf. A. L. Peck, "Plato versus Parmenides" *cit.* above note 2, pp. 174-177; 181-184.

12. *Ibid.* pp. 177-179

example, our courage is a response to external danger. Temperance consists in making our passions conform to reason. These can scarcely be the moral tasks of divinity. When we say that God's virtue is not our virtue, do we deny that it is virtue at all? Here we are again in the presence of the difficulties of negative predication with which we began this enquiry.

In answering this question (1.2 (19).2) Plotinus offers a refutation of the copy-likeness argument.¹³ He distinguishes two senses of

13. E. Bréhier has noticed the dependence of 1.2 (19).2 on Plato *Parmenides*, cf. the *Notice* t. 1.2.2. in his Budé edition of Plotinus. P. Aubin, "L' 'Image' dans l'oeuvre de Plotin", *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses* 41 (1953) p. 371, remarks on a "ressemblance — à sens unique" in this passage, but does not notice its dependence on the *Parmenides*. He curiously seems to confine the "sens unique" to the relation between the One and Nous, although there is no justification for this statement in 1.2 and wishes to refer it to the "expérience mystique sous-jacente à tout l'intellectualisme plotinien" (p. 372), rather than to examine the logic of the relation of image to original in this passage; cf. note 19 below. R. Ferwerda, *op. cit.* above note 3, pp. 6-7 employs this text to demonstrate that the use of images borrowed from the world of sense, while necessary to Plotinus' description of intelligible reality, cannot bridge the gulf between these realms. A precise philosophical discourse which would describe the intelligible may not be constructed upon their use. Of imitation in 1.2 (19).2.4-10 Ferwerda remarks (p. 7): "ce second type de ressemblance n'exige pas la présence d'un élément différent, puisque la ressemblance s'est opérée de la deuxième manière". He argues that, if there is to be a scientific discourse about intelligible reality on the basis of images borrowed from the world of sense, the relation of imitation would have to allow for some element in common between them. It will be argued here that the relation of imitation does not exclude, but rather embraces the relation of similarity, so that it would be incorrect to deny that, in the relation of imitation, the presence of a common element is excluded. Ferwerda argues further (p. 7, note 1) that Plotinus' statements to the effect that the intelligible is designated by attributes from the sensible world only by equivocation (3.6 (26).17-25; 6.7 (38).18. 36) would preclude exact philosophical discourse on the basis of a language of images; cf. K. Wurm, *Substanz und Qualität. Ein Beitrag zur Interpretation der plotinischen Traktate VI.1.2. und 3* (Berlin and New York 1973) pp. 150-151 for similar conclusions on the basis of equivocation in Plotinus. Wurm argues that an attribute may be predicated of intelligible and sensible reality only by equivocation (in the sense of Aristotle *Cat.* 1A3-4; *Met.* 991A5-8). (For the same view cf. G. Nebel, *Plotins Kategorien der Intelligiblen Welt* (Tübingen 1929) pp. 6-8). Plotinus says of sensible reality (6.3 (44).1.20-21) that, with reference to the intelligible world, it is "equivocal and an image" (ὁμώνυμος καὶ εἰκών) (cf. Harder's translation). Wurm incorrectly observes (p. 150) that here equivocation is "auf beide Formen des Seins bezogen". Rather we have here a special Plotinian sense of equivocation employed within the framework of his understanding of imitation. Sensible reality as image may have predicated of it the same attribute predicated of intelligible reality, but it is predicated of it *qua*

"likeness" (*homoioōsis*): (1) the symmetrical relation of similarity and (2) the asymmetrical (οὐκ ἀντιστρέφον, 1.2.2.7) relation of imitation. In the second, the relation prevails between an archetype (*archetypos*) and an imitation (*mimema*) (1.2.2.3).

Plotinus draws the same distinction in 1.2 (19).7.27:

It is they (*sc.* the gods), not men, who are the objects of our imitation (*homoiosis*); likeness among men is the resemblance of

image. That is to say that the attribute belongs *proprio sensu* to the original. It will be objected that sensible attributes are said to be predicated of the intelligible only by equivocation. Here Plotinus approaches the same problem from the other end. The intelligible does not admit the failure of the image, which is its appearance, to be the original. If the attribute is understood to be that which belongs in a derivative sense to the image, then the original does not have that attribute in its derivative sense. Plotinus' statements (6.3 (44).1.6-7; 13.5-6) to the effect that we may use the same predicates of intelligible and sensible reality by "equivocation and analogy" are also to be understood within this framework of interpretation. Οὐσία cannot be a common genus for sensible and intelligible reality because they bear the relation of prior and posterior. They therefore cannot, in Aristotelian terms (cf. *Cat.* 14B33) admit of a common genus (cf. Wurm p. 151). In describing the chain of reality which extends to the world of sense, Plotinus says that each superior link stands to its inferior as prior to posterior (5.2 (11).2.3.26-31). This reverses the Aristotelian order in which, as Blumenthal comments, the "lower faculties are always present if the higher ones are, and exemplify the different approaches of the two philosophers: Plotinus in discussing any part of his world tends to look down on it from above" (cf. H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology, his Doctrines of the Embodied Soul* (The Hague 1971) p. 25, note 19 and my dissertation, *The Doctrine of Presence in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Toronto 1970) p. 212. In 1.4 (56).3 it is argued that the term "life" is not to be used synonymously (line 3) of the links in the chain of life which extends from the Good to irrational creatures in the world of sense. Because it is predicated of terms which are prior and posterior it cannot be generic (lines 16-18). Therefore it is employed by equivocation (ὁμωνύμως, line 20). The same term will bear different senses as each phase is an image of the phase which is prior to it (18-24). From this we may see that "equivocation" in Plotinus may bear the special sense of predicating the same attribute in proportional analogy of original and image arranged in the order of prior and posterior. (G. Nebel, "Terminologische Untersuchungen zu ΟΥΣΙΑ und ON bei Plotin", *Hermes* 65 (1930) p. 132 is obviously incorrect in taking the conjunction in κατ' ἀναλογίαν καὶ ὁμωνύμως, 6.3 (44). 5.3 as disjunctive). Predication by equivocation (in this special sense) does not, if our argument about the nature of imitation is correct, imply that intelligible reality is wholly other or that the use of images by Plotinus cannot be adequate to the uses of a scientific ontology. For these reasons Ferwerda should not succeed (pp. 6-7) in his polemic against W. Beierwaltes, "Die Metaphysik des Lichtes in der Philosophie Plotins", *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung* 15 (1961) pp. 344-362. It is my intention to explore the problems of equivocation and analogy in Plotinus at greater length in another study.

one image to another when both images are drawn from the same source, but the other kind of likeness is imitation directed toward yet another object beyond them both as a pattern (*paradeigma*).

Here Plotinus uses the word of Socrates in the *Parmenides* 132 D2, "pattern" (*paradeigma*) to describe the Form.

In 1.2. (19).3 epistemological considerations are shown to lie at the root of Plotinus' understanding of imitation. The imitation by which, in the *Theaetetus*, we are called upon to imitate God is possible to us only if we use the intellect which apprehends Form to cease the thinking of bodily sensation. The language used here to describe the association of the soul with the body and how this prevents ascent to the intelligible world is reminiscent of the *Phaedo*. The soul is "kneaded in with" (συμπεφυρμένη) the evil of the body.¹⁴ It "shares the opinion of" (συνδοξάζουσα) the body¹⁵ and this prevents it from apprehending Form. It is apparent that if man is to become like or imitate God he must apprehend the object of his imitation as an intelligible pattern. This kind of apprehension is distinguished from sense perception which perceives similarity among particulars.

We may see that in Plotinus' refutation of the copy-likeness argument, he refutes other introductory arguments in the *Parmenides* with one blow. Not only is the vital distinction between similarity and imitation introduced, but he insists upon the epistemological considerations vital to a proper understanding of imitation. In our subsequent examination we shall see yet further examples of how Plotinus presents a common refutation to these arguments.

It is to be observed as well that, on the basis of his refutation of the copy-likeness argument, Plotinus is capable of avoiding some difficulties of negative theological statements of the kind which we observed at the beginning of this paper. When we say that God does not have the virtue of man, we deny Him only the imitation of His own virtue which is instantiated in man.

We may in Plotinus distinguish between attributes of similarity and attributes of imitation. This distinction may best be approached through illustration. Jane and her portrait share many attributes in common. Jane has curly blonde hair, blue eyes and an aquiline nose. The curly blonde hair is represented in the painting by curved lines and daubs of a certain shade of yellow paint; the aquiline nose is represented by a straight line; the eyes by oval shapes and blue

14. Cf. 1.2 (19).3.13 and *Phaedo* 66B5.

15. Cf. *Phaedo* 83D7: ὁμοδοξεῖν τῷ σώματι; cf. also Plotinus *ad loc.* line 13: ὁμοπαθῆς and Plato *loc. cit.* line 8: ὁμότροπος καὶ ὁμότροφος.

paint. Jane's nose and the representation of that nose in the painting share straightness in common. Her hair shares colour and curves with the representation. Her eyes oval shape and colour. Between these attributes of similarity in Jane and her portrait, the relation is symmetrical. An attribute of similarity is held truly both by the original and by the image.

There are also important differences between Jane and her portrait. Jane really has a nose. The portrait has only the appearance of a nose. When we speak, not of "straight", but of "nose", this attribute may be called an attribute of imitation. An attribute of imitation is one which is held truly in the original or model, but is only represented in the image. Jane really has hair, eyes and a nose; these are only represented in the portrait.

Recognition of the attributes of imitation embodied in the attributes of similarity upon the canvas requires a knowledge of the original. To recognize Jane in the portrait we must know Jane. To make any sense of the portrait, we would need to know at least woman, or human being.

In the system of Plotinus each hypostasis images the hypostasis superior to itself.¹⁶ This principle is applied to the entire cosmos which consists of a descending order of beings in which each stands to its superior in the relation of image to original.¹⁷ For this reason the distinctions between pattern and copy, or image and original which are used to describe the relation between Form and particular have a wide application. Thus in a discussion of these distinctions in Plotinus it is not possible to confine them simply to Form and particular.

In the general treatment of this subject above it was contended that attributes of similarity (as distinct from attributes of imitation) are to be found alike in both the original and the image. In 5.1 (10).6.30-35 Plotinus argues:

All true beings, as long as they remain what they are, give forth from the power which is present to them an hypostasis which is dependent upon them, an image, as it were, of the archetypes from which they descend: Fire gives forth heat from itself and snow does not contain the cold alone within itself.

There are attributes shared alike by the original and the image. Original and image are in a sense similar. Snow is cold and a person whom it has made cold are really cold. Fire is hot and anyone warmed by the fire is hot. Cold is an attribute truly contained in both snow and objects which it has rendered cold and heat is truly

16. 5.1 (10).6.30-34.

17. 2.3 (52).18.16-17.

present both in the fire and in the things which it was warmed.

In 5.1 (10).7.1-5 Plotinus contends:¹⁸

We say that Nous is an image of the One; we must speak more clearly: First that which comes into being [*sc.* Nous] must in some sense be that principle [*sc.* the One] and preserve many of its attributes and be a likeness of it as the light in its relation to the sun. But the One is not Nous.

There is light in the sun and there is light which proceeds from the sun, just as in 5.1 (10).6 there is cold in the snow which proceeds from the snow and heat in the fire which proceeds from the fire. To have cold, or heat, or light, is to resemble the snow, the fire, or the sun. This is to share with these things an attribute of similarity. Yet for an image to resemble, in the sense of sharing an attribute of similarity, does not mean that it will be confused with the original, the object of imitation. The cold is not the snow, the heat is not the fire, the light is not the sun. Although Nous which imitates the One shares attributes of similarity with the One, the One is not Nous and Nous is not the One.¹⁹

18. With Henry and Schwyzer I believe it makes perfect sense to read with the MSS. *ἐκεῖνο* in line 2 and to take this as the predicate of a sentence of which *τὸ γενόμενον* is the subject; *ἐκεῖνο* refers to the One and *τὸ γενόμενον* refers to Nous (Vitringa and Volkmann emend *ἐκεῖνο* to *ἐκείνου*).

19. Cf. 5.6 (24).4.14 ff. P. Aubin, "L' 'Image' dans l'oeuvre de Plotin", *cit.* above note 13, pp. 366-367, contends that, while indeed the relation of image to original prevails between the Soul and Nous, we may not with any assurance say that this relation exists between Nous and the One. The texts which Aubin adduces to show how Plotinus qualifies his appeal to the relation of original and image when speaking of the One in its relation to Nous are not convincing of his thesis. In 6.8 (39).18.26-27 Plotinus speaks of the One as *τὸ οἶον ἰνδάλματος αὐτοῦ ἀρχέτυπον, ἐν ἐνὶ νοῦν* ("what is, as it were, the archetype of its own image, Nous in the One"). Aubin takes the word *οἶον* ("as it were") to qualify the relation of image and original which might be said to prevail between these hypostases. In lines 21-22 Plotinus speaks of Nous as bearing witness to *τὸν οἶον ἐν ἐνὶ νοῦν οὐ νοῦν ὄντα* ("the, as it were, Nous in the One which is not Nous"). By this is meant that the characteristics of Nous are contained in the One in a mode appropriate to the simplicity of the supreme hypostasis as original. The qualifying *οἶον* ("as it were") here is applied, not to the relation of original and image, but to the manner in which Nous is contained *per eminentiam* in the One. Henry and Schwyzer properly refer the words *ἐν ἐνὶ νοῦν* ("Nous in the One") in line 27 to the occurrence of this phrase in line 21. It would seem reasonable to construe (lines 26-27) the words *τὸ — ἀρχέτυπον* ("the archetype") in apposition to the words *ἐν ἐνὶ νοῦν* (Nous in the One") which follow immediately. In this case the qualifying *οἶον* ("as it were") would qualify the whole phrase *τὸ οἶον ἰνδάλματος αὐτοῦ ἀρχέτυπον, ἐν ἐνὶ νοῦν* ("what is, as it were, the

We earlier saw that Plotinus expresses discontent with that use of analogy and negation which would take away with one hand what it gives with the other. We may now observe that no statement, positive or negative, about the original or the image, made in the context of a methodical use of the language of imitation, is negative in the sense that it denies to the original an attribute proper to the original. Nor does such a statement confuse the original with the image. Thus if I say of Jane that she has an aquiline nose, I understand that she has not that mere appearance of aquiline nose which is in her portrait. If I deny that mere appearance to her and say that she is not like her portrait, I do not deny her the true attribute which consists in actually having an aquiline nose. If I say that the portrait has an aquiline nose, I understand that it has only the appearance of an aquiline nose and not the true attribute. If I say of the portrait that it does not have an aquiline nose, I deny to it the true attribute possessed by the original.

In 3.6 (26).13 a sensible object is said to be an image of intelligible Form; the image appears in matter as an image in a mirror. The image in the mirror is not real: It only appears to exist.²⁰ Similarly the image of the Form in matter does not really exist: It only appears to exist. The image of a person who looks into a mirror only lasts as long as he stands before it. The image in the mirror, or the image of Form in matter, is dependent on its archetype for whatever existence it may have. The statement that the image does not truly exist must remain unsatisfactory. For Plotinus, as we shall see, the sensible world may be a realm of appearance, but it is by no means an illusion. We must, to understand his position, enquire more closely into what is meant by the non-being of the image.

In the *Sophist* of Plato the sophist is distinguished from the philosopher on the basis that the former is a creator of false, the

archetype of its own image, Nous in the One'). Thus what is qualified by οἶον ("as it were") is the way in which Nous is contained *per eminentiam* in the One and not the relation of original and image as it exists between the One and Nous. Aubin also adduces 3.8 (30).11.19 where he sees the word οἶον as qualifying ἔχνοσ ("trace"), so that again the relation of image and original between the One and Nous is qualified. Here Aubin ignores the fact that οἶον here occurs in the construction οἶον — τοιοῦτον. Just as (οἶον) the image of the Good is in Nous, so (τοιοῦτον) must we think of its true archetype if we would advance to the vision of the Good. In 5.1 (10).7.2 Plotinus says that Nous must "in some way" (πῶς) be the One. Here there is no qualification of the statement that Nous is an image of the One; rather, the qualification is addressed to the statement that Nous is the One and this reservation is resolved in the relation of image to original. 20. 3.6 (26).13.51: φαίνεται δὲ εἶναι; actually the mirror itself has a greater reality than does matter, as it is itself informed matter and may be seen in itself, cf. note 23 below.

latter a creator of true images of reality in words.²¹ In that dialogue Plato wrestles with a sophistic attempt to show that false statements are impossible. Suppose it is said that A is not B. The words "is not" are used of A. Therefore non-being (τὸ μὴ ὄν) is predicated of A. Non-being does not exist. It is impossible then to say that-which-is-not (τὸ μὴ ὄν) if it does not exist. Since it is impossible to say that-which-is-not, there can be no false statement. The Eleatic Visitor contends that this argument makes false use of truncated logic. In the above statement (A is not B) we do not mean that A is not (in an existential sense of the verb "to be"); rather we mean that A is other-than-B (τοῦ ὄντος—ἕτερου μόνον, *Sophist* 257B4). The verb "to be" functions as a copula. Therefore the further step which would isolate non-being from both subject and predicate may not be taken.²²

The Platonic equation of non-being with otherness is made within the context of logical enquiry: It is not a cosmological formulation. Plotinus adapts this equation to his own uses. It was observed above that the relation of original and image pervades his entire system of being, from the One to the sensible world. He employs this equation in a metaphysical sense within the context of his relation of original and image. In 1.8 (51).3 he maintains that evil is a deprivation of goodness and being. Matter, since it is just such a deprivation, is also the most fundamental kind of evil. It is non-being. This is qualified thus (1.8 (51).3.6-9):

It is not non-being in the sense that it is absolute non-being, but only other-than-being — as an image of being, or rather even less than that.

The phrase "but only other-than-being" is the same used by the Eleatic Visitor in Plato's *Sophist* 257B.

That Plotinus hesitates to allow matter even the being of an image does not affect his essential argument that the equation of non-being with otherness is to be made within the context of the cosmic occurrence of the relation of original to image. Plotinus goes on to say that the whole of the sensible world is an image in this sense (1.8 (51).3.8).²³

21. 235D; 264D; 265B.

22. Cf. A. L. Peck, "Plato and the Μέγιστα Γένη of the *Sophist*, a Reinterpretation", *CQ* n.s. 2 (1952) pp. 32-56; "Plato's *Sophist*: the συμπλοκή τῶν εἰδῶν", *Phronesis* 7 (1962) pp. 46-66.

23. Cf. 3.6 (26).14.4: "For this is the nature of an image, to be in the other". The doctrine that the image is non-being in comparison with the original is also set forth in 3.6 (26).7; here too Plotinus speaks of the ontological inferiority of matter as reflecting substrate to other examples of reflecting media (e.g. mirrors) which may contain images (3.6

The language of otherness is frequently used in conjunction with the language of imitation. In 5.1 (10).6.46-53 Plotinus says that as the Soul is an image of Nous, so is Nous an image of the One. Nothing separates the Soul and Nous but otherness.²⁴ In 6.9(9).8.33-35 he maintains:

The One which has not otherness is always present, but we are present to the One when we have no otherness.

He then proceeds to argue²⁵ that our present life is but a trace or impression of the life of the intelligible world and that our present life imitates that life.²⁶

As we have seen, otherness and non-being are alone on the side of the image. The otherness of the image consists in its failure to possess truly the attributes which it imitates in the original. It may appear to have these attributes, but it does not truly have them (although it may have attributes of similarity in common with the original). Its failure to have these attributes is its non-being. Since the original truly has these attributes, it cannot be other than the image in the sense that it fails to have these attributes, for it truly has them.

(26).7.40-43). The distinction consists partly in the fact that in the case of a mirror image the substrate, the mirror, is already informed matter while matter itself (which reflects Form) is less real than this (3.6 (26).13.38-40). It also consists in the fact that a mirror, simply because we are conscious that it is a mirror, is less deceiving than matter (3.6 (26).13.43 ff.).

24. Cf. 5.1 (10).3: The soul is an image of Nous (line 7) and nothing separates Nous and the soul but otherness (lines 21-23).

25. 6.9 (9).9.15-17.

26. On otherness cf. R. Arnou, "la séparation par simple altérité dans la 'Trinité' Plotinienne", *Gregorianum* 11 (1930) pp. 181-193; G. Huber, *Das Sein und das Absolute* (Basel 1955) p. 83: "Die Transzendenz bezeichnet nicht das Verhältniss des Absoluten zum anderen, wohl aber dessen Verhältniss zu ihm"; for a discussion of otherness as a movement away from the One within the context of procession and the genesis of the hypostases of Nous and Soul cf. J. M. Rist, "The Problem of 'Otherness' in the *Enneads*", *Le Néoplatonisme* (Paris 1971) pp. 77-87; H. R. Schlette, *Das Eine und das Andere. Studien zur Problematik des Negativen in der Metaphysik Plotins* (Munich 1966) p. 87 argues that the positive and the negative as they occur in Nous, Soul and the world of sense are grounded in a "metapositive" and "metanegative" unity of the One which is beyond admitting the identity and difference of its sequents. For a discussion of how evil may exist as a product of the One in the context of Plotinian monism, cf. Schlette *ibid.* pp. 134 ff.; 150 ff.; D. O'Brien, "Plotinus on evil", *Downside Review* 87 (1969) pp. 68-110 and A. H. Armstrong's comments on O'Brien's discussion, "Tradition, Reason and Experience in the Thought of Plotinus", *Plotino e il Neoplatonismo in Oriente e in Occidente* (Rome 1974) p. 189, note 30; cf. further J. M. Rist, "Plotinus and Augustine on Evil" in the same volume pp. 495-508.

This kind of thinking must be present in 6.5 (23).12.19 ff. where the human soul in its descent from the intelligible world is diminished by the addition of non-being in the sense that it becomes other-than-the-intelligible model. It is apparent that the image is not other than the original by possessing some other thing which (in a positive sense) is other than, let alone more than, the original. The image is other than the original by deficiency. This is the sense in which the otherness of the image is an addition of non-being.

It is of importance to observe in this discussion that Plotinus, when he speaks of an image, is not speaking of the substrate (mirror, or water, or matter) in which it may appear. The image *qua* image is distinguished from the substrate in which it occurs. The otherness of the image must then not consist in the peculiar properties of the reflecting surface, but in the failure of the image *qua* image to possess truly the attributes of the original which it imitates.²⁷

When Plato argues in the *Sophist* that non-being is only that-which-is-other-than-being, he is trying to show that it is possible to make a false statement (λόγος ψευδής). If we state the non-being concerning a thing (as opposed to absolute non-being) we are describing that which is other than the being of the thing in question (257B). If I say that Theaetetus is flying I am saying about him that-which-is-not in the sense of that which is other than the truth about Theaetetus (263AB). Yet what is predicated falsely of Theaetetus may be predicated truly of something else, e.g. a bird.

Plotinus argues that the non-being of the image is other-than-the-being of the original. In 3.6 (26).13.31-36 he contends that the image of Form in matter, like an image in a mirror, is false (οὐκ ἀληθινόν, ψεῦδος). What is other-than-being, or false, in this instance of the image, is not, as in the case of the Platonic example, true of something else. It is true of the original. It is an image of the original and if it is mistaken for the original, this appearance is falsity. Its untruth consists in its pretence. It is obvious that any statement which predicates an attribute of imitation of both image and original need not confuse the two. It is not so much that what is true concerning the original is untrue concerning the image: The image is an appearance of the truth of the original. This is to say that in his discussion of imitation Plotinus combines the veridical and existential senses of the verb "to be".

In Jane as model or original, the attributes of imitation are held in the unity of her being. These are imitated by the artist through a

27. In 3.6 (26).13.34 ff. Plotinus insists that when a person looking into a mirror steps away from it his image no longer appears, i.e. the image is ontologically dependent on the original.

reproduction of attributes of similarity. Aquiline nose is analysed and reduced to straight line, curly blonde hair to curved lines and a shade of yellow. In this analysis attributes which are, in the model, held in unity are divided as they are reduced to attributes of similarity. We have a disparate collection of curved and straight lines and shades of colour. These are, however, so arranged that the plurality of attributes present the appearance of unity to anyone who knows the original. The movement of analysis, reduction and division is accompanied by a movement of synthesis into a quasi-unity.

For Plotinus the image is necessarily a representation in multiplicity of what in the original inheres in the unity of its substance. He argues (2.6 (17).1.7-10):

Everything in the intelligible world is substance. Why then is everything in the sensible world not substance too? In the intelligible all is substance because all things are one, but here, because the images are separated, one is one thing, another is another.

The unity of the intelligible world is the unity of an original; the plurality of the world of sense is that of an image. Plotinus maintains further:²⁸

Reality there, when it possesses an individual characteristic of substance, is not qualitative, but when the process of rational thinking separates the distinctive individuality in these realities, not taking it away from the intelligible world but rather grasping it and producing something else, it produces the qualitative as a kind of part of substance, grasping what appears on the surface of the reality.

When the mind analyses intelligible substance into discrete qualities it divides it by treating each individual characteristic as a part of substance. When the mind does this it creates something else by a process of reduction. This something else is an image of substance. The division of the intelligible world of Form into parts creates an image. In this image the individual characteristics which inhere in the unity of substance are rendered discrete. The division of Form into parts is reminiscent of the "day and sail" argument of Plato's *Parmenides*. It is striking that this division may occur within the context of imitation language.

In 6.3 (44).15 it is argued that the entire content of the world of sense is to be conceived as quality in the sense that it bears an adjectival relation to the substance of the intelligible world. Thus while the formal principle of Man may be substance, man in the sensible world will be qualitative and stand to Form in an adjectival

28. 2.6 (17).3.10-20 (tr. A. H. Armstrong).

relationship. This is demonstrated through the relation of a portrait of Socrates to Socrates. The portrait shares attributes of similarity (e.g. colours and shapes) with Socrates. Yet the portrait bears an adjectival relation to the subject. Everything in it describes him, but is not himself. Here the artist must analyse what in Socrates is held in the unity of his substance into discrete attributes of similarity which in their aggregate present an appearance of unity to anyone familiar with the model.²⁹

Plotinus says (5.1 (10).7.1-5) that Nous preserves many attributes of the One and yet the One is not Nous. In the relations of similarity and imitation which prevail between the One and Nous the original is not confused with the image. He compares Nous (6.8 (39). 18) to a circle with the One at its centre. The radii and their limits at the circumference are faint traces and images of the One. Together they are an unfolding of the content of the One in multiplicity. Nous bears witness to what might with caution be called a Nous in the One which is not Nous (μαρτυρεῖν τὸν οἶον ἐν ἐνὶ νοῦν οὐ νοῦν ὄντα).³⁰ This means that the One contains the attributes of similarity which it shares with Nous; in Nous these exist, apart from the substance of the One, in the quasi-unity of the second hypostasis. In the One, however, these are inseparable from the attributes of imitation which are held in the unity of an original of which Nous is the image. Thus the One is said (5.3 (49).15.31 ff.) to possess the attributes of its products in such a way that these attributes are not discrete (ἀλλ' ἄρα οὕτως εἶχεν ὡς μὴ διακεκρίμενα) while in Nous these attributes are discrete (τὰ δ' ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ διεκέκριτο). Nous must be multiple because it has sameness and otherness and quality.³¹ Nous as image of the One has as discrete qualities divorced from substance those individual characteristics which the One as original contains in the unity of its substance.

29. K. Wurm, *op. cit.* above note 13, p. 255 argues that in 2.6 (17) a distinction is drawn between essential and accidental qualities in the world of sense. Essential quality is the act of a form, while accidental quality is separable from substance. He contends that this view is expressly corrected in the later treatises on the categories 6.2 (43) and 6.3 (44), so that the distinction is erased and all qualities are, so to speak, accidental. This argument need not affect our interpretation of the texts presently under consideration. We are here concerned to show that the sensible world is, in comparison with the substance and unity of the intelligible world, a discrete aggregate of attributes of similarity bearing in the context of imitation an adjectival relation to the intelligible world. They are qualities in the sense that they bear this adjectival relation to intelligible substance, whatever their ontological status in the world of sense.

30. 6.8 (39). 18.21-22.

31. 5.3 (49).15.39 ff.

The primary creative act of Nous is not the making of the Soul but the constitution of itself. When Nous beholds the One it beholds it with the eye of an artist. It analyses the attributes of imitation in the One which inhere as individual characteristics in the unity of its substance into attributes of similarity or qualities apart from the substance of the One. While an image in my mind might be something rather insubstantial, in Nous, which is supereminently Mind, such an image is very real indeed. Thought and being in Nous are poised in a unity of mutual implication.³² When Nous analyses and reduces the One to an image, that image of the One is Nous itself.

The thought of Nous is cast in sameness and otherness.³³ It must therefore conceive the relation between itself and the One as one of symmetrical similarity and difference. It does not grasp the relation as that of imitation and the asymmetrical relation of likeness and otherness which that embraces. This statement must be corrected. Nous does not merely conceive the relation between itself and the One as one of symmetrical similarity and difference. In its creative contemplation of the One it *creates* that relation and thereby constitutes itself as the image of the One. As Nous analyses the One as original into the discrete attributes of an image it reduces the substantial unity of individual characteristics in the One to a plurality.³⁴ This conception, this image, which Nous forms of the One, becomes true of itself as it thinks itself *per accidens* in this very act of contemplation.³⁵ Of course in so constituting itself Nous creates a new kind of unity. Nous is not the radical unity of the One but one-and-many.³⁶ Nous as image of the One enjoys a lesser degree of unity.³⁷ The movement of analysis and reduction which divides the

32. The objects of the thought of Nous are not outside its mind: This statement is intended to express the essential unity of being and thought in Nous (5.3 (49).5.44; 5.9 (5). 5.4; 5.9 (5).8.1-7; 5.9 (5).8.1 ff.; 6.2 (43).8.13). The Forms may be described either as objects of thought (*noēta*) or as beings (*onta*) (for the Forms (*eide*, *ideai*) as beings (*onta*) and objects of thought (*noēta*) cf. 5.5 (32).1.20; 5.9 (5).8.12). Being does not exist as an object external to thought (5.5 (32).1-2). Thought is the thought of being and being is the being of thought (5.9 (5).8.12; 6.2 (43). 8.13). Furthermore each object of thought both thinks and is all the other objects of thought; the other objects of thought are not foreign either to its being or to its thought; they are rather involved in the interiority of its own relations (5.5 (32).1.28-43; 5.8 (31).3.30-4.11; 5.9 (5).8.3-7; cf. J. Trouillard, "The Logic of Attribution in Plotinus", *IPQ* 1 (1961) pp. 125-138 for an excellent discussion of this familiar doctrine.

33. 5.3 (49).10.25-26.

34. 5.3 (49).10.29-30; 5.3 (49).10.38-41; 5.3 (49).13.30-31; 6.7 (38).15.20-22.

35. 5.6 (24).5.15-17.

36. 6.7 (38).8.17-18; cf. Plato Parm. 145A: The One discussed in the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* is here interpreted as Nous.

37. 5.6 (24).3.1-9.

unity of the original is complemented by the simultaneous composition of the fresh if less perfect unity of Nous as image.

Language which expresses division into parts is used to describe the way in which Nous constitutes itself as an image of the One. Plotinus describes the contemplation of the One by Nous as a fragmented vision (5.1 (10).7.17-19):

In itself, which is divisible, Nous sees, in a vision which is derived from the One, which is indivisible, life, thought and all things, because the One is none of all these things.

Nous is itself divisible and hence thinks the One in division.³⁸ Nous is said (6.7 (38).15.20-21) to break up the power for creation which it receives from the One so that it may bear it divided into parts. The vocabulary of part and division employed in these passages is again reminiscent of the "day and sail" passage in the *Parmenides*. It is apparent that Plotinus makes a complementary use of the language of likeness and the language of division into parts. His thinking about likeness stems largely from his interpretation of the arguments from infinite regress in the *Parmenides*. While the language of division into parts is derived from the treatment of participation in that dialogue, it is finally shown to have an ineluctable connexion with the language of likeness.

It was argued above that Plotinus insists that epistemological considerations are paramount in our understanding of imitation. Now we can see that in the constitution of the second hypostasis epistemology (in the address of Nous to the One in terms of similarity and division) and ontology (in the self-constitution of Nous as the Forms in imitation of the One) are joined. We may also see that Plotinus, in his doctrine that the Form-thoughts are not outside the Intellect over-comes the argument in the *Parmenides* that Form is a thought.

It would be possible, if space permitted, to demonstrate that the general principles which we discover at work in the Plotinian account of the constitution of Nous apply as well to the constitution of the Soul in relation to Nous and to the creation of the world of sense. We may observe that Plotinus (5.1 (10).6.46-48) says that Soul, which is an image of Nous, looks toward Nous even as Nous looks toward the One that it may be Nous. The principle of imitation is applied to the entire cosmos as an order of descending beings.³⁹

Soul's progressive creation of images as it descends "deceived by

38. In the same chapter Plotinus is speaking of Nous as an image of the One which preserves many of its attributes (5.1 (10).7.1-4.).

39. Cf. p. 14 above and 2.3 (52).18.16-17.

likeness'⁴⁰ proceeds to the infinity of matter in the world of sense.⁴¹ We may recall that in the *Parmenides* new Forms come into appearance as the arguments from infinite regress require them. In the descent of the Soul the new images which come springing into appearance are not higher Forms, but ever inferior expressions of intelligible reality. The Soul, in succumbing, as it were, to the arguments of Parmenides, creates the sensible world of division and likeness.

Man in the world of sense is the last product of Soul's progressive analysis into a descending series of images of the Form of Man in Nous. Man in the sensible world is, significantly, called the "third man" (as in the argument of the "third man" in the *Parmenides* (6.7 (38).6.11-15):

Man in the intelligible world is the man before all men. He shines forth upon the second man and the second man shines forth upon the third.

Plotinus' final reply to the introductory arguments of the *Parmenides* is not just that the Parmenides of the dialogue is mistaken. Rather, in accepting his arguments we participate in the fall of the Soul, the division of Form and the creation of the sensible world. We position ourselves in relation to a fallen splendour.⁴²

When Aristotle discusses the Platonic Forms as cause, he dismisses both the language of participation and the language of imitation as empty metaphor. What is it, he asks, which fashions the particular after the pattern of the Form (*Metaphysics* 991A20-23)? The student of Plato will find it difficult not to answer this question by affirming that it is the Demiurge who makes the particulars after the pattern of the Form.⁴³ This is, of course, precisely what is said in the *Timaeus*, however metaphorically we may wish to interpret the account of creation in that dialogue.⁴⁴ Plotinus makes an abundant use of demiurgic imagery.⁴⁵

The task of showing how the Plotinian interpretation of the *Timaeus* follows his understanding of the *Parmenides* is beyond the

40. 4.6 (41).3.9.

41. 2.4 (12).15.17.

42. Cf. J. Trouillard, "Le 'Parménide' de Platon et son Interprétation Néoplatonicienne", *Études Néoplatoniciennes* (Neuchatel 1973) 9-26 for the view that in Neoplatonism the *Parmenides* is interpreted in such a way that the succession of arguments represents states of the soul in its progress toward mystical union; further, the unfolding of primal unity and of the Forms unto the world is accomplished through the medium of Soul.

43. Cf. J. M. Rist, "The Immanence etc." *cit.* above note 2, p. 225.

44. *Timaeus* 29A; 39E.

45. E.g. Nous as Demiurge: 2.3 (52).18.15; the world-soul as Demiurge: 4.4 (28).9.9.

scope of the present study.⁴⁶ We may remark, however, that *Nous* constitutes itself after the pattern of the One, without the intervention of a Demiurge conceived as an external agent. The Soul similarly constitutes itself after the pattern of *Nous*.

In the *Parmenides* Plato examines deficiencies in the language of participation and likeness which is used in the middle dialogues to describe the relation between Form and particular. We have seen that Plotinus generates a vocabulary of imitation with which he may obviate these difficulties. He does more, however, than this. He develops, on the basis of his careful distinctions concerning similarity and imitation, a method for defining Form in such a way that the difficulties which surround the relation to the particular are met *ab initio*. The problems of the introductory arguments of the *Parmenides* are met through a concentration, not upon relation, but upon definition. The Form is defined in the first instance as immaterial and hence indivisible. It is defined as the primary object of intellective vision and therefore as that with reference to which the copy-likeness of the particulars is known. It is thus not confused with particulars.

Central to the Plotinian theory of imitation is the view that Form is an intrinsically valuable object of intellective vision before it is a cause of being or being known, or a guarantor of moral values (cause of goodness). This may be argued from his insistence that the language of imitation pre-supposes knowledge of the Form as original. It may be supported as well by what appears to be the Plotinian claim to mystical experience.⁴⁷ It is precisely when instrumentality is suspended and Form is regarded as intrinsically valuable that it may be seen how it acts as cause and we may be delivered from the world of fallen particularity and division.

We may further reflect that the series of hypostases in Plotinus' system are not to be viewed as demiurgic links between the One and

46. In the *Timaeus* 35A, where Plato speaks of how the Demiurge created the Soul of the World, Plotinus (4.2 (4).1) discovers four realities: *Nous*, the higher Soul, the Soul as present in the sensible world and the corporeal, cf. H.-R. Schwyzer, "Zu Plotins Interpretation von Platons *Timaeus* 35A" *Rheinisches Museum* 84 (1935) pp. 363-366. The passage is replete with the language of division and indivisibility. The discussion of the indivisible largeness of the Soul (lines 69-76) would show how Plotinus interprets the division of the *Timaeus* after the "day and sail" argument of the *Parmenides*. (P. P. Matter, *Zum Einfluss des Platonischen "Timaios" auf das Denken Plotins* (Winterthur 1964) p. 41 refers, less suitably, to *Parmenides* 129C2 ff.) For the tendency in Plotinus and Neoplatonism generally to interpret the *Timaeus* after the *Parmenides* cf. J. Trouillard, "L'Âme du 'Timée' et l'Un du 'Parménide' ", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 24 (1970) pp. 238-241.

47. 4.8 (6).1 and A. H. Armstrong, "Tradition, Reason and Experience"

sensible reality. Each entity contains its own reason for being and is more than a link in a mechanical chain of causation.

It will remain for another occasion to show how the body of theory set forth in this paper relates to our return to the One as we put away a religious or philosophical view which regards God merely as an explanation rather than as the proper goal as well as the foundation of reason, experience and being.

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cit. above note 26, p. 182. I agree that this text enunciates such a claim, especially since it places Platonic language in the first person; cf. also the witness of 6.9 (11).4 and Armstrong *ibid.*

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