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REVERSAL AND RECOGNITION IN PLATO

Introduction

It has often been remarked with irony that most of modern writing on Plato approaches Plato's thought from an Aristotelian perspective. This seems to be especially true of the modern discussion of the theory of Forms. While one need not altogether deny the possibility of gaining new insight into Plato which such a procedure may afford us, yet we must also realize that it may create some problems also. The approach to Plato by way of the logical, epistemological and metaphysical principles of Aristotle may erect a serious barrier to the understanding of Plato, all the more so, when such principles are implicitly used as part of one's interpretative framework. But, of course, in thus being cautioned against using Aristotle to cast light upon Plato, one need not, as it were, abjure altogether the use of Aristotelian prisms. Perhaps, if we choose different filters, we may be able to gain a different kind of illumination on certain aspects of Plato's thought. At any rate, in the present essay, I propose to use certain ideas of Aristotle's *Poetics* for the purpose of understanding the nature of Platonic inquiry.[1] While I am only too well aware of the limitations of the procedure that I am recommending, yet I believe that it may prove suggestive in certain respects. First and foremost, the basic ideas of Reversal and Recognition that I shall be using, do not pre–judge, *ab initio,* the epistemological and ontological differences between Plato and Aristotle, adversely to the Platonic point of view. On the contrary, the

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background implications and overtones of Reversal and Recognition seem to be more sympathetically tuned to the Platonic sensibility. Secondly, a framework designed for interpreting Art helping us in understanding a philosophical position is not without its own lesson for us, suggesting, as it does, an inner affinity between art and certain aspects of Platonic thought. Thirdly, and as a further specification of the preceding point, such an approach to Plato by way of the aesthetic theory of Aristotle may help us in appreciating the connections between the discursive, argumentative level and the symbolic expressive level in Plato. Particularly in the context of the theory of Forms, such a connective framework may have its own advantages. The epistemological and methodological presuppositions of the standard approaches too often sunder these two levels, thus projecting the Forms as some kind of symbolic imagery. However, the severance of the discursive and the symbolic levels in Plato's discourse may hinder a proper understanding of the complex texture of the Platonic dialogues.

But of course the intention behind the present attempt is not to substitute a symbolic in the place of the logical understanding of Plato; it is not to minimise the discursive and argumentative level in favour of symbol and expression. On the contrary, it is hoped that the present attempt may allow us to return to the argumentation in Plato from a different point of view.

Since the guiding ideas of the present venture are the Aristotelian principles of Reversal and Recognition, in the first section I shall present the Aristotelian doctrine briefly and also indicate in a general sort of way, how the themes of Reversal and Recognition characterise the nature of philosophical inquiry in Plato.

Reversal and Recognition in Aristotle

In *The Poetics,* chapters XI and XII, Aristotle discusses the parts of tragedy in terms of quality (chapter XI) and quantity

(chapter XII). Of the parts of tragedy, from the point of view of quality, he mentions two kinds of action which may be represented in art – simple and complex. A simple action, Aristotle tells us, is one in which there is continuity and unity but without reversal or transformation into the opposite, but in a complex action, there is reversal **(peripateia)** and recognition **(anagnorisis)**.[3] The idea of reversal is introduced in the eleventh chapter as a mutation or transformation of action into a contrary condition. But not any kind of change could be described as reversal but it must be a transition which proceeds with either probability or necessity, from what had gone before.[4] There must, in other words, be a principle of direction implicit in the preceding situation. Secondly, a reversal is a change or transformation into the opposite. The examples that Aristotle mentions suggest two kinds of reversals; firstly, there could be reversal in the sense of the contrary kind of action taking place. The example of the messenger in Oedipus, who comes with the intention of relieving Oedipus, but whose action actually results in his condemnation, is an instance of this.[5] But there could also be a reversal of the agent's character when he is presented as being the contrary of what he first appeared to be. Here the reversal is not merely of action but the perception of the agent himself undergoes a transformation.

The function of Reversal is to facilitate Recognition, which Aristotle describes as a change from ignorance to knowledge or into the friendship or hatred of those destined to be prosperous or adverse fortune.[6] With regard to Recognition, Aristotle is more meticulous and distinguishes six kinds of recognition, from the most external kind having to do with the recognition of inanimate or casual things to the recognition of character, which he regards as the noblest.[7] Recognition of character, again, is distinguished into two kinds– recognition of either one person involved in

the situation by the other or mutual recognition of each other. Aristotle also suggests that recognition may take place with or without reversal but holds that the latter, i.e. recognition with reversal, is the perfect form.[8]

Although he does not explicitly say so, it appears that recognition and reversal are modes of understanding that are available to the spectators of the tragedy. The reason for this conjecture is that Aristotle says the recognition excites pity and fear and the excitement of these emotions and their purgation **(catharsis)** takes place in the spectators.[9] If we hold that this is possible for the spectors, then it would follow that recognition is purely a form of audience response. This would make it a purely aesthetic category. If, on the other hand, it is allowable to talk of the excitement of pity and fear in the characters and not merely in the spectators, then recognition has a locus in the characters also. This possibility is vital to the extension of recognition that I am proposing, for if recognition were to be a purely aesthetic phenomeon, then the possibility of extending it to non-aesthetic, i.e., moral contexts would be ruled out in principle. If on the other hand, it is a mode of understanding that is available to the characters whose actions are imitated in the play, then it is possible for us to extend the use of recognition to real life or existential situations. However, in the present eassy, I shall not directly argue for the permissibility of such an extension. The most that I can do for the present is to suggest that there seems to be nothing in *The Poetics* to forbid such an extension in principle. Hence for the purpose of the present argument I shall presume the possibility of extending both the notions of reversal and recognition to the real contexts of life experiences.

But even granted the logical possibility of such an extension, we still have to show that there is a point in such an extension;

in other words, we must show that the Aristotelian notions of recognition and reversal are fruitful notions in such extended contexts. For this purpose, I shall first expand the notion of reversal as a generalised description of certain specific situations and then try to show how in that kind of situation, the problem of recognition arises. After thus anchoring both recognition and reversal in the structures of life, I shall comment upon the way the problem of recognition structures Plato's inquiry.

Reversal as a Form of Existence: Thucydides on the Pelopennesian War.

Far removed from the concerns of philosophical theorization, in the context of a historical narrative in Thucydides, we have an example of what may be called 'reversal as a form reality'[10]. The location of this in the history of the Pelopennesian War is significant in two ways: first of all, Thucydides gives us a very clear picture of social life which is a paradigmatic illustration to reversal in both the senses that Aristotle had distinguished– reversal of action and reversal of character. Secondly, the situation of disorder brought about by the Pelopennesian War is also the cultural and moral climate of Plato's philosophical investigations. Thucydides' description not only illustrates the extended use of the category but also presents us with an understanding of the spiritual context of the Platonic problem of Recogonition.

Since no mere summary could ever hope to bring out the appropriateness of the category of reversal to the reality being described, we may cite the text of Thucydides somewhat in full.

"Revolution" writes Thucydides, "thus ran its course from city to city and the places in which it arrived at last, from having heard of what had gone before, carried to still greater excess the

refinement of their inventions as manifested in the cunning of their enterprises and the atrocities of their reprisals. Words had to change their ordinary meanings and to take that which was now given to them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation. specious cowardice moderation was held to be a cloak for unmanliness; ablity to see all sides of a question inaptness to act on any. Frantic violence became the attribute of manliness; cautious plotting, a justifiable means of self–defence. The advocate of extreme measures was always trustworthy; his opponent, a man to be suspected. To suceed in a plot was to have a shrewd head, to divine a plot still shrewder, but to provide against having to do either was break up your party and to be afraid of your adversaries ... thus every form of inequity took root in the Hellenic countries by reason of the troubles. The ancient simplicity in which honour so largely entered was laughed down and disappeared and society became divided into camps in which no man trusted his fellow". [11]

The situation described by Thucydides is characterised by a basic perversion of the categories of moral and political judgement. Since all the categories of right and wrong, proper and improper, both for the individual and for societies, were turned upside down, the very meanings of the terms of judgement were perverted. The obliteration of distinctions and their transformation into their opposites, made recognition impossible. In such a situation of reversal, the primary issue becomes : how can one recognise the proper forms or shapes of these criteria of order. It is interesting to note that Thucydides is talking at the semantic level, although the primary object of his concern is social disorder and anomie. This feature of his narrative is important for us to note. However, a proper appreciation of Thucydides' methodology here can be had only if we first reflect

upon the proper relationship between language or discourse and reality, particularly, human reality. There are two pictures or models of this relationship that we must avoid.[12] On the one hand, there is the view that language is merely an expression of facts which are antecedently there and that the function of discourse is to reflect or communicate this antecedently given reality. This may be called the copy theory of discourse, according to which the relationship between discourse and reality (here human action) is extrinsic. On the other hand, there is the idealistic view that discourse creates or brings into being the reality of that which it is about. Neither the picture of extrinsic reflection nor that of intrinsic creation is adequate to comprehend the dialectical relationship between language and action. According to the dialectical conception, the categories of discourse constitute the framework of broad principles within which social and political phenomena are to be comprehended. Discourse presents the meaning-giving framework of action such that a disorder or derangement of the categorial principles is felt not merely at the level of thought but also at the level of action. Not only our understanding of our practices but those practices themselves, are distorted. It is to describe this interlocking of language and social reality that in the text Thucydides takes the semantic turn and describes the transvaluation of meanings and the perversion of the connotations of the terms of discourse.

For a proper understanding of the method of Plato, it is important to emphasise this semantic ascent which we find in Thucydides' account. At the most superficial level, it illumines a certain enigmatic feature of the method of Socrates, what may be called the 'intellectualism' of the Socratic way. By probing the meanings of terms and suggested definitions, Socrates claims to be examining souls. The real object of his concern is the

examination of life and action, but he pursues this aim in a very 'intellectualist' manner by testing definitions and refuting accounts.[13] Later generations have always been somewhat puzzled by this apparent dis–harmony between method and aim in Socrates. The aim, as he himself repeatedly tells us, is the examination of lives but he pursues this aim by means of an examination of words. If we keep in mind the semantic ascent in Thucydides, we may perhaps come to a proper understanding of the Socratic style, for it suggests that a disorder at the level of meanings is constitutive of a disordered existence. In this sense, too, virtue is knowledge.

The concept of reversal also helps us to understand another aspect of the Platonic method. Socrates always asks for examples, whether it is piety as in *Euthyphro*[14] or friendship as in *Lysis*[15] or justice as in *The Republic*.[16] In the course of the inquiry, as one after the other, the proferred instances are examined, found wanting and rejected, we are made to realise that there is a problem of recognition. Even when a suggested instance is not summarily rejected, we are made to feel a certain uneasiness about it. The difficulty in recognising an instance or an example may be felt as due to some kind of trickery on the part of Socrates. Not merely we, the on–lookers, but sometimes even the protagonists get this impression. Meno, for example, likens Socrates to the stinging ray fish that can numb and deaden its prey.[17] In a domain of settled discourse, where the meaning of the basic terms are not in dispute, recognition of an instance or an example does not pose any such threat or problem. But in a situation like the one described by Thucydides, the disorder of discourse paralyses recognition. In this predicament, individual instances and examples do not help; we must turn the axis of our inquiry all the way round from the particular instances to the forms.

Aristotle has said that induction and example may be attributed to Socrates but the turn towards the Forms is distinctively the characteristic of Plato.[18] If we place the Socratic insistence upon examples in the context of what we have called a situation of reversal, we can better appreciate the turn towards the Forms, for in such a situation, recognition of an instance itself becomes problematic; in this manner, the link or continuity between Socrates and Plato becomes clearer.

It may be noted that at this level, we are concerned with the recognition of seperate instances or cases, what in *The Poetics* Aristotle calls the most elementary or simple level of recognition– the recognition of seperate instances. The suggestion is that even at this stage, recognition becomes problem in a situation of reversal and that the resolution of the problem requires a turn to the Forms. At this simple elementary level, it looks that our inquiry takes shape as a search for the Forms, guided by two presupposition. In a situation of disorder, the identification of a thing or an action requires us to look to the Form under which we may recognise it as such and such. The Forms are paradigms under which we recognise instances or cases. But the second presupposition that such recognition only requires separate Forms may have to be given up. On the contrary, we have to grasp, not merely the separate Forms but their inter–relationships. This is because individual actions themselves cannot be properly understood in an isolating and atomistic manner. Rather, just actions or temperate actions, or actions of courage or friendship can be recognized only in terms of the contexts in which they are performed. In the contemporary mode, only against the form of life that we can recognise such actions. It is because of this that the inter–relationships among the Forms becomes crucial; thus in *The Sophist* we are led to the doctrine of the 'communion of Forms.[19]

But for the present, we may assume that recognition only involves separate Forms. (One of the ways in which we shall see the breakdown of this assumption is the paradox of all virtues turning to be one and the same.) With this assumption, we may now consider the question as to why we must turn to the Forms in the first place.

The basic Platonic principle is that it is in the light of Forms or **'eide'** that we recognise particular things. Just as we turned to Thucydides to give us an understanding of the context in which the problem of reversal arises, we may now turn elsewhere for a clue as to why we must invoke the Forms. The clue I am having in mind is provided by the Hippocratic treatises *On Ancient Medicine*[20] and *The Nature of Man.*[21] In recent years scholars like Werner Jaeger have shown the medical–theoretical background of some of the crucial philosophical themes and doctrines in Plato.[22] I am now referring to a particular aspect of this discussion. In the Hippocratic treastises, we are introduced to the problem of recognition of an illness and it is interesting to note that *Ancient Medicine,* in its own way, poses the problem of recognition in a situation of reversal. The specific issue being considered is the identification of proper diet and the text goes on to explain why diet becomes a problem for the medical art. Foods, which are good to one individual may prove injurious to another and similarly, what is beneficial at one time and in one quantity, may prove injurious at another time and quantity and *vice versa.* It is this tendency of going over into the opposite that poses the problem of recognising what is proper diet.[23] But we are told that this question of what is proper food can be answered only on the basis of an understanding of the nature of man in relation to habits, temperament and character as well as in relation to the things of the environment, as well as general factors such as land and climate.[24] In the purely medical

context also, recognition ultimately broadens out into the problem of grasping inter relationships. But the immediate point that we have to note is that these texts introduce the concept of an **eidos** or form, as something by which we recognise an illness.[25] The idea is that it is by looking to the **eidos** that we recognize a particular state as to what it truly is. The **eide** or the Forms are not simply reduced to specific configuration of observable details (i.e.. the outwadrly manifest symptoms). But yet it is by means of the **eide** that empirical or observable configurations are comprehended. The turn to the Forms is not a turn away from the particulars but it is precisely that by which a deeper understanding of the particular is made possible.

The problem of recognition at this stage seems to have reached an interim solution; we recognise a particular or an instance as what it is in terms of its form **eidos**. It is true that there is already a hint that this formulation cannot be final, for even in this interim formulation, there is implicit the question of the inter-relationships of the forms and the particulars as well as the inter-relationships among the forms themselves. But more important than all these issues of elaboration and formulation, there is the question of the recognition of the Forms themselves. Even if it is correct to say that it is by means of the Forms that we recognise particulars, yet this cannot be the final answer to the problem of recognition; for now, the question would emerge as to how we recognise the Forms themselves. Considering that the problem of recognition arose in the first instance because of the perversity of reversal, the question now becomes, how, in so far as we are still implicated in this situation of anomic disorder, is it possible for us to recognize the Forms themselves.

Reversal and Recognition in Plato

We may perhaps proceed to respond to this final issue in two stages. In the first stage, we may assume that we do have such cognition of Forms and then ask about the presuppositions of having such knowledge. In the second stage, we may ask what should be the nature of the world, if it can be understood only by way of the Forms. In the first stage, we are asking what is the nature of man, if he is to be capable of recognising the Forms and in the second stage, we are asking what is the nature of reality, if such knowledge of Forms is to be possible for man. In Platonic language, we are asking about the faculties of the soul and also about the approriate objects of these faculties. [26] Or in a broader frame of interpretation, we may say that the guiding presupposition of our investigation is that a proper understanding of man and reality mutually implicate each other, in the sense that the question What is man ? can be answered only in terms of a certain metaphysics, while the question what is reality, in turn, can be answered only in terms of philosophical anthropology. [27]

But there are two other tasks also that we have to attend to, if we approach the theory of Forms in terms of the principles of reversal and recognition. The first question has to do with the devices of representation of the Forms. Since under conditions of reversal, our intellectual perception is said to be fundamentally disoriented, by what symbolic devices can we represent the forms? The second question has to do with the discipline of character and skills which may be necessary for the recognition of forms. If the first question sends us towards poetry, myth and symbolism in general, the second qnestion sends us towards the moral and the spiritual. But the complication is that these levels of consideration may conflict; [28] the symbolic devices of poetry and art may pervert the powers of recognition and hence may bind us with

enchanted chains, as it were, to the realm of reversal. It is clear, therefore, that the second level must function as a critique of the first. If, on the contrary, the first level becomes all important and were to dictate the forms of the second, if, in other words, mythos were to govern logos, then this itself would be a profound inner reversal in the soul.

In this critique of the perversions of the symbolic, the necessity of the symbolic itself, is not in question, for in a situation of reversal, recognition of reality has been jeopardized and hence in sofar as such recognition is still possible, it must assume certain indirect and oblique ways. Hence, symbolism becomes essential, but while necessary, such devices have their own hidden dangers and temptations; philosophic recognition has for ever to be alert to the subversions of Rhetoric. [29]

In the earlier dialogues, an aspect of this contrast is emphasised, namely, that we can truly understand something only when we are able to understand what makes it so. Recognition involves giving an account and not merely a simple description. We must see what makes a particular or an instance what it is and in *The Phaedo* this idea of giving an account is expanded as recognition of the cause. Only, as *The Phaedo* itself makes clear, cause here means the form or the **eidos** in the participation or imitation of which an instance becomes what it is. [30] Hence, the recognition of an instance as such and such involves not merely, as it were, looking at it, but looking *beyond* it, to the **eidos** in which it participates By this move, a *vertical* dimension is added to problem of recognition. To recognize a particular, it is not enough if we compare it with other particulars; it is not enough if we compile a list of similar and dissimilar instances. But what is needed is a change in our orientation, a turning of our gaze from the realm of the changing to the relam of the constant

and the immutable, to the Forms. Later on, in *The Republic* this turn about is described as a **periagoge,** not merely a noetic but a fundamental existential re–orientation.[31] But already in the early *Euthyphro* there is a dim foreshadowing of this in the discussion whether an act becomes pious because the gods love it or whether the gods love it because it is pious.[32] In this passage with the sanctimonious Euthyphro, Socrates makes two points. Negatively, we are told that the piety or holiness of an act cannot be recognized by means of merely mythic convictions about the gods which men like Euthyphro pride themselves upon. We must look beyond such fairy tales to recognise true piety and holiness. In our terms, recognition is philosophic understanding and not mythic conviction. But the more subtle point which is being suggested is that there in an inner affinity between the divine and the good. The gods recognize the good and the holy because it is the nature of the divine to be thus attuned to virtue and righteousness. The idea which is germinal in *The Euthyphro* receives its most powerful expression in *The Republic* in the notion of the overflowing or out pouring of the Idea of The Good.

But if the recognition of the perfect Forms is natural to the divine and if the human soul is also capable of such recognition of exemplary Forms, then, there must be something divine about the human soul also. Now, to be divine is to be contrasted with the mortal and hence to be incapable of perishing. There must therefore be something immortal in man; we find that *The Phaedo* actually argues for the immortality of the soul as a condition for the possibility of the knowledge of Forms.[34] The significance of the discussion of the immortality of the soul in *The Phaedo* for us is the underlying motivation, namely, that the knowledge of the Forms requires, as a presupposition, the immortality of the soul. The conceptul framework of recognition

now includes the particular changing instances or happenings, the exemplary Forms and the soul.

The status and powers of the soul within this framework are somewhat peculiar. On the one hand, the soul cannot be merely one among the particulars, for, as we have already seen, it is the mark of the particular to be in-constant and go over into its opposite, whereas the soul is constant. (We remember that the argument for the immortality of the soul begins from its constancy.) But on the other hand, the soul cannot also be substantially the same as the Forms. The peculiar status of the soul has an important consequence for the problem of recognition. If the soul were merely and wholly immersed in the domain of phenomena, it would not even be capable of the recognition of essences, but if it were a Form itself, it would have been perfect and since perfection implies completeness, it would not have had any lack. The vision of the Forms would have been its constant possession. It is true that the divine architect or the **demiurgos** in *The Timaeus* too seems to have some such position, but yet the human soul is not to be identified with God, for in the case of God, we are told that he looks to the Forms in creating the phenomenal order, but the human soul is noetic rather than creative. It looks to the Forms for recognition rather than creation.[35]

Once we introduce this distinction between the creative and the noetic souls, then the conceptual world of recognition expands considerably, for now, we have to include the creative intellect on the one hand and the illuminated intellect, on the other. Similarly, we have to include the exemplary Forms on the one hand and the Receptacle on the other, as The *Timaeus suggests.*[36]

We may however break off at this point our consideration of the ontological framework within which the problem of recogni-

tion gets shaped and turn back to some of the epistemic aspects of the problem. For this purpose, we may recur back to the intermediary position of the soul between the phenomenal order and the order of true being or the Forms. This situation structures the epistemic possibilities of the soul in a certain way. It first of all illustrates the point already made that it is only by relating the particular given in experience to the **eide** or forms that even the particulars could be recognized as what they are. But the recognition of the Forms seems to be presupposed in this solution and it is this which becomes problematic in *The Meno*.[37]

Although the problem surfaces in *The Meno*, the shape of the solution also is discernible therein. Since the particulars are to be recognized and identified by way of the Forms, it is clear that the Forms themselves cannot be derived from the experience of the particulars. If that were so, the recognition of particulars would not require the Forms; hence, as far as the noetic situation is concerned, we must distinguish two aspects of the relationship between forms and particulars. Forms are primary in the order of being whereas the particulars are primary in relation to us, in the sense that although experience is not the source of the knowledge of Forms, yet it serves as the occassional cause of knowledge.[38] But the role of perception as the occassional cause of the recognition of Forms has to be understood in a certain dialectical fashion. It is not the case that experience, as it were, directly and straight forwardly, turns our minds to the Forms. Rather, the very instability and unsatisfactoriness of our experience, the tendency of perceptual qualities to pass over into their opposites, in short, their liability for reversals, it is this tension–generating character of our experience that serves as the occasional cause of the turn towards the Forms.[39] But this mutability is not also wholly negative; there is a glimmer, a glimpse, of some perfection beyond, of something

more satisfying to the soul, which is given in the midst of the flux of perception itself. This teasing and suggestive and yet frustrating character of our lives in the world provides the stimulation for the soul's turn towards the Forms.

In *The Meno*, it is said that sensory experience provides the occasion for recollection, that on the basis of the fleeting glimpses provided by the phenomena, the soul is reminded of its prior acquaintance with the Forms, a knowledge which had been, as it were, buried but not totally obliterated in the soul. The role of experience is precisely to serve as this kind of reminder.[40]

The forms and stages of this recollective search are more elaborately described in Diotima's speech in *The Symposium* where the mystic prophetess describes how the perception of particular and fleeting beautiful things leads the soul to ascend up the ladder of Forms and how finally the soul is given a rapturous and ecstatic vision of the Form of Beauty itself. When we consider the exaltation which this vision of Beauty is said to give rise in the soul, we can perhaps conjecture that it is the same experience which in *The Republic* and in the *Seventh Letter* is described as the vision of The Good.[41]

But in this long ascent from the frustrations and disappointments of phenomenal encounters to the supremely satisfying and fulfilling vision of The Good, a number of intentionalities and powers of the soul come into play. These various faculties are given a certain orientation by the existential situation of the soul—on the one hand, mired in the world of sense, it experiences a certain lack, a deficiency and also knows that this deficiency is fundamentally a deficiency of being. So, the particular objects of experience cannot remedy this lack, for, as particulars, they themselves are characterized by this deficiency of being—they neither truly are, nor are they wholly non-being; they roll, as it were, unsteadily, between being and non-being and hence

cannot satisfy the soul's longing for reality and truth. The soul also knows that what it aspires after is something independent of it, for the very experience of deprivation teaches the soul that what could fulfil its most ardent aspiration is however something other then itself. Hence, the dynamism of the soul's search takes the form of a longing and aspiration after that which would fulfil and complete the soul—the search for recognition becomes Eros.[42]

In the classical world, there have been two types of philosophies of love. A. Nygren has called these two shapes Eros and Agape respectively. The first perspective looks upon love as a yearning to possess that which one lacks; it may by said to have an upward orientation. It arises in the context of acutely felt misery and deprivation but it is sustained by a yearning which would complete and confirm the soul. Agape, the other love, is moved not so much by a lack, but by a fullness. Precisely because it is a plenitude, it is self-giving, but in this it suffers no dimunition. Eros, we may say, is an asking love, whereas Agape is a giving one. In Plato, both the movements of love are represented. On the one hand, the yearning eros is aligned with Philosophy.

In *The Symposium* we are told how eros is born in poverty but aspires after plenitude. It is not in possession of felicity but sees itself as ever in pursuit of it. Similarly, philosophy also is not an already existing and achieved wisdom but the pursuit of it. The object of its knowing is its own ignorance, as *The Apology* tells us.[43] But paradoxically enough, precisely this knowledge of one's ignorance functions as a source of strength for the philosopher or lover of knowledge, whereas, it would be unbearable to the sophistic soul. Without eros, the awareness of one's own lack would prove crippling and hence would lead to self-deception. But eros strengthens and sustains the search because, already

in the very recognition of one's own lack of knowledge, there is an anticipatory awareness of what would remove the deficiency. It is because of this fore-knowledge that one becomes capable of recognising one's own deficiency. In this sense, the recognition of one's own ignorance is itself an assurance that one is on the right track, as it were. Furthermore, this intentionality of eros keeps it immune from solicitatious and vain blandishments of illusory contentment. For, the soul knows what would really satisfy it and with this as a standard, it is capable of fortifying itself against all the allurements of mere opinion.

The experience of integrity in the midst of one's own lack of knowledge—this holding fast to the soul's inmost aspiration, is the peculiar **eudaimonia** of the Platonic eros. But this inner Socratic strength is possible because there is also the other love—the self-giving love of the Good. In *The Republic,* we are told that the perfection and completeness of The Good is such that it, as it were, overflows into and sustains everything else.[44] It is this metaphysical hope that there will be an answering response from reality to the aspiration of the soul that explains the phenomenon of Socrates. But of course, this metaphysical faith is not to be formulated in the form of a doctrine or theory. It is rather exemplified in the form of existence of Socrates himself. Hence, the final issue of Recognition becomes the recognition of the person of Socrates. We might therefore come back to the point that Asistotle makes in *The Poetics* but now, in a very different sense—that the noblest form of Recognition is the Recognition of personality.

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NOTES

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19. Plato; *The Sophist* 257 a f, 257 e
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    The *Great Books of the Western World*, Vol. 10
21. *Ibid, On the Nature of Man.*
22. On the influence of the medical schools on Plato and Aristotle, Werner Jaeger; *Paideia : The Ideals of Greek Culture* vol. II, Bk IV, Chapter I on Greek Medicine as Paideia is particularly stimulating, both for the discussion as well as for its full documentation.

23. Hippocrates; *On Ancient Medicine.* pp. 3–5
24. *Ibid;* p. 7
25. The occurrences of eidos (usually as eide, in the plural) and Idea in the Hippocratic writings have been investigated by A. E. Taylor in *Varia Socratica* 178–267. Eric Voegelin also has noted this similarity of usage in his *Order and History* vol. II, p. 94. Werner Jaeger has pointed out that the medical texts are also concerned with the problem of relationships between the eide. (Warner Jaeger *Paideia* : *The Ideals of Greek Culture,* vol. 2 Also his Notes for Chapter I item 53 a).
26. Hintikka; Jakko, "Knowledge and its Object in Plato" in *Patterns in Plato's Thought* (ed) Moravcsik p. 9, D. Reidel, Dordrecht, 1973.
27. On this point see Eric Voegelin *Order and History* vol. II and Werner Jaeger *Paideia : The Ideals of Greek Culture,* Vol. II.
28. This conflict is the basic issue involved in Plato's examination of Art in *The Republic* Bk X 595a–608b.
29. Plato; *The Gorgias* 100 b–e, (trans) Walter Hamilton, Penguin Classics, 1960.
30. *Ibid, Phaedo* 100b–e, (trans) Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato,* Vol. I.
31. *Ibid, The Republic* 518d–f.
32. *Ibid, Euthyphro* 10.
33. *Ibid, The Republic* 507a–509c.
34. *Ibid, Phaedo,* pp. 97–98, *The Dialogues of Plato* (ed) Justin D. Kaplan
35. *Ibid, The Timaeus 28, The Dialogues of Plato,* Vol. 3, (trans) Benjamin Jowett.
36. *Ibid, The Timaeus* 47–51
37. *Ibid, The Meno*
38. *Loc cit*
39. *Ibid, Symposium* P218, *The Dialogues of Plato,* (ed) Justin D. Kaplan.
40. *Ibid, The Republic,* 514a–517c
41. *Ibid, The Seventh Letter*
42. *Ibid, Symposium* P 207, *The Dialogues of Plato,* (ed) Justin D. Kaplan,
43. *Ibid, Apology* 21c–d, *The Dialogues of Plato* Vol. I, (trans) Benjamin Jowett
44. *Ibid, The Republic* 514a–517c.

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