

Separation and Immanence of Plato's εἶδος/ιδέα

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In this article I propose a new solution to the problem of separation and immanence of Plato's εἶδος/ιδέα. Aristotle reports in the *Metaphysics* that Plato separated universals from sensibles and called them Forms (ιδέας). Plato's descriptions of τὸ ὄντως ὄν seem to endorse his report (see *Smp.*211a5-b5; *Phdr.*247d5-e2; *Ti.*51e6-52a4 = SP passages), but there are also passages which seem to indicate that εἶδη/ιδέαι are immanent in sensibles (e.g. *Phd.*100d3-8; *Rep.*476a5-8; *Phlb.*16c9-d2 = IM passages). Thus the true ontological status of Plato's εἶδος/ιδέα has been a controversial issue.

I reject three solutions that have been offered by scholars. First, G. Fine and R. M. Dancy suggest that Forms can be immanent in sensibles in a certain way. But this suggestion is not consistent with the SP passages. Second, according to R. E. Allen and Ch. Kahn, saying that *F* is in *x* is just another way of saying that *x* is *F* in Greek, and so the passages which seem to suggest the immanence of a εἶδος/ιδέα are in fact ontologically neutral. But their view does not explain the IM passages we come across in the examination of the ontological status of εἶδη/ιδέαι. Finally, N. Fujisawa, D. Devereux, and A. Silverman propose a solution to this problem by taking immanent εἶδη/ιδέαι in the *Phaedo* (102a11-107b10) as 'immanent characters' or 'Form-copies'. But their view is again in conflict with the IM passages.

I then propose my own solution. I suggest that the εἶδος/ιδέα of *F* or αὐτὸ *F*, the object of reason or intellect, is originally put forward by Plato as such an entity that can be comprehended not only *by itself* (καθ' αὐτό) but also in connection with other things (ἐν τισι). When Plato introduces the εἶδος/ιδέα of *F* or αὐτὸ *F*, he distinguishes the process of examining it from the goal of grasping it *by itself*. Thus Socrates says in the *Phaedo* (65d4-66a10) that a true philosopher turns to αὐτὸ *F* and tries to hunt it down *by itself*, and in the *Republic* (476b9-10) that a true philosopher can advance towards the beautiful itself and look at it *by itself*. It is reasonable to suppose that one examines αὐτὸ *F* in connection with other things prior to beholding it *by itself*, just as a released prisoner examines the sun reflected on the water prior to beholding it *by itself* (*Rep.*516b4-6). The problem of separation and immanence of εἶδη/ιδέαι will be solved, or so I argue, if we take the SP passages to describe εἶδη/ιδέαι grasped by itself, and the IM passages εἶδη/ιδέαι grasped in connection with other things.