

Renewing the Question of Beauty: Gadamer on Plato's Idea of the Beautiful

DANIEL L. TATE

St. Bonaventure University

ABSTRACT: Posing the question of beauty anew, Gadamer pursues a hermeneutic remembrance of the original relation of beauty and truth forgotten by modern aesthetics. For Gadamer, the essential relation of *kalos* and *aletheia* is preserved, above all, in Plato. This essay elaborates his retrieval of Plato, re-thinking the splendor of beauty and the illumination of truth from being as an event of coming-to-presence. After discussing his engagement with Heidegger the essay reconstructs Gadamer's interpretative argument, showing how he interprets the transcendence, radiance, and measure that characterize Plato's idea of the beautiful as structural features of being as an event of truth.

Jay Bernstein provides poignant characterization of the predicament which provokes the question of beauty today: "In modernity beauty is not only alienated from truth, but grieves its loss; modernity is the site of beauty bereaved—bereaved of truth."¹ This statement both captures the current condition of "aesthetic alienation" of beauty from truth and conveys the sense of loss suffered due to their separation. Moreover, it projects a prior condition wherein beauty and truth were bound together, from which vantage one can recognize their divorce as a loss. It further suggests an element of mourning which pervades the thinking that would memorialize this loss by preserving the original relation of beauty and truth from oblivion. In terms familiar to philosophical hermeneutics, this is a mode of thinking that overcomes the concealment of beauty in modernity by the "remembrance" of what has been "forgotten." Posing the question of beauty anew, I argue, Gadamer pursues such a thoughtful remembrance by means of a hermeneutic retrieval of the beautiful that would recover its essential relation to truth. Even if the original relation of beauty and truth has been concealed and forgotten in the aesthetic turn of modern thought, it is nonetheless preserved in

ancient philosophy—above all, for Gadamer, in Plato’s thought. For it is there, in the Socratic recollection of the beautiful, that the essential relation of *kalos* and *aletheia* can be (re)discovered and the relevance of the beautiful (re)appropriated for contemporary thought.²

Gadamer finds attestation to their original belonging-together in the *Phaedrus* where the experience of beauty enables the soul to acquire “a lasting remembrance of the true world.” Moreover, “Plato describes the beautiful as that which shines forth most clearly and draws us to itself, as the very visibility of the ideal. In the beautiful presented in nature and art, we experience this convincing illumination of truth and harmony that compels the admission: ‘This is true.’”³ The affinity of beauty to truth thus lies in the compelling presence of the beautiful which leaves us with a sense of conviction. “Beautiful things are those whose value is self-evident.”⁴ Hence Gadamer’s return to Plato seeks to reclaim the radiant self-presence of the beautiful and its proximity to the self-evident appearance of the true. In so doing he discerns “the closeness between the experience[s] of contemplating the beautiful and knowing the true.”⁵ But this proximity can only be brought out if *kalos* and *aletheia* are thought in concert with the Greeks such that the radiant splendor of beauty and the sudden illumination of truth are both thought from out of being as an event of coming-to-presence. By returning to Plato Gadamer intends to recover an ontological understanding of the beautiful that re-members its original union with both being and the true.⁶

Such an approach places Gadamer’s retrieval in proximity to Heidegger with whom he remains in some tension, especially when it comes to the latter’s reading of Plato. Because Heidegger’s insights into the Greek experience of truth and being both motivate and complicate Gadamer’s retrieval of the beautiful, I begin with a brief discussion of his engagement with Heidegger’s Plato (I). I then proceed to a reconstruction of Gadamer’s interpretive argument that elaborates those traits of Plato’s idea of the beautiful he highlights—namely, its transcendence (II), radiance (III), and measure (IV). While the radiance of beauty certainly enjoys a phenomenological privilege for Gadamer insofar as it shows self-presentation to be definitive for the being of the beautiful, I argue that the transcendence of the beautiful and its appropriate measure are also critical to the full scope of Gadamer’s retrieval. Due to the fact that his treatment of these several traits not only draws on different dialogues of Plato, but occurs in different texts of his own, Gadamer’s account can seem somewhat fragmented. So I conclude by showing that these traits of the beautiful, taken together, exhibit the structural aspects of being as an event of truth (V).

I. THE RETURN TO THE BEAUTIFUL

For Gadamer, the proximity of beauty and truth can only be discerned if *kalon* and *aletheia* are thought in a sufficiently Greek way. For only when the shining-forth of beauty is experienced as the coming-forth of truth can contemplating the beautiful and knowing the true find their common origin in the self-presentation of being. Gadamer seeks to recover this ontological dimension of the Greek experience of *to kalon* preserved in the Platonic idea of the beautiful. However, he remains acutely aware of his debt to Heidegger's insight into the Greek experience of truth (*aletheia*) as the appearing of being (*physis*), that is, as a movement by which beings emerge from concealment to become what they are.⁷ Yet it is in Plato's thought that Heidegger famously detects a decisive change in the essence of truth that proves fateful for the history of metaphysics. In "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" Heidegger provides a detailed reading of central passages from the *Republic* where, he argues, Plato turns away from this original sense of truth in order to realign it with his doctrine of ideas.⁸ There Heidegger marks the shift *from* being as the emergence into unconcealment *to* being as the changeless object of noetic vision. This shift occurs where Plato attends to the *idea* as the stable "look" of a thing that determines its "what," the unchanging essence that constitutes its true being. By focusing on the *idea* as a continuous presence, *physis* as a process of unconcealment recedes from view. The way is now clear to conceive the good itself as *idea*—that is, as pure presence—thereby effacing the ontological difference. Correlatively, Plato's emphasis on the permanent look of things leads him to stress the correctness (*orthotes*) of vision. Truth is now a matter of bringing one's vision into conformity (*homoiosis*) with the *idea*. By yoking truth to the *idea* Plato inaugurates a profound transformation in the essence of truth which, for Heidegger, marks a crucial step into the forgetfulness of being that defines metaphysics.⁹

While Gadamer confirms Heidegger's account of the original Greek experience of truth, he resists the latter's conclusion regarding Plato's thought (and metaphysics generally). Instead he says, "I would like to raise the question, contrary to this [i.e., to Heidegger's interpretation], whether Plato himself did not attempt to think the realm of unconcealedness," indeed, "whether from the beginning he had not questioned behind this doctrine [of truth as *homoiosis*] and thereby *aletheia* as correctness."¹⁰ Gadamer thus challenges Heidegger's verdict that Plato stands at the "beginning" of metaphysics as onto-theology wherein the question of being is concealed and forgotten. In fact, he argues to the contrary that "Plato sought to go *beyond beings* in his dialectical ascent to the Good itself, to the Beautiful itself, or to the One itself."¹¹ Nevertheless, he takes seriously Heidegger's critique of metaphysics. He concurs that the question of being is no longer posed where "being, as the being of beings, becomes essence, and *aletheia* is no longer thought

as unconcealedness [*Unverborgenheit*], but rather as the being of that which is unconcealed [*des Unverborgenen*].¹² Where being is conceived as essence—i.e., as the manifestation of *eidōs*, as a determinate what in unchangeable form—it is implicitly conceived as continuous presence. However, Gadamer remains unconvinced that the question concerning the “what” of beings completely obstructs the question of Being.¹³ In his view, Plato thinks *aletheia* both as the unconcealing movement of coming into being and as the being of that which is thereby unconcealed. What comes to stand in its being is not detached from the movement of its coming into being; the unconcealing and the unconcealed (or “event” and “essence”) are to be thought together. This point, I believe, is critical to Gadamer’s rescue of the idea of the beautiful from a “metaphysical” reading of Plato.

Still Gadamer is well aware that Heidegger turns to Aristotle who, “against the Pythagorean thinking of Plato,” renews an older way of thinking being as movement instead of constant numerical harmony.¹⁴ For Heidegger, it is Aristotle’s concept of *physis* that intimates a thought of being as the “emergence” (*Aufgehen*) of beings in their being. However, Gadamer believes it possible to find this dimension of self-manifesting being in Plato’s philosophy as well.¹⁵ Gadamer explicitly takes this stand against Heidegger’s Plato interpretation when it comes to the idea of the good and the dialectic of ideas.¹⁶ But I believe that, for Gadamer, being as motion comes forth decisively in Plato’s idea of the beautiful as well. It is, above all, in the presence of something beautiful that one experiences the sudden illumination that characterizes our encounter with beauty. Gadamer considers it an ontologically significant feature of the beautiful that it suddenly appears and just as suddenly disappears.¹⁷ Here we encounter that “sudden change” (*metabole*) that signals the movement proper to being—that is, the “coming-forth into presencing [*Anwesenung*].”¹⁸ By shining-forth, the beautiful thing suddenly comes forth in its visibility so that it appears there “in the unconcealedness of [its] emergence.”¹⁹ And yet this very movement retreats from the presence it yields. With the beautiful, being shines forth in midst of the visible where it both emerges and recedes. Here Gadamer perceives the movement of arrival and withdrawal that marks the ontological affinity of *kalos* and *aletheia* in Plato’s thought.

It is consequently puzzling that Gadamer does not recognize the opportunity afforded by Heidegger’s lecture on Plato’s *Phaedrus* where the essential unity of *kalon* and *aletheia* is at issue. In this lecture Heidegger engages the dialogue where the beautiful is discussed in regard to “the question of man’s original relation to beings as such.”²⁰ He picks up Plato’s great myth of the soul’s ascent where Socrates asserts that human souls must already have viewed beings in their being in order to comport themselves to beings as such. Having merely glimpsed the “beings themselves” in their journey with the gods up to the vault of the heavens, however, they fall to earth where this view of being is exiled in the body. In their embodied condition human souls content themselves with *doxa*, the fleeting ap-

pearances of things, wherein being conceals itself. Overcome by *lethe*, most sink into a condition of forgetfulness of being. Even those capable of remembering being must have their memory provoked by the power of *eros* which seizes them in their encounter with beautiful appearances, drawing them toward being and overcoming their forgetfulness. For Plato, Heidegger asserts, the beautiful is what makes possible this “perpetual renewal and preservation of our view upon being.”²¹ Unlike the appearances of justice and moderation, it has been allotted to the beautiful to be the most radiant and enchanting. Thus the beautiful “grants entry into the immediate sensuous appearances and yet at the same time turns toward being.”²² Opening this view upon being constitutes the basic relation of beauty to truth as unconcealment. “That which truth brings about, the unveiling of being, that and nothing else is what beauty brings about.”²³

Heidegger's “destruction” of the *Phaedrus* thereby retrieves the original relation of beauty to truth.²⁴ As Gadamer's witty characterization of his mentors' way through the history of philosophy suggests, it seems that Heidegger's “divining rod” has “dipped down” and “made a find.”²⁵ In this case, what Heidegger has “divined” is that Plato's thought of the beautiful extends “behind” metaphysics into the dimension of unconcealedness. Now it is this essential insight that Gadamer too finds preserved in Plato's idea of the beautiful, the original meaning of which he seeks to renew. Yet this is surely an odd predicament: Gadamer's reading of Plato, while motivated by a deep accord with Heidegger (on the meaning of being and truth for Greek thought), turns against Heidegger (on the conception of truth and being in Plato's philosophy) only to reconverge with him (on the proximity of beauty and truth in Plato's *Phaedrus*). But if Heidegger rediscovers the ontological affinity of *kalos* and *aletheia*, he soon abandons this insight, leaving further excavation of Plato's idea of the beautiful to his protégé. In the following, I pursue Gadamer's interpretation of the beautiful as a movement of unconcealment, thereby joining *kalos* to *aletheia* in a more originary thought of the beautiful as an event of truth. In the “transcendence” of the beautiful at the summit of Diotima's “way of love” in the *Symposium* Gadamer detects a looking to the one that marks a “step over being to that which is beyond being.”²⁶ In the “radiance” that Plato attributes to the beautiful in the *Phaedrus* Gadamer discerns its distinctive mode of being as self-presentation in which what appears comes forth into the open so that it stands out in the light of its visibility. In the concept of “beautiful mixture” drawn from the *Philebus* Gadamer finds that appropriate “measure” by which what comes forth authenticates itself in its very genesis. Taken together, these several traits—of transcendence, radiance, and measure—outline Gadamer's retrieval of Plato's idea of the beautiful as an event of unconcealment.

II. THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Like the idea of the good, Gadamer observes, the idea of the beautiful “transcend[s] everything that is conditional and multiform.”²⁷ The transcendence of the beautiful is evoked most powerfully by Diotima’s account of the soul’s erotic ascent wherein “the loving soul encounters the beautiful-in-itself at the end of a path that leads through the beautiful that is multiform.”²⁸ The parallel between this path to the beautiful in the *Symposium* and the path to the good in the *Republic* does not escape his notice.²⁹ Both dialogues set forth an “upward way” that leads beyond the many appearances to the “one” that transcends them. “The beautiful-in-itself is the one, the uniform, the boundless (*Symposium*), just like the idea of the good that lies beyond everything that is conditional and multiform.” Thus the characterization of the good-in-itself as “*epekeina tes ousias*” (*Republic* 509b), as “beyond all beings,” applies just as well to the beautiful-in-itself. But how are we to conceive the transcendence of the beautiful? Gadamer refuses to construe “*epekeina*” as the changeless presence of the idea which would reify the transcendence of the beautiful, treating it as a being. Instead he views the beautiful as a singular transcendence that withdraws beyond beings in the very movement by which it nonetheless becomes present in the appearance of those beings we find beautiful. Indeed, for Gadamer, “this fundamental step of going beyond all existing things in Plato . . . represents a counter-movement against the metaphysical interpretation of being as merely the being of beings.”³⁰

In “Plato as Portaitist” Gadamer explicitly addresses the famous speech in the *Symposium* where Socrates conveys what he has learned about love from the priestess Diotima. As he reminds us, it is Socrates, not Diotima, who recounts the way of love. This point becomes significant when, changing tone, Diotima casts doubt about Socrates’ capacity to follow her attempt to introduce him to the “higher mysteries” of *eros*. (210a) Beginning with the love of a single beautiful body (210a), the soul’s ascent proceeds to the love of all beautiful bodies (210b) and, from there, to the love of beautiful souls (210c), the beauty of laws and institutions (210c), as well as the beauty of knowledge (210c–d) and philosophy (210d) before culminating in a vision of the beautiful-in-itself. Since it is Socrates who speaks, Gadamer detects an irony in Diotima’s skepticism about Socrates. “Does the Platonic Socrates ultimately doubt himself and the ascent to the beautiful, which like a sudden revelation becomes visible in its truth, purity and unity, or is Socrates driven out beyond himself as it were?”³¹ In one respect, Diotima’s assertion that Socrates could be initiated into the rites of love certainly rings true (209e). After all, we readily recognize Socrates in that stage of the ascent that passes from one beautiful youth to another in order to generate beautiful speeches. Nevertheless, Gadamer hears Diotima’s skepticism as an ironic expression of Socrates own reservation concerning the ascent to the beautiful conveyed to him by the

priestess. This is surely the point of Gadamer's claim that Socrates goes "beyond himself" in recounting the way of love, as if he were momentarily carried away by her vision. Precisely because the ascent culminates in the "sudden revelation" of the beautiful-in-itself that now appears "in its truth, purity and unity," Gadamer explicitly worries that it "sounds like a step in the direction of onto-theology."³²

This worry brings us to the crux of Gadamer's reading of Diotima's "way of love" and its bearing on the transcendence of the beautiful. If indeed Diotima's account strikes him as a step towards onto-theology this is because the soul's erotic ascent appears to hypostatize the idea of the beautiful as something that could be revealed in its truth, purity, and unity apart from any sensible thing in which it might become manifest. On this view, the acme of the ascent arrives when, having climbed through the preceding stages, the soul envisions the beautiful *in itself and by itself*. In this culminating vision the beautiful-in-itself would be given as a constant presence. According to such an interpretation, each previous stage in the ascent merely conducts the soul to the next and higher stage(s)—as if they were steps on a ladder that could be thrown away once the ascent is complete. In his reading of the *Symposium* Drew Hyland dubs this the "usual interpretation" which gives us "Platonism" with its radical separation of sensible and the intelligible and its central concern with knowledge of the forms.³³ But Hyland is careful to note that Diotima does *not* say that the preceding stages are merely left behind; instead she uses the comparative to initiate the movement of the soul. So, for instance, one is brought to recognize that beautiful souls are "more worthy" (*timioteron*) than beautiful bodies. On several occasions she also describes one stage as "small" (*simikron*) by comparison to that which supersedes it. Hence Hyland concludes: "If the point of the ascent is to understand, through an insight into Beauty itself, the character of beauty in all its manifestations—or what Diotima calls the 'wide sea' (210d) of beauty—then we *cannot* leave behind any particular stage, or we would lose our understanding precisely of beauty *in its various manifestations*."³⁴

Gadamer underwrites this conclusion when he asserts that "the ascent to the beautiful consists of nothing else than learning to see the beautiful, which is in everything."³⁵ Elsewhere he elaborates: "The beautiful is experienced again and again in each thing as something whose beauty is distinct and unique unto itself; it is experienced in the sum of all the stages of ascent from bodies to souls to institutions to insights, as immanent in them all, and therefore no 'looking away' from any of them is implied. Thus it emerges as more like the ubiquitous presence of the day at any place, an analogy which Socrates employs in the *Parmenides*."³⁶ The transcendence of the beautiful is thus marked by the very ubiquity of its presence—that is, by its being present in all beautiful things. This prompts Gadamer to restate his central concern about Diotima's teaching: "The renewed account of the ascent becomes clearer and clearer, becomes too clear—that is, transparent."³⁷ He thinks that what this account actually displays is "the

problem of the constitution of the universal, of *epagoge*.³⁸ Insofar as the soul's ascent is characterized as a movement toward ever higher, more encompassing manifestations of the beautiful, the step by step construction set out by this teaching reminds Gadamer of a dialectical exposition that seeks to demonstrate the constitution of the beautiful as a universal. In this respect, Diotima's doubt about Socrates ability to follow her is "a deeply grounded irony" since "it is no longer Socrates who projects this dialectical structure into the pedagogical experience of love."³⁹ Here I take Gadamer to be asserting that the ascent to the beautiful in the *Symposium* is *not* intended as an account of the pedagogical experience of love, but instead provides a dialectical reconstruction of that experience which seeks to demonstrate the *universality* of the beautiful.

Yet even in the *Symposium* the universality of the beautiful is distinctive in that it transcends bodies and souls, institutions and laws, knowledge and philosophy while nonetheless being present in each. For Gadamer, however, this does not mean that the idea of the beautiful presents itself as the changeless object of a noetic vision. Instead he holds that the beautiful is always co-present in those beautiful things from which it must be distinguished, but never separated.⁴⁰ Its singular transcendence differentiates the idea of the beautiful from other ideas as it does the idea of the good. In this respect, the universality that pertains to the beautiful is distinct from that which applies to genera where it refers to what is possessed in common by all of its members. Hence, he asks, "is it not unsatisfactory to view precisely the beautiful—or the good, for that matter—as a universal in the sense of a *koinon genos* (common genus)?"⁴¹ For unlike those Platonic ideas that express such a common genus, the idea of the beautiful cuts across all distinctions of genus and species, thereby transcending such ideas. The idea of the beautiful thus belongs among the "highest genera," like being and the good, which "do not gather together the content of a class."⁴² The idea of the beautiful is a different kind of "one" than the other ideas. Even its mode of parousia is essentially different from the other ideas that function as genera. As a consequence, the idea of the beautiful does not present itself in a direct vision, but is only indirectly encountered through that which becomes present by its light.⁴³ In this way, the idea of the beautiful, like the idea of the good, exhibits a "tendency to withdraw in a peculiar way into a realm beyond."⁴⁴ Thus the idea of the beautiful "is not an existent particular, but is to be thought as the unconcealedness of emergence into the field of vision."⁴⁵ Here, in the transcendence of the beautiful Gadamer detects an affinity of *kalon* with *aletheia* as the dynamic movement of revealing and concealing, of emergence and withdrawal that marks it as an event of being and truth.

III. THE RADIANCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Despite how closely Plato links the idea of the beautiful with that of the good, Gadamer notices that Plato attributes an important distinction to the beautiful that gives it a “special advantage” over the good. This advantage consists in the way that the beautiful shines forth in and through its beautiful appearance, captivating and attracting us. Due to the obscurity of the worldly manifestations of human virtue, it is difficult to discern their true form; since they have no light of their own it is easy to succumb to impure imitations of justice, temperance, etc. (250b). In this significant respect the experience of the beautiful is distinctive since “it has its own radiance so that we are not seduced by deceptive copies.”⁴⁶ Further, the quality of the experience is different; the embodied experience we have of justice, temperance, or wisdom pales by comparison to the overpowering effect conveyed by our experience of beauty. This aspect of the beautiful is summarized in the famous passage from the *Phaedrus* that Gadamer does not fail to quote: “It is beauty alone that has this quality: that it is what is most radiant (*ekphanestaton*) and lovely” (250d).

For Gadamer, then, “what distinguishes the beautiful from the good is that the beautiful presents itself, that its being is such that it makes itself immediately evident [*einleuchtend*].”⁴⁷ But it is also distinctive in that it “disposes people in its favor immediately.”⁴⁸ In the presence of something beautiful we find ourselves irresistibly drawn to its very appearance and held there. But Gadamer claims that this capacity of the beautiful—to immediately attract human desire—is actually founded in its mode of being since “it belongs to the unique essence of the beautiful to appear.”⁴⁹ He seizes upon this distinctive aspect as an ontological characteristic of the beautiful. “Being present,” he asserts, “belongs in a convincing way to the being of the beautiful itself.”⁵⁰ Indeed, this is just what Plato means when he calls it the “most radiant.” Thus the experience of beauty attests to the parousia of the beautiful “itself” and its palpable presence. Because beauty is visibly present to the senses, it clearly appears in the sensible world. And yet since beauty suddenly appears and, just as suddenly, disappears, it seems to arrive from elsewhere, as if it were of a different order. Gadamer believes that this mode of appearance bears out Plato’s intuition that while the beautiful is certainly an idea in that “it belongs to an order of being that rises above the flux of appearances as something constant in itself; it is just as certain that “it is it itself which appears.”⁵¹ Thus the beautiful both creates and surmounts the separation of idea from appearance. “If we must speak with Plato of a hiatus [*chorismos*] between the world of the senses and the world of ideas, this is where it is and this is where it is overcome.”⁵²

For this reason Gadamer maintains that the beautiful plays the crucial role of mediating between idea and appearance, the “metaphysical crux” of Platonism.

Here we find the controversial issue of “participation” (*methexis*) prompted by the “separation” (*chorismos*) of these two ontological orders in the Platonic philosophy. In Gadamer’s view, it is significant that Plato uses “*methexis*” to indicate the relation of idea to appearance rather than “*mimesis*.” For this relation does *not* refer to *imitation*, where one thing points to another that serves as its model; it rather refers to *co-existence*, where one thing is there along with something else. “Participation, *metalambanein*, completes itself [*erfüllt sich*] only in being-together and belonging-together, *metachein*.”⁵³ Insofar as the word “participation” suggests that the part belongs to the whole, it can be misleading. For it simply means that where one of them is the other is there too; the part is present in the whole in the way that the number one is present in each of the things counted without somehow being divided among them. But Gadamer maintains that “Plato is obviously fully aware of the paradox in a participation or taking part [*Teihabe*] that does not take *a* part but participates in the whole—as the day participates in the light of the sun.”⁵⁴ Here participation means nothing other than presence. The presence of the beautiful in its various appearances is like that of number which can be wholly present in numbered things without losing any part of itself. Gadamer thereby reduces the supposed separation of ideas and appearances in Platonic thought to a relative difference that presupposes their prior belonging-together. More fundamental than the *chorismos* which separates the idea of the beautiful from its appearances is the *methexis* by which the beautiful is present whole and undivided in each and every beautiful thing.

The ontological import of the beautiful can be highlighted in another way that returns to Plato’s claim that the beautiful alone is the most radiant. “Radiance’ [*Hervorscheinen*], then, is not only one of the qualities of the beautiful but constitutes its actual being.”⁵⁵ The being of the beautiful thus consists in the very radiance of its shining. Here Gadamer plays upon the German “*scheinen*” which means both “shining” and “appearing.”⁵⁶ In fact, these two meanings converge inasmuch as shining enables something to appear; by shining forth the beautiful allows something to come forth into its appearance. The range of meanings which Gadamer engages here is brought out in the following passage: “As pure shining [*Scheinen*], appearance [*Erscheinen*], shining forth [*Herausscheinen*], the beautiful is like that ‘splendor’ which is, according to Plotinus, as if poured out over that which appears, because this shine [*Glanz*] has its being in the *diffusio sui*, in its diffusion.”⁵⁷ By virtue of its shining the beautiful is the most visible of all the beings; it alone shines forth in its worldly manifestations with unmistakable brilliance. “Thus the beautiful is conceptualized in Platonic terms as something to whose essence it belongs to appear.”⁵⁸ Even when Plato insists that appearances participate only more or less in the idea, so that beautiful things are only imperfectly beautiful, Gadamer holds that “it belongs to the unique essence of the beautiful to appear.”⁵⁹

In his study of the *Phaedrus* John Sallis confirms that “‘the beautiful’ names the way in which being itself shines forth in the midst of the visible.”⁶⁰ Shining forth in this way the beautiful enables the visible to come forth, to appear. Gadamer does not hesitate to draw out the relation between shining and light: “Beauty has the mode of being of *light*.”⁶¹ As he points out, shining implies shining on something, thereby making that on which the light falls appear. This not only means that without light nothing beautiful can appear, it also means that the beauty of a beautiful thing appears within it as light. Alluding to Plato’s analogy of the sun (*Republic* 508d), Gadamer observes that the reflective nature of light combines vision and the visible such that there can be neither seeing nor anything visible without light. The beautiful thus exhibits the reflective nature of light insofar as it only becomes visible by making something else visible. So it is not just that beauty, like light, makes something else visible by its shining, but that it itself only becomes visible in this way. The radiance of the beautiful therefore marks its appearance; the beautiful presents itself. “The beautiful must appear; otherwise it is not the beautiful.”⁶² And yet through the radiant appearing of the beautiful something appears; shining forth something comes to presence. As Elaine Scarry observes, “something beautiful—a blossom, a friend, a poem, a sky—makes a clear and self-evident appearance before one.”⁶³ For Gadamer, it is precisely such self-evident appearance that connects the experience of beauty with that of truth. In fact, he invokes the metaphysics of light as the basis for this connection between the shining-forth (*Vorscheinen*) of the beautiful and the evidentness (*Erleuchtende*) of the true.⁶⁴ It is due to such radiance that the beautiful (*to kalon*) is brought into relation with truth (*aletheia*) in Platonic thought.

IV. THE MEASURE OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Gadamer’s appeal to the metaphysics of light opens up a further dimension of the beautiful. Light is responsible for the very appearance of something. Indeed, “without light nothing beautiful can appear, nothing can be beautiful.” Moreover, “the beauty of a beautiful thing appears within it as light, as radiance.”⁶⁵ He now adds that the beautiful as a mode of appearing “causes things to emerge in their proportions and outline.”⁶⁶ Things become manifest by virtue of beauty’s radiance which allows them to come forth as the beings they are, illumined from within in their proper proportion. “The proportionateness of the thing does not simply let it be what it is but also causes it to emerge as a harmonious whole that is proportioned within itself. This is the disclosure [*aletheia*] of which Plato speaks in the *Philebus* and which is part of the nature of the beautiful. Beauty is not simply symmetry but appearance itself.”⁶⁷ What is at stake here is the hermeneutic interpretation of the characteristics of measure, proportion and harmony traditionally associated with the concept of the beautiful. Now Gadamer realizes

that this concept of measure provides the metaphysical basis for the connection in ancient Greek thought between the concept of the beautiful and the teleological order of being. He also recognizes that the Pythagorean legacy underscores the mathematical exemplification of such order, especially as that is evident in the cosmos which offers the supreme example of beauty in the visible sphere. Further, he is well aware that this legacy carries into Plato's own definition of the beautiful where "harmonious proportion, symmetry, is the decisive condition of all beauty."⁶⁸ But Gadamer insists that this is not just true within the metaphysics of ancient Greek thought. Instead he holds that these features are ingredient in all manifestations of beauty. So even if we can no longer ground the concept of beauty in the teleological order of being, he nonetheless maintains that measure, proportion, and harmony are integral to the phenomenon of beauty. To discover what we can still learn from Plato on this matter he turns to the *Philebus*.

What draws Gadamer to the *Philebus* is the notion of "mixture" that Plato develops there. Inquiring into what constitutes the good life for human beings, Socrates describes it as a mixture of pleasure (*hēdonē*) and reason (*nous*) where these ingredients are blended together in their proper proportions. In this context Plato develops his doctrine of the four kinds. Relying on the Pythagorean doctrine of opposites, Plato designates the limit (*peras*) and the unlimited (*apeiron*) as the first two kinds. But Gadamer maintains that Plato steps decisively beyond the Pythagorean opposition with the introduction of a third genus.⁶⁹ While earlier thinkers applied the Pythagorean categories of limit and unlimited indiscriminately to what determines the limit and what is determined by it, Plato distinguishes ontologically between the ideal order of number and the reality of concrete appearances determined by it.⁷⁰ Hence he does not confuse the eidetic reality of the limit and the unlimited "themselves" with the concrete reality of that which comes to be from their mixture. This "mixture" comprises "a genus of its own," one that is not merely derived from the eidetic opposition of *peras* and *apeiron*, "but is instead a special kind of being."⁷¹ Gadamer's believes it is crucial that the mixture of these opposites yields a distinctive mode of being, one that Plato himself calls "*genesis*," coming into being (26d8). "Genesis does not identify still another form of ideal being but rather the 'real' being of what comes to be."⁷² Plato's expression "being that has become" deliberately emphasizes the unity of becoming and being such that "Becoming . . . signifies coming-into-being [*Werden zum Sein*]." Gadamer even holds that Plato uses this "highly paradoxical formula" in order to overcome (as a "false illusion") any actual separation between the world of ideas and that of appearances. In other words, "Being emerges from becoming!"⁷³

The genesis that results from the mixture of the limited and unlimited further requires an art of measuring by which the ingredients are blended in their proper proportions. This is no small matter, especially if we recall Gadamer's claim that

it is measure and measuredness that constitutes the beautiful or that the good life itself is a "beautiful mixture." Here he refers to the two arts of measure introduced in the *Statesman*. The first of these arts is concerned with "quantity" (*poson*) and aims at "pure exactness" of the sort that mathematics provides in order to make things measured "available and controllable." The second art of measuring, although designated "the exact itself," is concerned with "quality" (*poion*) and consists in "striking the 'right measure,' of finding what is appropriate."⁷⁴ He underscores this point (citing the *Statesman* 284e ff.): "Indeed, it is expressly stated in the dialogue that the 'exact itself' has to do with the appropriate, the fitting, the needful at the favorable moment."⁷⁵ Such measure is evident, for instance, in the musical harmony of tones sounding together. Thus the third genus is brought about by an art of measuring, the exact itself, which supplies the inner measure that is appropriate or fitting to the being that is measured. Gadamer therefore concludes that such genuine measure is "proper to the being itself" or, simply, "measure here belongs . . . to being."⁷⁶

Gadamer also reminds us here of Plato's claim that the good takes refuge in the beautiful (*Philebus* 64e5). "Measure, symmetry, and openness to view (*alētheia*) characterize the beautiful. To this extent the beautiful is at the same time the good."⁷⁷ So to say that "the *dynamis* (power) of the good takes refuge in the *physis* (nature) of the beautiful" means that "measure and measuredness constitutes what beauty and *aretē* are everywhere."⁷⁸ So when Plato names beauty, symmetry, and truth as the structural elements of the good, Gadamer understands this to mean that the good only appears as the beautiful. Hence he argues that "'the good,' which is at the same time 'the beautiful,' does not exist somewhere apart for itself and in itself, somewhere beyond.' Instead it exists in everything that we recognize as a beautiful mixture."⁷⁹ On this reading, what the *Symposium* identifies as the beautiful-in-itself (i.e., the pure, unmixed idea of the beautiful) would be "beyond being" only in the sense that it has an ideal identity distinct from those things in which it appears. From the standpoint developed in the *Philebus*, the beautiful-in-itself would not exist apart from what is concretely beautiful. Moreover, it is precisely "the unity and integration" of the appearance itself that constitutes its being beautiful. So even if the idea of the beautiful must be distinguished from everything that appears beautiful, it remains that the beautiful "is in everything and is seen in distinction from everything only because it is in everything and shines forth from it."⁸⁰

By elucidating the third, mixed genus in the *Philebus* Gadamer underscores the measure that belongs to the being of anything beautiful, affording it the unity and integration that allows it to come into being, that is, to appear and disclose itself. Such a measure is not a matter of applying an abstract standard represented, for instance, by the mathematical calculation of ratios. Instead it is an internal measure that determines what is fitting or appropriate for each thing, thereby

enabling it to come forth as the being that it is. Emergence into being is a matter of achieving a “beautiful mixture.” This returns us to the quote that motivated the foregoing discussion. “The proportionateness of the thing does not simply let the thing be what it is but also causes it to emerge as a harmonious whole that is proportioned within itself.” Proportionality here bears an ontological weight that not only allows the thing to be what it is, as determined by its own proper measure, but enables it to come forth as a “harmonious whole” that is ordered from within. “Beauty is not simply symmetry but appearance itself.” According to Gadamer, such appearance is a matter of ontological genesis, an event of coming-into-being. Thus the disclosure (*aletheia*) afforded by such a measure is integral to the beautiful (*to kalon*) as a coming-forth that is somehow commensurate with itself.⁸¹

V. THE BEING OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Gadamer’s retrieval of the ancient Greek concept of *to kalon* shows it is internally related to the concept of *aletheia*. Indeed, he asserts it is Plato who first shows that unconcealment is the essential element in the beautiful. As the most radiant, the being of the beautiful is such that it presents itself. Insofar as self-presentation is ontologically constitutive of the beautiful it converges with the ontological understanding of truth as the self-disclosure of being. This process of self-presentation is an ontological event of unconcealment which Gadamer, following Heidegger, characterizes as a movement of coming-to-presence. And, like his mentor, he confirms that such presencing occurs as a double movement of revealing and concealing. In the very movement of revealing itself the beautiful also conceals itself; it withdraws in favor of that which emerges in its radiant appearance. Moreover, what presents itself comes forth by coming to stand in its “there” where it is sheltered and preserved in its being. Further, when the beautiful shines forth in this way, a being becomes present in accordance with its own internal measure as the being it truly is. The traits that Gadamer highlights in Plato’s idea of the beautiful are also those that reflect the very structure of truth as an event of being. Recollecting the original relation *kalon* to *aletheia*, he appropriates the transcendence, radiance, and measure of the beautiful to truth as unconcealment.

First, Gadamer claims that the idea of the beautiful is a one that transcends its many appearances, but not as a discrete entity. Instead it is simply the shining-forth by which beings come to presence. The idea of the beautiful is therefore profoundly misunderstood if it is mistaken as a being which can ultimately become visible in and by itself at the apex of an ascent. We have seen that Gadamer resists such an onto-theological reading of Plato which would hypostatize the beautiful. The idea of the beautiful is not something directly given in its “unity, purity, and truth” as a static, continuous presence that culminates in a pure noetic

vision. Rather, it is only given indirectly in our encounter with those things whose beauty captivates us. Drawn toward their beautiful appearance we are simultaneously drawn beyond them toward the beautiful itself. If, as Plato emphasizes, the human soul is moved by the beautiful, this is because beauty "itself" is a matter of movement. It thereby initiates the very movement of transcendence by which we find ourselves carried away. Moreover, the beautiful exhibits the movement into unconcealment that the Greeks named *aletheia*. But, as we have seen, the movement of unconcealment simultaneously occurs as a movement of concealment. For Gadamer, this means that the transcendence of the beautiful occurs as a double motion of coming forth and drawing back. Indeed, we participate in the movement of transcendence insofar as we let ourselves be drawn along in the withdrawal of the beautiful beyond those beings in which it comes forth.⁸² The transcendence of the beautiful thus consists in the sheer event of appearing that always exceeds its appearances. As light itself becomes visible only by making something else visible, beauty discloses itself only in the process of disclosing beings. Recovering the beautiful as an alethic movement of emergence and withdrawal, Gadamer affirms the singular transcendence of *to kalon* as *epekeina tes ousias*, beyond all beings.

Second, Gadamer is attracted to the idea of the beautiful as a universal metaphysical concept. He finds something valid in Plato's account of beauty quite independent of any commitment to substance metaphysics or to a teleological order anchored in a divine mind. Seizing on the phenomenological aspect offered by the radiance of beauty Gadamer sees an ontological import to Plato's idea of the beautiful inasmuch as it reveals being itself. Plato's emphasis on the shining-forth of the beautiful reveals being to consist in self-presentation. This means that the beautiful does not reside in another realm separate from those beings in which it appears; instead we find it present there, whole and undivided, in each of its appearances. Rather than an ontic distinction between two metaphysical realms, he sees in the radiant presence of beauty a more original *methexis* wherein the alleged *chorismos* is always already overcome in the very appearance of the beautiful.⁸³ In fact, this is the meaning of *methexis* for Plato: the beautiful does not exist apart from the appearances in which it becomes present, but is co-present with them. The phenomenon of beauty thereby discloses the sudden emergence into the light characteristic of being as an event of coming-into presence. Gadamer therefore contends that Plato's account of the beautiful attests to the experience of appearing being. This is the aspect of *Sein* as *Schein*, of being as appearance, as the coming-to-appearance of something in the very radiance of its shining. It is important here that *Schein* as appearance, as *Erscheinung*, not be conceived as mere semblance, as a false or distortive appearance. Instead it must be conceived in its positive possibility as genuine or true appearance, as the appearing

of something in its true being, its essence. In its splendor the beautiful presents itself as a self-presenting event in which being appears.

Third, that which comes to presence is only able to do so by virtue of an internal order that provides its proper measure, one that is fitting to its essential being. Such a measure enables a being to come forth in its true being as the being it is. Consequently, the event of appearing cannot be divorced from the essence of what appears. This is the other side of Gadamer's insistence that the beautiful itself is only ever given as the shining forth by which beings come-to-presence in their being. For Gadamer, what shines forth in the experience of beauty deepens, broadens and clarifies our vision of what becomes present there. That which appears in the radiance of its own shining undergoes an "increase of being." Elevated into its essential being, it becomes more than its simple "thatness" as something merely extant. Its sensuous presence offers up a sense that radiates from it, drawing us into its newly disclosed depth in order to draw us out into the world, bestowing presence on the whole of what is. What comes forth into its essential appearance thereby presents itself as a whole which exhibits a binding order that Gadamer even calls "organic." Like a crystal which "grows out from within,"⁸⁴ this is an immanently arising order. What becomes present is illumined in accordance with that inner measure, the *metrion*, which Plato understood as proportional or fitting to the being. Thus measure belongs to the beautiful as the becoming of being, as the very genesis by which something comes to presence. So even if we no longer share the metaphysical vision of a teleological order in which harmony and proportion were rooted for the Greeks, Gadamer still sees the concept of measure as bearing phenomenological warrant and ontological weight.

By renewing the question of beauty that motivates Plato's inquiry, Gadamer retrieves *to kalon* as an event of being that occurs as *aletheia*. The beautiful thus takes place as the movement into unconcealment whenever something comes to presence in the radiant splendor of its shining. What thereby emerges is granted the measure that enables it to come forth as the being it is. In this way, Gadamer's interpretation of Plato offers a remembrance of beauty prior to its alienation from truth under the reign of modern aesthetics. Here, it seems, Gadamer follows Heidegger's appeal to the Greek beginning when "the arts soared to the supreme height of the revealing granted them" and "brought the presence of the gods, brought the dialogue of divine and human destining, to radiance." Then, Heidegger avers, artworks were not merely aesthetical but poetical in that they brought "the true into the splendor of what Plato in the *Phaedrus* calls *to ekphanestaton*, that which shines forth most purely, . . . the beautiful."⁸⁵ If, however, Gadamer does not evoke such an "exorbitant memory" of a past effaced by the present epoch of technology,⁸⁶ his own remembrance nevertheless remains responsive to the hermeneutic situation which prompts the question of beauty today—namely, the situation wherein the subjectivization of art effectively sunders beauty from

truth, thereby depriving art of any cognitive claim.⁸⁷ Accordingly, Gadamer holds that wherever we encounter the beautiful in art we experience the binding immediacy of an event of truth that proceeds from the work itself. And while the original import of *to kalon* is by no means confined to the realm of art, Gadamer maintains that its proximity to *aletheia* still supports art's claim to truth. For in the encounter with art, he says, "we have experience of something emerging—and this one can call truth."⁸⁸ I would hasten to add—one can also call this beauty.

NOTES

1. J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation From Kant and Heidegger to Adorno* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 4.
2. A hermeneutic account of the present predicament wherein beauty, separated from truth, is confined within the "the aesthetic dimension" should consider Gadamer's critical elucidation of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Insofar as Kant's account delimits the aesthetic from the cognitive it resituates the beautiful outside the domain of knowledge; beauty is thereby severed from truth. For Gadamer the Kantian critique is the inaugural site of the forgottenness that prompts his retrieval of the Platonic Idea of the beautiful. Consequently, I regard this return to Plato as a crucial aspect of Gadamer's effort to transcend the aesthetic. See Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., ed. and trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum 2004), 37–49; abbreviated as TM. *Gesammelte Werke 1: Hermeneutik I* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990), 48–87; abbreviated as GW1.
3. Hans Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 15; abbreviated as RB.
4. TM 472–3; GW1 481.
5. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*, ed. Richard Palmer (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 203; abbreviated as GR. *Gesammelte Werke 7: Griechische Philosophie III* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 380; abbreviated as GW7.
6. Although it lies outside the restricted purview of this essay, Gadamer also seeks to renew the original relation of beauty to the good. In fact, he wants to retrieve the essential "belonging-together" of the beautiful, the true and the good for which Platonic thought provides the crucial source. For Gadamer's reflection on the idea of the good see GW7 128–227; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986); abbreviated IG.
7. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger's Ways*, trans. John W. Stanley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 144; abbreviated as HW. *Gesammelte Werke 3: Neuere Philosophie I* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987), 289; abbreviated as GW3.
8. Martin Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" in *Pathmarks*, ed. William MacNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 155–82.
9. HW 84; GW3 240–1. Even late in his career, Heidegger continues to see Plato as the ancient thinker most responsible for setting philosophy on course toward metaphysics.

- See his “Seminar at Thor” (1969) reprinted in *Vier Seminare* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), 75.
10. HW 87; GW3 243. Gadamer makes this point explicitly with respect to Plato’s idea of the good. But I hold that the same basic point applies to the idea of the beautiful as well.
 11. GR 379; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke 10: Hermeneutik im Rückblick* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995), 150–1 (Gadamer’s emphasis); abbreviated as GW10. Elsewhere Gadamer remarks of Heidegger: “Only the thought-event of the Platonic dialogues . . . remained inaccessible to this impatient questioner in spite of all the momentum behind his appropriations” (HW 144; GW3 289). Despite such remarks, Heidegger does recognize this aspect of Plato’s thought. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, for instance, he cites Plato’s description of the idea of the good in the *Republic* as *epekeina tes ousias* and observes that here one comes upon something as “going beyond being” (Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans., Albert Hofstadter [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982], 284.) Heidegger further acknowledges that Plato thinks the good in relation to truth as the basic condition for the knowledge of beings and for the understanding of being. But he insists that the meaning of the “beyond” and the significance of the good remain obscure (Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 285–6). Heidegger then asks how the idea of the good can be connected to his thesis that ancient philosophy interprets being within the horizon of production. Deferring an answer, he intimates that “the idea agathou is nothing but the demiourgos, the producer pure and simple” (Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 286). Here Heidegger appears to deny that the “going beyond being” of the good points beyond metaphysics. No doubt Gadamer would contest such a preemptive gesture that would include Plato’s idea of the good within the productive paradigm of a history of metaphysics understood as the forgetfulness of being. (I want to thank the reviewer for alerting me to this passage in Heidegger).
 12. HW 165; GW3 307.
 13. HW 86; GW3 243.
 14. HW 151; GW3 295.
 15. HW 160; GW3 302–3.
 16. Wachterhauser develops at length Gadamer’s critique of Heidegger’s Plato interpretation specifically with respect to the idea of the good. See Brice R. Wachterhauser, *Beyond Being: Gadamer’s Post-Platonic Hermeneutic Ontology* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 166–99.
 17. TM 476; GW1 485.
 18. HW 148–9; GW3 292–3.
 19. HW 88; GW3 244.
 20. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, vol. 1, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 192; abbreviated as N1.
 21. N1 195.
 22. N1 196.
 23. N1 198.

24. It should be acknowledged that Heidegger's aim is to profile the "raging discordance" between art and truth in Nietzsche's thought against Plato. Prompted by Nietzsche's "reversal of Platonism," he discerns a discord in the *Phaedrus* that runs deeper than the distance established between art (*mimesis*) and truth (*aletheia*) in *Republic X*. Heidegger's reading of the *Phaedrus* thus hinges on the "felicitous discordance" he finds between truth as "non-sensuous illumination" and beauty as its sensuous site. This divergence within Being between the supersensuous and the sensuous marks a discord that is nonetheless effaced where the true is sheltered within the beautiful, that is, where "the beautiful elevates us beyond the sensuous and bears us back to the true" (N1 198). With this gesture, however, Heidegger invokes the "Platonic" distinction between the intelligible and sensible that Gadamer, as we shall see, is at pains to challenge. Heidegger thereby seems to draw Plato's idea of beautiful back into the orbit of metaphysics from which Gadamer seeks to release it.
25. HW 161; GW3 303.
26. GR 380; GW 10 151.
27. TM 473; GW1 482.
28. Ibid.
29. GR 308; GW7 243.
30. GR 31.
31. GR 307; GW7 242.
32. GR 307; GW7 242.
33. Drew Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 55.
34. Ibid.
35. GR 309; GW7 244.
36. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980), 134; abbreviated as DD. *Gesammelte Werke 6: Griechische Philosophie II* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1985), 136; abbreviated as GW6.
37. GR 307; GW7 242.
38. GR 307; GW7 242.
39. GR 308; GW7 242.
40. Wachterhauser, *Beyond Being*, 187.
41. DD 133; GW6 136. For an acute criticism of Heidegger's failure to recognize the distinctive status of the idea of the good in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" see Adriaan T. Peperzak, "Heidegger and Plato's Idea of the Good," in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 271–8.
42. DD 133; GW6 136. By Gadamer's own admission, these highest genera are therefore "transcendental."
43. Gadamer believes that Plato's exclusive use of the term "*idea*" (and never "*eidōs*") in connection with *agathon* is indicative of its transcendence. In this usage of *idea* he detects an emphasis on "looking *to*" something by contrast to "looking *at*" which predominates in *eidōs*. I suspect that, for Gadamer, this holds for *to kalon* as well;

- like idea of the good, the idea of the beautiful is not an intelligible object one looks at, but a singular transcendence one looks toward (GW7 143; IG 27–8).
44. HW 88; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege: Studien zum Spätwerk* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983), 76.
 45. HW 88; Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege*, 76. Although Gadamer makes this remark specifically about the good, he also refers to the *Phaedrus* 250d where Plato explicitly invokes the beautiful as that which is *to ekphanestaton*.
 46. TM 476; GW1 485.
 47. TM 476; GW1 485.
 48. TM 475; GW1 485.
 49. GR 310; GW7 245.
 50. TM 476; GW1 485.
 51. TM 481–2; GW1 491.
 52. TM 476; GW1 485.
 53. GR 311; GW7 246.
 54. IG 11; GW7 134.
 55. TM 477; GW1 486.
 56. The German word “*Schein*,” invokes connotations that range from look and appearance to semblance and even illusion. Gadamer emphasizes the “positive” connotations of look and appearance rather than the “negative” ones of semblance and illusion.
 57. GR 310; GW7 245.
 58. GR 310; GW7 245. Gadamer thereby executes a more specific recovery of the “Pythagorean” Plato (over and against the Aristotelian critique) that would reclaim the phenomenological basis for correlating the order of being with the order of beauty while leaving aside the teleological order of numerical ratios that pervades the Pythagorean affirmation of order in the cosmos, music, and the soul.
 59. *Ibid.*
 60. John Sallis, *Being and Logos: The Way of Platonic Dialogue* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1975), 156.
 61. TM 477; GW1 486.
 62. GR 310; GW7 244–5.
 63. Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 28.
 64. TM 483; GW1 493.
 65. TM 477; GW1 486.
 66. TM 478; GW1 487.
 67. TM 477; GW1 486.
 68. TM 474; GW1 483.
 69. GR 209; *Gesammelte Werke 8: Ästhetik und Poetik I* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebek), 1993), 385; abbreviated as GW8.
 70. DD 139; GW6 140.
 71. IG 114; GW7 192.

72. IG 112; GW7 191.
73. GR 209; GW8 386. Risser rightly points to the suddenness of beauty as “an originating moment of emergence” that exhibits “the strangeness of *generation*.” See “The Flash of Beauty” in James Risser, *The Life of Understanding: A Contemporary Hermeneutics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 99–111.
74. GR 114; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gadamer Lesebuch* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1997), 105.
75. GR 205; GW8 382.
76. GR 315; GW7 250.
77. IG 117; GW7 194.
78. IG 115; GW7 192–3. Cf. *Philebus* 64e.
79. IG 115; GW7 193.
80. IG 116; GW7 193.
81. TM 477; GW1 486.
82. Wachterhauser, *Beyond Being*, 186–91.
83. According to Wachterhauser, Gadamer’s retrieval of the idea of the beautiful from a “metaphysical” interpretation allows a hermeneutic reading of Plato that does not so much occlude the ontological difference as relativize it (ibid. 191–4).
84. RB 91; GW8, 322
85. Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *Heidegger’s Basic Writings*, rev. ed., ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1993), 339–40.
86. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*, 116.
87. TM 70–87, GW1 87–106.
88. GR 207; GW8 383–4.

