

Fernando Pessoa

CRITIQUE OF PLATO'S THEORY

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When Plato says that Beauty alone is Beautiful, that Whiteness alone is truly white, he errs. For to be beautiful means «to participate in Beauty» and to be white means «to participate in whiteness», to possess whiteness in some degree. But Beauty does not possess Beauty, neither is Whiteness white.

We commit the same error as Plato when we, seeing that infinity contains, all numbers, is the only true number whereas infinity is not a number at all, but is of another nature entirely.

The origin of this error is easily seen when we consider a series. Here we are prompted to say infinity is superior to any number. Here is the error of Plato. Infinity is neither superior nor inferior to any number; because superiority and inferiority depend on number, on degree.

But not even is Infinity *different* from number. For the principle of difference is degree; degree is numeric; and infinity is not number.

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