

THE SILENCE IN PLOTINUS

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Silence led me to Plotinus. The glimpse of Silence in the words of the mystics¹ was for me, not only a sign of its existence, but also the possibility of attaining it from an “engagement” and “exercise” capable of leading to it. And so, through Silence, an ideal, or rather, a purpose started to appear at that very moment, and a path that I have not known, but suspected it had one day existed in the Christian and Jewish traditions. Pursuing the trails of Silence, and of “exercises” or “practices” capable of leading me to silence, I found outside those traditions, and, therefore, without any formal ascetic connotation, other leading possibilities towards that direction. Thus, I discovered my craft — The Eutony of Gerda Alexander² — and I found my way to academic life³. I tried to find the words to talk about Silence — intelligible Silence. When my supervisor Dr. Prof. Luiz Felipe Pondé learnt of my interest in Philon of Alexandria, he suggested I also read Plotinus in Giovanni Reale⁴. From Philon to Plotinus, the meeting with antique Greek Philosophy and the certainty of having ‘found’ who would make me grasp the answers to my questions, what guided my journey for over twenty years.

¹ Especially in Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross.

² The Eutony is a therapeutic body-centred practice developed in Denmark by Gerda Alexander (1908-1994). It aims at, among other things, offering its practitioners sufficient resources, so they can balance the muscle tonus, improve daily life posture, movements and gestures, as well as the relationship with oneself and with the others. This is achieved through the eutonic “touch” and/or through specific attention exercises directed to body sensations. Bibliography on Eutony: Gerda ALEXANDER. *Eutonia: Um caminho para a percepção corporal*. São Paulo, Martins Fontes, 1983; Gunna BRIEGHEL-MULLER. *Eutonia e relaxamento*. São Paulo, Manole, 1987; Berta VISHNIVETZ. *Eutonia: Educação do corpo para o ser*. São Paulo, Summus, 1995; Violeta Hemsy de GAINZA. *Conversas com Gerda Alexander: Vida e pensamentos da criadora da Eutonia*. São Paulo, Summus 1997; Gunna BRIEGHEL-MULLER e Anne-Marie WINKLEER. *Pedagogia e Terapia em Eutonia. Guia de regulação psicotônica*. São Paulo, Summus, 1999; Cecília Lourenço MAEDA. *Eutonia e processo de individuação: Uma abordagem psicossomática*, 2000. Dissertação de Mestrado, PUC-SP; Rosa Maria HÉRCOLES. *Eutonia: Um processo de comunicação no corpo*, 2000. Dissertação de Mestrado, PUC-SP.

³ On being invited to teach “Práticas de Desenvolvimento Pessoal” [Personal Development Practices] at the program of International Relations at Santa Marcelina College, it was demanded that I held a Master Degree. I had no idea where to start from neither had a subject, so I realised that I could study the “Silence”. Due to my professional practice, I firstly went to the Semiotics Department of the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo - PUC-SP, where a peer eutonist was completing her masters. There, I could not find a way to conduct my research regarding the mystics, so I sought the Program on Religious Science. This is why I understand that “practice” led me to the masters.

⁴ G. REALE. *História da Filosofia Antiga – Vol. IV*. São Paulo, Loyola, 1994.

We went through all places with Plotinus, but in none of them did we find what we searched for. In appearances we did not find any traces, for they merely insinuate on the inside⁵ and in the seams and this is why we sought persistently, behind appearances, for the thread that weaves the web within the essence of his writings. The echoes of Silence would accompany us at every step, and we then thought: where will we find it? As we walked along, the landscapes we had been seeing have turned themselves into vision. Vision and contemplation were one single thing. We acted to see and saw to contemplate.⁶ Our writing itself would take form, as we recognised that, in the intertwining of thoughts that expresses all that it knows, all that we aggregated to a primal simplicity, and that, for this very reason, is made clear in our writings. This stage corresponds to the first part of this study, *The Silent Contemplation*, the density of which is but a mere reflection of this distance from the Principle that is made along the path from the intelligible to the sensible world, *phýsis or Nature*⁷ and man.

Integrated to his way of thinking, and not only while the object of discourse, but more especially while subject who build bridges within the recognition of his position in the hierarchical structure of realities, man is invited to take it upon him to carry his own unification. The plotinian discourse is a lively one, in which the interlocutor can see himself reflected in the words evoking “that memory” — the memory of himself. As man is not only present in discourse only as object, it is exactly for this reason that he can, little by little, fit in as subject, and receives the necessary impulse to initiate or proceed his journey towards the unification of the Soul (*psyché*). As we went along, we left behind all that we had not been, or what we discovered had not belong to us since the very beginning. The only way to plod along this path is through silencing. We surmised merely its presence and, in Presence *parousía* from Who inspired us, we would recognise, from afar, the possibility of finding Silence in his writings. And, when we finally found a definition capable of completing our quest, we glimpsed, on its trail, signs that lead us to our goal. In the second part of the present study, we share this long and solitary journey, *The Silence in Plotinus*. Though alone, we did not feel lonely, since, while in the company of Plotinus, we were together with those who, just like us, commentators, were on the track of his trails, and saw the Silence in his writings. In the third part, *The Silence in Plotinus’ Commentators*, their voices express the echoes of

⁵ The word “inside” does not mean the opposite here, but the inside of the web that, hides in the seam, and enables the system to present itself as such.

⁶ PLOTINUS. Treatise 30 [III 8], 6, 1-10

⁷ We will use capital letters when we refer to a Greek term.

plotinian Silence. Among them we can highlight, from 1947 to 2002, the contributions of Pierre-Maxime Schuhl⁸, Jean Trouillard⁹, Giovanni Reale¹⁰, Annick Charles-Saget¹¹, Pierre Hadot¹², Jean-Louis Chrétien¹³, Paul Mathias¹⁴, Danielle Montet¹⁵, André Bord¹⁶, Michel Fattal¹⁷, Bertrand Ham¹⁸, Reinholdo Aloysio Ullmann¹⁹, Bernard Collette²⁰, and Florent Tazzolio²¹.

We first glimpsed the plotinian idea of Contemplation (*theoría*). More than a concept, Contemplation corresponds to a conversion of sight that reminds both the Principle (*arkhé*) that generated us as well as ourselves and to all that we created. To understand contemplation it is required that we make an effort in order to penetrate in a “way of thinking” that goes beyond the limits of the very process of discursive and linear thinking, as contemplation corresponds to a reflexive act, to an “introjection” that is independent from the level of reality in which we find ourselves. In the act of contemplating, what is contemplated is present in contemplation and, in that sense, contemplation always entails the contemplation of oneself. Contemplation is, at once, conversion and dispersion. Fullness and emptiness are also part of contemplation. In plenitude, overflowing occurs. The weakening that results from the unfolding of oneself reaches the action. We merely act because we wish to contemplate, see, and return to the origin.²² From emptiness to action, to *praxis*, and unification. All this occurs without our being able to realise it, in Silence. The motion succeeds itself in an “overflow” of

⁸ P-M SCHUHL, Pierre-Maxime. *Études sur La Fabulation Platonicienne*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1947.

⁹ J. TROUILLARD, *La Purification Plotinienne*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1955.

¹⁰ G. REALE, *História da Filosofia Antiga*. v. I -V. São Paulo, Loyola, 1994.

¹¹ A. CHARLES-SAGET, *L'Architecture du divin: Mathématique et philosophie chez Plotin et Proclus*. Paris, Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1982.

¹² P. HADOT, *Plotin: Traité 38*. Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987. / *Plotin: Traité 9*. Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994. / *Plotin ou la Simplicité du regard*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997. / *La philosophie comme manière de vivre. Entretiens avec Jeannie Carlier et Arnold I. Davidson*. Paris, Albin Michel, 2001. *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*. Paris, Albin Michel, 2002.

¹³ J-L CHRÉTIEN, *La voix nue: La phénoménologie de la promesse*. Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990.

¹⁴ P. MATHIAS, *Plotin: Du Beau. Ennéades I, 6 et V. 8*. Paris, Pocket, 1991.

¹⁵ D. MONET, *Archéologie et généalogie. Plotin et la théorie des genres*. Grenoble, Editions Jérôme Millon, 1996.

¹⁶ A. BORD, *Plotin et Jean de La Croix*. Paris, Beauchesne Editeur, 1996.

¹⁷ M. FATTAL, *Logos et image chez Plotin*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998.

¹⁸ HAM, Bertrand. *Plotin: Traité 49 V. 3*. Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2000.

¹⁹ R.A.ULLMANN, *Plotinus: Um estudo das Enéadas*. Porto Alegre, EDIPUCRS, 2002.

²⁰ B. COLLETTE, *Dialectique et Hénologie chez Plotin*. Bruxelles, Éditions OUSIA, 2002.

²¹ F. TAZZOLIO. *Du lien de l'Un et de l'être chez Plotin*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 2002.

²² PLOTINUS. *Treatise 30 [III 8]*, 6, 1-10

successive realities; a motion originating from rest, without any effort²³. Contemplation is silent and all happens with nothing being done.

And contemplation is silence.
All reality is therefore “contemplation” and “silence”.²⁴

Plotinus describes the stages of ascesis and performs the journey together with the reader departing from his own referential, in other words, from the place where the reader-interlocutor finds himself. As there is no single path, we perceive that at each Treatise or even as a whole, the *Enneads*, many routes are indicated to access the Principle. The first stage²⁵ of the ascesis concerns the recognition of the existence of Soul, and of its role as an intermediate between the sensible and intelligible worlds. The rational Soul knows itself when, illuminated by the light emanated from the Intellect, it recognises its distance from its origin. On reaching that level of self-knowledge, it ceases all and every activity, and on being attracted to a higher level, it lives the life of whom has a simultaneous view of oneself in all things – Intellect (*noûs*). The Intellect that knows itself sees itself reflected in the Forms (*êidos*), through which it recognises its own dependence in relation to the Principle, since, yet, it does not have its own light, but receives its light from another stronger one. As it does not yet have the light that illuminates itself, the Intellect must abandon all the knowledge it acquired of itself, since what it knows as itself only corresponds to an image of the One which is self-sufficient, and of something it yearns to become: the Principle that does not even know itself because if it were actually able to do it, it would be different from what it is and it would not be the Principle of all things any longer. Only the One is self-sufficient and does not even need Himself, for He neither want, nor need anything. He does not even know Himself because if He actually did, He would not be Who he is but other.

As we come closer to the Principle, a new horizon unfolds ready to be crossed indicating that we have not reached the end of our voyage. Even if we had glimpsed, in the recognition of the Intellect the completion of our goal, on arriving there, we discover that there is still a narrow passage of infinite power to be crossed. We still lack — and here

²³ IDEM. Treatise 31[V 8], 7, 22-29.

²⁴ G. REALE, *História da Filosofia Antiga*, p. 532.

²⁵ Although the term “stage” indicates a succession of events, it is convenient to highlight that, in this case, they are not excluding, but, on the contrary, they need one another to accomplish their goals at each landscape of the path.

knowledge is synonymous with experiencing — to become other than the one we have lived until now. To abandon “the other” that we are and become One with One. The Being is the “Other” in relation to the One. While primary emanation of the Principle, it originates from the vision that the *energéia* has of itself when its power cannot any longer be retained within itself. Thus, power originates the acts that performs the distance from its Principle and that corresponds to the moment of indetermination, also known as the Intellect in love (*noûs éron*). Still in direct contact with the One, its vision and contemplation are formless and not intellectual.

In order for us to deepen our knowledge of the intelligible world, we must know the reality of beings and the reciprocal relations that they establish between one another and with the Principle. In our search to know the relation between beings, we are led to the notion of Primary Genera²⁶ first presented by Plato in *Sophist*²⁷ and renovated by Plotinus in *Treatise 43 [VI 2]*. The Primary Genera — Being, Sameness, Otherness, Motion and Rest²⁸ — correspond, in its totality, to Intellect, as only it can absorb and retain the power of the One within itself. On expressing the unity of Principle — the primary unity of the One — Genera perform their main function that is that of establishing the connection and cohesion between the parts that make one same reality. Knowing the “moment” of indefinition that generates Primary Genera helps us recognize what still separates us from the Principle, what is to be abandoned for the union to take place. To enter the “moment of indetermination”, from which everything emanates and to which everything is turned to, to perform the same motion through which “the vision prior to the vision” is made possible is the same as experiencing “the quivering of the One in the springing Intellect”.²⁹

In that sense, it may be of interest to think that the Self (the Same) and the Other are inseparably united to the Motion that performs the distance in relation to the Principle, from which the Being originates, and whose Rest reflects the permanence of the One in itself and to which we turn, when seeking to simplify our Soul; we must perform this same motion, only inversely and, thus, starting from “re-cognition” of the Other and of the Same, perform the only and same Motion capable of leading us back from the intelligible world to the One. What

²⁶ We will use capitals to refer to Plotinus’ Primary Genera, and , in this way, we will be able to differentiate them from the genera of Plato.

²⁷ PLATÃO, *Sofista*, 251 a – 259 e.

²⁸ PLOTINUS. *Treatise 43 [VI 2]*, 6, 17-20; 7-8.

is that Motion to which we must return to if we want to “experience” the One? And what is the path that leads us in His direction?

Firstly, we must clarify that, as we are dealing with the “indefinite reality” that immediately follows the One, we shall deal here with the Primary Motion and the Primary Otherness³⁰. The Primary Motion is performed simultaneously in two ways: from the distance in relation to the Principle arises the Primary Otherness, and Sameness is revealed from the return or conversion to It. The passage from the intelligible to the indefinite reality, the closest to the One, occurs through the overcoming of the Sameness at the level of the Genera triad in reference to “Motion-Sameness-Otherness”, and corresponds to the simplification or to the passage from the intelligible world to the Indefinite Dyad. Composed by the “Primary Motion and Primary Otherness”³¹ it “is” what always “was” even before having been. Behind the idea of Indefinite Dyad, Plotinus reveals what defines his thoughts. Plotinus's thoughts reveal the reflections of superabundance of the One present in Forms and hides what enables Forms to be manifest. The ground from which Plotinus builds his thoughts has less to do with Forms, and more to do with what that, prior to forms, is impassive, infinite, and eternal.

The weft weaves itself and thus realities appear. The same weft remains for ever, because, behind these reflections, remains What emanates everything, and Who remains, weaves the weft that establishes the cohesion between the parts and that is not even the Principle, nor its reflection, but simply what supports and maintains it, because it does not change. What does not change is Matter (*hýle*). Intelligible Matter (*hýle noete*) is the background of all Plotinus's thoughts. Taking as a point of reference the moment of pre-noetic indefiniteness and the emerging of the Intellect in love, the Primary Otherness may be considered as what limits and gives support to the Primary Motion from which it emerges itself, and from which all other proceeding relations occur. Because Matter relates neither with the Principle, nor with what emanates from the Principle, and so it can be considered as

²⁹ D. MONTET, *Archéologie et généalogie: Plotin et la théorie platonicienne des genres*, Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 1996, p. 141-2.

³⁰ PLOTINUS. Treatise 12 [II 4], 5, 29-34.

³¹ Plotinus does not define on an objective way the Indefinite Dyad as the Primary Motion and Primary Otherness as we do here, although he affirms “that motion and otherness come to life together” (12 [II 4], 5, 29-34) and that they correspond to the matter. We share with Danielle Montet the idea that “motion and otherness, factors of the intelligible matter, are qualified as primary; this motion and this otherness do not affect the Primary, instead they are defined with respect to It by leaving it, by moving away from it. Reciprocally, considered as the Noûs, the matter is a factor of identity as the constitutive dimension of all forms”. Cf. Danielle MONTET, *Archéologie et généalogie*, p. 230.

the element from which all relations are established. Interfacing different levels of reality, matter, which remains impassive, does not change. It is difficult to express what occurs even before all occurs, what exists even before existence, that is to say, what enables existence to occur. Plotinus also manages to say the ineffable.

Considering that everything we comprehended so far had to do with Form, we recognised merely our resemblance with it. Therefore the indetermination relative to Forms represents an inversion of perspective, as nothing changes with reference to the Principle. The perspective of the One is always the same. We are the ones who change our perspective on approaching the Indefinite Dyad. But what does this inversion of perspective entail? When we stop relating only with Forms with which we identify ourselves, we find the indetermination of Matter. And it is at this precise moment that the inversion of our vision occurs. If we recognised up to that point our resemblance with the Principle through the reflections present in the Forms, on abandoning reflections, we reach the “bottom” — Matter — from which emerges both the possibility of determination and the consequent emergence of realities, as well as the inversion of the emanation order, at turning into and abandoning ourselves, on returning to the origin, we achieve the unification of the Soul.

Plotinus describes the vision inversion and that change of perspective of whom has “experienced the One”. The very moment when we are in the One, no Other exists anymore, but merely the totality that everything embraces. And when we return from the supreme Unity, we discover that we are the others with reference to the One, since we can only recognise it from our distance and otherness. What we know as ourselves is established from the distance; this is the reason why we say that when there is no distance, not even the Self exists. Knowing oneself is to recognise other than the Principle. Although we are attracted by the Forms, what attracts us in the first place³² is Whom comes before them, to which we relate only as we dispose, ourselves, of all Forms, since with reference to the intelligible world — differently from the sensible world in which what separates us are bodies — what draws us away from the Principle is our otherness.³³ As Plotinus says:

³² PLOTINUS. Treatise 38 [VI 7], 33.

³³ The relationship between “Primary Genera” and the otherness is described on the Treatise 38 [VI 7], 13 and 19.

For bodies are hindered from communion with each other by bodies, but incorporeal things are not kept apart by bodies; nor are they separated in place, but by otherness and difference. 9 [VI 9], 8, 31-33³⁴

In this manner, in order for the God to be able to be re-recognised by the Soul, the latter must dispose itself from all Forms³⁵ and, thus, not knowing itself, it is in Him that it is another, and both are One. On Plotinus's words:

When therefore there is no otherness, the things which are not other are present to each other. That One, therefore, since it has no otherness is always present, and we are present to it when we have no otherness. 9 [VI 9] 8, 33-37³⁶

In its proximity, Intellect in love touches the One and its recognition is immediate. In having no otherness in itself the One is always present in itself and, this is why, it is Presence for the others. It is in this Presence³⁷ that we recognise the One in ourselves. The Silence tells the ineffable about itself in his writings. And we can only recognise it when, on abandoning all otherness, we experience the silent Presence of the One. As Plotinus also says:

For there could not be thinking without otherness, and also sameness. These then are primary, Intellect, Being, Otherness, Sameness; but one must also include Motion and Rest. One must include motion if there is thought, and rest that it may think the same; and otherness, that there may be thinker and thought; or else, if you take away otherness, it will become one and silent; and the objects of thought, also, must have otherness in relation to each other. But one must include sameness, because it is one with itself, and all have some common unity; and the distinctive quality of each is otherness. 10 [V 1], 4, 34- 41³⁸

As the starting point and point of arrival, the above statement is emblematic of the Plotinian Silence. Following Plotinus' trails and the evolution of his thinking step by step, and from the definition of Presence as the "absence of otherness"³⁹ and of Silence as the "suppression of otherness"⁴⁰, we can recognise among other things, that in his writings Silence speaks through the Presence. Presence, solitude, and sound allusions speak of

³⁴ Translated by A.H. Armstrong. *Plotinus - Ennead VI. 6-9*, London, 1988.

³⁵ PLOTINUS. Treatise 9 [VI 9], 7, 15.

³⁶ Translated by A.H. Armstrong. *Plotinus - Ennead VI. 6-9*

³⁷ In relation to the Presence, we found on Treatises 9 [VI 9], 38 [VI 7] and 49 [V 3], representative of the written phases of Plotinus, the following references to the Presence: Treatise 9 [VI 9], 4,3; 4,25; 7,5; 8,27; 8, 30-35; 9,49; 11,23-25; Treatise 38 [VI 7], 34; 35, 21-22; Treatise 49 [V 3], 16, 26; 17,12; and, yet, the Treatise 31 [V 8], 11,1-22.

³⁸ Translated by A.H. Armstrong. *Plotinus - Ennead V*, London, 1984.

³⁹ PLOTINUS. Treatise 9 [VI 9] 8, 33-37.

⁴⁰ IDEM, Treatise 10 [V 1], 4, 34-39.

Silence⁴¹, though very often in an indirect manner. The will to find “a place for Silence” also makes us seek Him in “all places” and, faced with the impossibility of finding it in “some where”, still following our quest, we are forced to admit that, if we actually want to find it, it is our task to abandon “our place” (thought) to be in the Presence of Him in All. This is why Plotinus tells us:

We must go in silence and enquire no longer, aware in our minds that there is no way out. For why should one even enquire when one has nothing to go on to, since every enquire goes to a principle and stands still in it? 39 [VI 8], 11, 2-4⁴²

The search only ends once we have “found” Who we searched for so much. And, to find Him, we must relinquish, in the end, the most precious of what we received from Him. The abandonment of otherness and of its consequent sameness is necessary if we wish to be free of our needs, as whoever is in need requires exactly what one does not have, and to have what one desires, one must abandon what represents that absence in oneself, in other words, the otherness. We have to let go, abandon the emptiness if we want to find what we seek so much, if we want to be in the Presence in God. Plotinus does not speak of Silence, but leads to It. The solitary road intermingled with beautiful sceneries together with the light of Whomever has guided us up to now must be left beyond His words and His company. If, from Intellect onwards, the journey is lonely, for the presence of guides is no longer necessary, we have now “the solitude to the solitary”⁴³ that must yet be abandoned. And this is the sharpest pain of the Soul. Leave all that you conquered until now, the self-knowledge, self-sufficiency and the highest of the Intellect. Renounce everything imitating the One, that thinks of nothing, has nothing, is nothing. The birth-pangs of the Soul's as it discards itself from everything only ends when it manages to “give birth”; that is when it becomes a self illuminating light. The pains do not cease until the delivery is over⁴⁴ and light is seen by itself without any mediation,

⁴¹ In an attempt to extract , from the group of Treatises, direct or indirect references to the Silence, we highlighted the following Treatises: Treatise 1 [I 6], 7, 1-14; Treatise 10 [V 1], 4, 34-39; 10[V 1], 12, 12-20; Tratado 27 [IV 3], 4, 26-28; Treatise 28 [IV 4], 8, 55-56; 28 [IV 4], 45, 27; Treatise 30 [III 8], 4, 1-22; 4, 27; 5, 26; 6, 12-14; 6, 25-31; 9, 27-30; Treatise 31 [V 8], 7,25; 11, 1-22; Treatise 38 [VI 7], 12, 26-30; Treatise 39 [VI 8], 11, 2; Treatise 45 [III 7], 12, 1-3; Treatise 49 [V 3], 10, 40-54. Although we have not mentioned anything in relation to the matter of sound in Plotinus, we would not avoid suggesting that the interested ones read chapter 5 of Treatise 29 [IV 5] which deals with sounds, without mentioning the matter of Silence, be it sensitive or intelligible.

⁴² Translated by A.H. Armstrong. *Plotinus - Ennead VI. 6-9*

⁴³ PLOTINUS. Treatise 9 [VI 9], 11, 50

⁴⁴ On speaking of the pains of delivering, Plotinus goes back to the idea of Plato's *Teeteto* (148e – 151d) in which Socrates calls himself the “soul deliverer”. It is in Treatise 49 [V 3], 17, 15-21 that Plotinus remembers the power of enchantment of words and of his own speech to create, just like Socrates, a tension that leads to light and, at the same time, soothe his pains in delivering.

since the light that is seen and the light that shines are now One and same light.⁴⁵ All is light!
All is Silence!

The novelty in Plotinus resides in the manner, in which he highlights the link among all things and the One from distance and from separation. We, therefore, must not consider that the originality of Plotinus is expressed in what he says of the One, but in the manner in which, from the distance established by the thought and from the recognition of the separation that it induces, Plotinus leads to his goal —the coincidence with the One. It is on recognising our separation and distance, for we did not lose the link with Him, that we say that He is separated. On asserting the separation I know the distance whose leap is fully performed in the coincidence, in the unitive experience. Plotinus invites to this coincidence through the recognition of the Otherness, from the difference capable of leading through the same motion that differentiated to the recognition of the link that was never broken. To say that the One is separated is an artifice, the single artifice capable of revealing the separation and of leading us, through thought, to the notion of separation that he himself establishes and that, nevertheless, must be abandoned because separation too is an illusion, the last illusion. Plotinus, therefore, skips thinking with thought and goes beyond, he goes down to the Source and Origin, though he neither speaks of the Source, nor of the Origin. He does not say anything about the One — not because of an impossibility due to a limitation but because of its everlastingness — but attracts everything to Him turning Him inaccessible.

At first, I think that the One, or God, is the “other” and that we are separated. Then I discovered that I am “other” than Him. Once I recognised that I am other than Him, I realise that we are not separated (except in thought⁴⁶). Only thought separates us from God or from the One. When thoughts go silent, all the rest becomes silent. When we accept that we cannot know anything from the One and that we cannot say anything about Silence, we go silent. We make ourselves silent by recognising that we were never separated from Him. To recognise the non-separation from the One, that is the challenge...

⁴⁵ PLOTINUS. Treatise 49 [V 3], 17,15 - 38

⁴⁶ PLOTINUS. Treatise 43 [VI 2], 3, 27.