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PARTICULARS AS AGGREGATES OF QUALITIES IN PLATONIC THOUGHT

by Cristina Faggion



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PREFACE

When I informed a friend and fellow philosophy student about the topic of my thesis, she laughed and asked, "Cristina, what can you possibly say about Plato that hasn't already been said?", and then she chuckled some more. I had never quite thought of the situation in that way. Indeed, after well over two thousand years of scholarship on the man, what could have gone unsaid? Armed with obstinacy, a charming trait neither of my parents admire, I searched and searched until I stumbled upon a small area requiring a little reinforcement and upon this spot I placed a patch of just the right dimensions.

Particulars are aggregates of qualities. So says Plato flat out. When he does not announce it, what he proposes leads up to it. Crombie and Cornford mention this proposition only in passing. They do not devote many pages to it as the scope and magnitude of their work does not permit them to treat fully every aspect, every nuance, of Platonic thought. Particulars are composed of qualities. Certain properties are specifically arranged to create a dog as opposed to a cat or Goofy instead of Pluto. Composite things are made up of parts. Order distinguishes the world from chaos yet chaos is as physical as the world itself. Perhaps chaos is a jumble of properties but this is not my concern here. The last

feature of my thesis holds that qualities are bodily. For those readers whom disagree or find all this very mysterious, I encourage them to read on.

My dissertation is divided into several chapters, six to be exact, but the number of methods I employ notwithstanding the introduction is only two. The first I call the "hunt and ferret" course. It involves poring over each dialogue, inch by inch, until one smells out the precise words one is looking for. It is crude and especially time-consuming without the zip of a computer, but it yields satisfactory results nonetheless. The second I have fondly christened the "Sherlock Holmes" technique if only for the imprint remaining in my mind from reading all those stories. In reality, I am speaking of deduction. Given what Plato declares, I am able to effectively deduce the thesis. Ol' Sherlock himself would have been proud.

Without revealing any more — I prefer the reader to ooh and ah as he goes along — I have but one single thing left to add. Although I have read just about everything on my subject I could unearth, I opted to forgo as much as possible the views of others in my text. I wanted to challenge myself to write something a bit original or unique. I hope I have succeeded and the reader will not be disappointed. I apologize for all the cartoon and western references to come as these go over big in our home.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THINGS AND QUALITIES

Something exists. Some thing exists. A thing is any object, animate or inanimate, material or immaterial. A thing may be thought of or spoken about. Existence is that which all things possess and exercise. That which does not exist is unreferable, indescribable, unnameable and inconceivable. Indeed, to speak or think of that which does not exist is to fall into self-contradiction just as I have in the previous statement.

Things have qualities. How can it be otherwise? One cannot construct a mental or physical object without qualities. A sphere stripped of its properties is as impossible as a softball stripped of its. Likewise qualities exist in things. Qualities endure only in so far as they are supported by an object. Without objects to substantiate them, qualities disappear completely from existence. If all objects were the same size and no one conceived the ideas of small and large, then these two properties would be non-existent. In other words, things and qualities have a common existence.¹

But what are qualities? Virtually all philosophers have at some point turned their hand to defining these elusive beings. Locke held the quality of a subject to be "... the power to produce

any idea in our mind ...".² Berkeley considered all qualities to be entirely sensible and perceptible as indicated in the dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.³ Russell construed qualities as being "... the universals represented by adjectives and substantives ...".⁴ For Strawson, adjectives refer to properties while nouns refer to things.⁵ McTaggart goes as far as stating that "... quality is indefinable ... [and that all] we can do is to point to examples of qualities."⁶ As one can gather, the definition of the word "quality" is as slippery as the quality itself. Without enumerating examples in place of a definition, something Plato would surely have scoffed at, I shall endeavour after a working explanation of "quality".

Qualities are the characters, traits, marks, attributes or properties of things. Such a declaration is merely a profusion of synonyms and is no more an explanation than shouting. Qualities are those beings which give an object its appearance and determine its nature. When I confront an object, everything I sense about that object is a quality. A specific group of these properties designates the kind of thing I am facing while all of the properties together distinguish this individual from another.⁷ Objects which seem to be identical in every respect are not. Each quality is unique or one just as each object is unique or one: no two things can ever be one and the same thing. Besides objects can be differentiated well enough by the properties of number and place. Even mass-produced objects cannot be identical in these respects. When counting objects, I assign a successive numeral to each. And place individualizes for no two objects can occupy the same spot at the

same time. Number and place factor into the appearance of finite things only. Infinite being is not bound by qualities.

Then aggregates of qualities constitute things and things are decomposable into qualities. More needs to be said on this subject. To begin with, a finite object is more than the sum of its properties just as a whole is more than the sum of its parts. Parts are arranged in a certain order and related in a certain way so that a coherent whole emerges. The whole supersedes the parts by commanding a nature of its own. The letters "o", "p", "t" combine to form the words "opt", "pot" and "top" whereas the combinations of "otp", "pto" and "tpo" are not at all words. In the case of "opt", "pot" and "top", each is composed of the same letters set in a different yet specific and compatible sequence. In the matter of "otp", "pto" and "tpo", these amalgamations amount to mere gibberish. Words are sounds that convey meaning by referring to objects but gibberish is undoubtedly meaningless sound. Properties too are organized into definite associations thereby creating things. Things have natures. The Parthenon and the Aegean Sea are both beautiful even though the beauty of one is man-made whereas that of the other is natural. The quality beautiful figures differently in each. A temple is an edifice erected for worship. Seas are large bodies of salt water on the earth's surface. Each thing is generated via the appropriate relations of suitable qualities but enjoys a nature that surpasses the mass of its components.

There is an infinite number of possible qualities even if only a handful finds its way into an object. This fact of life can be demonstrated sufficiently by an old proverb. When I say no two

snowflakes are alike, I mean no two objects are fully identical. For example, objects that are said to be of equal length or weight differ more often than not by the minutest of fractions. One may be a thousandth of a millimetre shorter or a thousandth of a milligram lighter than the other. Such accuracy is exaggerated and does not pertain to everyday use but is real nonetheless. At the very least, one must acknowledge an endless roll of qualities dealing with number. Although the catalogue of conceivable qualities is immense, only a share of these qualities occupies any object at any time. All things are limited and as such can possess only so many qualities. To ascribe to an object a property it does not carry is to destroy that object or to alter its nature. A round-square ball is not anything but eliminate the properties of a ball and add those of a box and we now have a box. To ascribe to an object more than its lot of properties is both redundant and regressive. If one is ignorant of the shape of a sphere but knows enough to assert that a ball is neither a cube nor a pyramid, then he is uttering something albeit limited about the ball. But if he describes the body of the ball as spherical as well as non-cubic and non-pyramidal, he is being repetitive. When one expresses everything that something is not on top of everything it is, he slides further and further down an infinite regress as his list continues into perpetuity. That not all properties are compatible and that the affirmation of some implies the negation of others goes without saying. In other words, countless imaginable qualities exist yet the qualities present in a thing are exact and specific.⁸

2. PLATO ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PARTICULARS AND QUALITIES

Plato distinguishes between two kinds of things, namely particulars and qualities.⁹ All objects found in the physical world are particulars, everything from flowers to butterflies to teacups. Particulars are made up of various combinations of qualities. Neither particulars nor qualities can exist alone though they may be considered separately. Plato labours the distinction:

I do point them out, I said, if you can discern that some reports of our perceptions do not provoke thought to reconsideration because the judgment of them by sensation seems adequate, while others always invite the intellect to reflection because the sensation yields nothing that can be trusted.

You obviously mean distant appearances, he said, and shadow painting.

You have quite missed my meaning, said I.

What do you mean? he said.

The experiences that do not provoke thought are those that do not at the same time issue in a contradictory perception. Those that do have that effect I set down as provocatives, when the perception no more manifests one thing than its contrary, alike whether its impact comes from nearby or afar. An illustration will make my meaning plain. Here, we say, are three fingers, the little finger, the second, and the middle.

Quite so, he said.

Assume that I speak of them as seen near at hand. But this is the point that you are to consider.

What?

Each one of them appears to be equally a finger, and in this respect it makes no difference whether it is observed as intermediate or at either extreme, whether it is white or black, thick or thin, or of any other quality of this kind. For in none of these cases is the soul of most men impelled to question the reason and to ask what in the world is a finger, since the faculty of sight never signifies to it at the same time that the finger is the opposite of a finger.

Why, no, it does not, he said.

Then, said I, it is to be expected that such a perception will not provoke or awaken reflection and thought.

It is.

But now, what about the bigness and the smallness of these objects? Is our vision's view of them adequate, and does it make no difference to it whether one of them is situated outside or in the middle, and similarly of the relation of touch, to thickness and thinness, softness and hardness? And are not the other senses also defective in

their reports of such things? Or is the operation of each of them as follows? In the first place, the sensation that is set over the hard is of necessity related also to the soft, and it reports to the soul that the same thing is both hard and soft to its perception.

It is so, he said.

Then, said I, is not this again a case where the soul must be at a loss as to what significance for it the sensation of hardness has, if the sense reports the same thing as also soft? And, similarly, as to what the sensation of light and heavy means by light and heavy, if it reports the heavy as light, and the light as heavy?

Yes, indeed, he said, these communications to the soul are strange and invite reconsideration.

Naturally, then, said I, it is in such cases as these that the soul first summons to its aid the calculating reason and tries to consider whether each of the things reported to it is one or two.

Of course.

And if it appears to be two, each of the two is a distinct unit.

Yes.

If, then, each is one and both two, the very meaning of 'two' is that the soul will conceive them as distinct. For if they were not separable, it would not have been thinking of two, but of one.

Right.

Sight too saw the great and the small, we say, not separated but confounded. Is not that so?

Yes.

And for the clarification of this, the intelligence is compelled to contemplate the great and small, not thus confounded but as distinct entities, in the opposite way from sensation.

True.

And is it not in some such experience as this that the question first occurs to us, What in the world, then, is the great and the small?

By all means.

And this is the origin of the designation intelligible for the one, and visible for the other.¹⁰

Plato illustrates the distinction between particulars and qualities via perceptions. Particulars give rise to homogeneous perceptions — the mind is content with its verdict. Qualities in particulars bring about conflicting perceptions — the mind is roused to question its judgements. Plato presents particulars as unable to be more than one thing at a time but as always possessing opposing qualities.

The species of a particular is clear from the outset whereas some of its properties appear to oppose one another. The nature of a finger is above-board but its properties are suspect. The diameter of a finger seems thick from one angle and thin from another; its flexibility, solidity and so forth are unreliable. It is at this moment reason is called in to decide whether or not a pair of contrary properties might be in short one and the same. Reason rules on the side of the senses; to wit two contradictory sensations entail two distinct qualities. The senses are correct in reporting two inimical impressions since two hostile qualities exist. Plato employs the distinction between particulars and qualities to deduce a two-level ontology. Particulars are what they seem, viz. physical objects in a visible realm. Qualities on the other hand induce the mind to contemplation. Reason asks what the thick can be and what the thin can be when the two appear confounded in particulars. In doing so, reason embarks upon the search for Forms, those absolute, independent, unique, eternal, unchanging entities to which properties owe their essence and particulars their properties. Forms are intelligible objects occupying an intelligible realm. Particulars are the subject of belief while Forms, that which qualities resemble, are the subject of knowledge.

Plato distinguishes between two sets of qualities, namely material and moral, all of which are copies of Forms. By contrast, particulars are composed of diverse collections of qualities and as a result cannot be copies of Forms. Plato articulates these points:

Socrates, he said, your eagerness for discussion is admirable. And now tell me. Have you yourself drawn this distinction you speak of and separated apart on the one side forms themselves and on the other the things that share in

them? Do you believe that there is such a thing as likeness itself apart from the likeness that we possess, and so on with unity and plurality and all the terms in Zeno's argument that you have just been listening to?

Certainly I do, said Socrates.

And also in cases like these, asked Parmenides, is there, for example, a form of rightness or of beauty or of goodness, and of all such things?

Yes.

And again, a form of man, apart from ourselves and all other men like us — a form of man as something by itself? Or a form of fire or of water?

I have often been puzzled about those things, Parmenides, whether one should say that the same thing is true in their case or not.

Are you also puzzled, Socrates, about cases that might be thought absurd, such as hair or mud or dirt or any other trivial and undignified objects? Are you doubtful whether or not to assert that each of these has a separate form distinct from things like those we handle?

Not at all, said Socrates. In these cases, the things are just the things we see; it would surely be too absurd to suppose that they have a form. All the same, I have sometimes been troubled by a doubt whether what is true in one case may not be true in all. Then, when I have reached that point, I am driven to retreat, for fear of tumbling into a bottomless pit of nonsense. Anyhow, I get back to the things which we were just now speaking of as having forms, and occupy my time with thinking about them.

That, replied Parmenides, is because you are still young, Socrates, and philosophy has not yet taken hold of you so firmly as I believe it will someday. You will not despise any of these objects then, but at present your youth makes you still pay attention to what the world will think.¹¹

"Material" is the name I assign to the qualities listed by Plato at Theaetetus, 185c9-d2. These are "... existence and nonexistence, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and difference, and also unity [and plurality] and numbers in general ... and ... 'even' and 'odd' and all that kind of notions." At Parmenides, 129e1, Plato adds rest and motion to the list. At Phaedo, 74b, he speaks of equal and unequal; at 100e, of large and small; and at 101a, of tall and short. Plato never provides a complete inventory of properties or Forms but rather satisfies himself time and time again with examples.

Material is not the best term for this most seemingly varied set of properties. The word is too colourful. It wants to imply things like red or sweet or warm which Plato is justifiably reluctant to admit. The key to understanding this first group of qualities that I unabashedly call material lies in the difference between it and the likes of red, sweet and warm. While admiring the roses blooming in our garden, I notice the length of the stems, the texture of the leaves and the shape of the petals. The roses are of a bright red hue; their fragrance, sweet. During the day, they are warm to the touch. Now one must ask himself how these two sets differ. Length, texture and shape pertain to the anatomy of a rose. Red, sweet and warm are sensations. The structure of an object is part and parcel of the object: the two are inseparable. Sensations spring from contact between senses and object and are detached from the object that produces them. Material qualities make up the structure of an object and hence that very object itself. By possessing mass and occupying space, physical bodies exercise properties relating to "... solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number."¹² Physical bodies and their properties are precisely the objects of mathematics, the science of space, number and quantity. Mathematical postulates are arrived at by way of reason's perusal of the material qualities in physical things. Material qualities populating the visible realm are images of the mathematical postulates inhabiting the lower portion of the intelligible realm. In turn mathematical postulates are images of Forms.

Moral is a straightforward term to translate and moral qualities are easy to name. Moral describes the character or disposition of

an individual or an action. Moral conduct sheds light upon the identity of a person. A system of values allows us to judge the behaviour and nature of others. At Theaetetus, 186a5, Plato mentions the moral properties known as "... 'honorable' and 'dishonorable' and 'good' and 'bad' ...". At Phaedo, 70e2-3, he cites beauty and ugliness and right and wrong. At Protagoras, 329b6-334c4, he raises the virtues of justice, courage and temperance as well as the vices of injustice, cowardice and intemperance.¹³ Ethics is the science of morals and moral principles have moral qualities as their objects. Moral properties are part of the constitution of things in the visible realm and are copies of the Forms. I might add as do a host of others including Cornford that Plato in all probability acknowledged the Forms of moral qualities first since these are at the centre of Socratic inquiry.¹⁴

Particulars, unlike qualities, are not images of Forms. Forms of particulars do not exist. Particulars, qualities and Forms are different kinds of things and to suppose otherwise is sheer nonsense. Although Plato is anxious over the positing of Forms for particulars and his intuition rebels at such a deed, he stops short of justifying his claim. To explain Plato's warranted vexation, one need only imagine a reality where particulars too are copies of Forms. What would such a world be like? Let me see. Well, if besides qualities, particulars were images of Forms, then qualities and particulars would be identical or two different kinds of Forms would exist, namely Forms of qualities and Forms of particulars. The first possibility is plumb silly. The number one may exist as an idea inside my mind but outside the integer is found in single

objects only. An object is made up of properties but once someone begins to strip away properties one by one, he finds himself sooner or later with nothing left. A property can no more on its own stroll down the avenue than an object can create and characterize itself. Qualities and particulars are not identical. At a glance, the second course looks credible but after careful observation turns out to be incredible. If both Forms of qualities and Forms of particulars were to exist, the latter would overlap not only each other but also the former with the consequence of either creating redundancy, introducing an absurdity or resurrecting the Third Man. To illustrate, the Form of Tower coincides in part with that of Tree and with that of Tall. Even though Tall is the only pure Form of the three — Tower and Tree are composite — the character of Tallness is inherent to all three Forms. If the characters of Tallness in the three Forms are identical, then at the very least Tall must be eliminated. However, such a drastic step presents further problems. Tower and Tree would overlap each other still while allowing Tallness to lie in only one merely leads to a deficiency in the other. And even if some Forms of qualities are left standing and some Forms of particulars remain intact after the eradication of all recurrences, one finds himself at wits' end if he hazards to demonstrate how the sensible world is a copy of the intelligible world. Trees would be obliged to participate not only in Tree to be trees but also in Tower to be tall. On the other hand, by not pruning away this duplication from the intelligible realm, one invites an endless positing of Forms. If Tower, Tree and Tall each contain the character Tallness, one must postulate a second Tall over and above the three mentioned.

However, four characters of Tallness are now in the picture and the reader is constrained to infer a fifth and a sixth and so forth indefinitely in a vain attempt to discover a Form of Tall over and above the rest in which the rest participate. Therefore, the addition of Forms of particulars to the pot spoils the soup instead of enrichening it. Forms of particulars do not exist, are not required and serve no purpose. An intelligible realm populated solely by Forms of qualities is both sufficient and complete to secure a sensible world where particulars are simply various combinations of various qualities.

3. A TWO-LEVEL ONTOLOGY BEFORE TIMAEUS

Where do particulars and qualities fit in Plato's scheme of things? At Republic, 509d-511e, Plato provides the reader with a bare bones look at reality. Upon dividing the cosmos into two orders, namely the visible and the intelligible, he explains the contents of each, the relations between the two and the corresponding mental states. Nowhere in this passage does he employ the terms "particular" or "quality" having laid these aside temporarily in favour of the all-embracing "visible realm". The physical world is filled with particulars but Plato in tempting the construction of a neat, correlative system splits these into two groups. Representations are embodied ideas so to speak, things that bring to mind other things. The word "man", the sculpture of a man and the shadow cast by a man recall to memory a man or at the very least, the idea of a man. Without the original, the likeness whether it be audible, tangible or visible could not exist. Natural things play prototype to representations'

resemblance. Animals, plants, minerals and manufactured goods are exactly what they appear to be: temporary, unstable, contingent, composite, manifold, imperfect, material entities. A boy matures to manhood; his body ages, dies and then commences to decay. But the same may be said of representations. Once spoken, words fade away; sculptures may be damaged or destroyed; shadows increase or decrease their length or disappear altogether depending upon the position of the sun. The fact is particulars are made of qualities and since these are forever shifting, all particulars are equally susceptible to change. Whether or not they further are copies of each other is irrelevant. Due to their corporeal nature, the inhabitants of the physical universe are subject to opinion, nothing more. Because of their dual identity, representations rouse illusions. The sculpture of a man is a sculpture from the standpoint of material causality but a man from the standpoint of formal causality, unlike a man whose material, formal, efficient and final causes coincide. Yet a man like any other particular possesses opposing qualities. At one moment he appears to be tall; from a different angle, short. At times his conduct is just; now and then, reproachable. Corporeal beings incite belief or doubt at most. This sensible realm of opinion is the image of the intelligible realm of genuine knowledge.

The intelligible domain is busy with mathematical postulates and transcendental Forms. Once more Plato seems to be manipulating the cosmos for the sake of a uniform system. Mathematical postulates are the foundations upon which the pure sciences rest. By employing axioms in coordination with mathematical symbols and certain rules such as those of inference, mathematicians crank out theorem after

theorem. Forms are eternal, stable, independent, incomposite, unique, absolute, intelligible entities acting as the archetypes or patterns of all else. Triangles, circles, squares and other mathematical objects are copies of Forms despite the mind's ability to deduce these ideas using as images the natural things in the physical world. And here is the rub, the covered hole into which the unattentive slip. Ideas are created and sustained by the mind. Plato does not mention at all ideas in the analogy of the Line or the similes of the Sun or Cave, and rightly so. Particulars and Forms are material and immaterial beings respectively independent of the mind. Ideas are thoughts. The intelligible realm is populated solely by axioms and Forms and governed impartially by reason and dialectic. Particulars serve as the basis for mathematical postulates which in turn are modelled after dialectic. But are mathematical postulates really and truly a necessary step towards the positing of Forms? Plato did not seem to think so at Phaedo, 100b3-c5 and 103e2-104b3 or at Republic, 524c1-d1 or elsewhere as he leaps from qualities to Forms in a single bound without any indication of something existing in between the two. Instead qualities are simply copies of Forms -- particulars are distinct aggregates of distinct qualities -- and the mind is able directly to intuit and contemplate Forms. Axioms are not needed as a medium to mediate between the two orders but may be helpful in reaching the world of Forms in the first place. For this reason and on the ground that they are required as a counterweight to balance the two orders by upholding the doctrine of image and original, axioms are incorporated into the system. Owing to their incorporeal nature,

the members of the intelligible domain are of a clarity and certainty that is propitious to knowledge. Reason using mathematical postulates as a vehicle travels from assumption to assumption only to reach a conclusion. In the meantime, dialectic sets out with assumptions, arrives at the first principle of all things and thereupon descends to conceive judgements, all the while restricting its movement to the world of Forms. This then is Plato's metaphysical system laid out in such a way that the visible realm is a living, breathing metaphor for the intelligible realm, where qualities are but the sensible personifications of Forms, waxing and waning accordingly.

More needs to be said about the relation between particulars, qualities and Forms. One must ask himself how qualities are copies of Forms and how particulars are modelled after the kinship among Forms. At Parmenides, 130e-135c, Plato defends the doctrine of image and original, sometimes combined with or known as the doctrine of participation, against the numerous misguided attacks of his opponents. First he scolds those who dare interpret participation in the gross sense. Particulars and Forms are metaphysically incompatible. They never come into any contact, physical or otherwise, with each other. A Form whether as a whole or in part can never enter a particular. To do so would require the Form to transmute into a quality or particular — impossible at any rate — or to possess the quality it itself is — a catastrophic event. The latter rubs Plato the wrong way as it rushes into the open arms of the Third Man. As Cornford notes, Large is Large; Large is not a large thing; only particulars may be large.¹⁵ That is to say, a Form does not possess a character as a particular does but

rather is that character. This tenet avoids the Third Man entirely and introduces the doctrine of image and original. A quality is a copy of a Form; the Form is the pattern a quality imitates. Cornford goes one better by suggesting each is like the other in spite of metaphysical disparities.¹⁶ The relation of copying or participation is not only separate from the Form Likeness but also asymmetrical as opposed to Likeness. Such is the theory that permits qualities to be named after Forms.

At Sophist, 251d-264b, Plato establishes the combination of Forms theory which is instrumental in determining the consanguinity among qualities and particulars and without which discourse would be scotched on the spot. Plato rules out exhaustive combination and universal separation immediately because of their unacceptable consequences. The first gives birth to a world of absurdities where for example everything is both at rest and in motion. The world of the second is an isolated one composed of non-interlocking components which can merely be pointed to and named. The third alternative and the one adopted by Plato is select blending. Some Forms concur whole-heartedly while others are simply repulsed. Compatibility among Forms is easily diagnosed. One need look no further than his nose, since this universe is an image of the intelligible one, to discover compatibilities. All things enjoy being seeing how being is consistent with all things. Those things that are not at rest are in motion for rest and motion are irreconcilable owing to their opposing natures. Nature is the factor that decides which things are mutually tolerant and which are implacably hostile. Although Plato nowhere provides an explicit account of combination,

certain facts about this relation may be culled from the alphabet analogy. The letters of the alphabet are divisible into two groups, consonants and vowels. Vowels act as bonding agents to consonants enabling the construction of syllables and ultimately words. This merger does not produce side-effects in any of the involved participants: natures stand unforfeited; individuals hold their ground; property changes do not occur. Similarly all Forms combine with the five most important Forms creating a network of relations which the physical universe then mirrors. The pieces of this universe fit neatly together according to the realm of Forms instead of floating aimlessly about left to chance to unite. Discourse no matter the topic relies upon the interweaving of Forms. A sentence admits of a subject and predicate though any part may be omitted by ellipsis. A sentence is true if it states the facts as they are. In other words, the objects and relations in the statement correspond to the same objects and their relations in reality in the case of true judgement but only to the same objects in reality in the case of false judgement. Thus qualities copy Forms while the relations among qualities themselves, between qualities and particulars and amid particulars themselves mirror the relations among Forms.

NOTES

- ¹ The reader must keep in mind the meaning and day to day use of the word "thing". Whatever exists is a thing, be it a sphere, a softball, strength or the like. Familiar speech tends to forgo qualities from the concept of thing such that physical objects only are referred to as things.

- ² J. Locke, "Essay on Human Understanding", II:VII:8 in The Works of John Locke (Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1963).
- ³ G. Berkeley, Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), p. 11.
- ⁴ B. Russell, The Problems of Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University, 1986), p. 54.
- ⁵ P.F. Strawson, Individuals (London: Methuen, 1964), pp. 167-73.
- ⁶ J. McTaggart, The Nature of Existence, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1968), p. 62.
- ⁷ Wisdom, justice and temperance are among the properties that separate man from the beasts. Tall, handsome and exceedingly charming are just a few of the characteristics that distinguish Cary Grant from other men. By naming species as well as some or all of the members of select species, society facilitates considerably communication. When I speak of human beings or of Cary Grant, everyone knows instantly what or whom my subject is. Referring to something or someone by name is much simpler and quicker than reciting a definition as in the case of species or painting a verbal portrait as in the case of any individual.
- ⁸ The potential-actual distinction is crucial to Plato. Although there is nothing on earth that is 100 000m tall, this height may be found as an idea in my imagination. Potential qualities — I might call these possible, conceivable or imaginary — are in reality ideas and not qualities just as a Spanish fly is a bright green beetle and not a fly. Possible qualities and qualities coincide in time when the idea of quality x exists in my mind while quality x exists in an object. The idea of 5895m corresponds to the altitude of Kilimanjaro.
- ⁹ See note 1.
- ¹⁰ Plato, "Republic", 523b1-524c12, trans. by P. Shorey in Plato: The Collected Dialogues, ed. by H. Cairns & E. Hamilton (Princeton: Princeton University, 1987). All subsequent quotations of Plato are taken from this collection unless otherwise indicated.
- ¹¹ Plato, Parmenides, 130b1-e5, trans. by F.M. Cornford.
- ¹² J. Locke, Essay on Human Understanding, II:VII:9. What I call material qualities in Plato and what Locke calls primary qualities are in reality one and the same. F.C. White makes this very point in "The Physical World in the Theaetetus" in Philosophical Papers, 3, and so does J.W. Yolton in "The Ontological Status of Sense-data in Plato's Theory of Perception" in The Review of Metaphysics, 3.
- ¹³ Since both qualities and Forms are things, both are written as nouns. In order to differentiate between the two, I will enter the habit of writing qualities as common nouns and Forms as proper names.

¹⁴F.M. Cornford, Plato and "Parmenides" (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 82.

¹⁵Ibid. p. 88.

¹⁶Ibid. p. 94.

CHAPTER 2

THE QUOTATION OF THE THESIS

It is time for me to roll up my sleeves and plunge into the business of proving this thesis. That particulars are distinct aggregates of distinct qualities is not just a claim I make. These words are Plato's own and they are repeated throughout the dialogues. Finding the passages requires some tenacity especially since Plato does not often jump out with the exact words. For the most part, the reader must content himself with having to squeeze these words out of arguments as one would squeeze juice out of oranges for breakfast.

Straight from the horse's mouth, here then is the thesis:

δεῖ δὲ καὶ κατὰ μέρος οὕτω λέγειν καὶ περὶ πολλῶν
ἀθροισθέντων, ὧν δὴ ἀθροίσματι ἀνθρώπων τε τίθενται
καὶ λίθων καὶ ἑκάστων ζῶων τε καὶ εἶδος.¹

So we must express ourselves in each individual case and in speaking of an assemblage of many — to which assemblage people give the name of 'man' or 'stone' or of any living creature or kind.²

By reading qualities in the place of "many" and particulars in the place of "to which assemblage people give the name of 'man' or 'stone' or of any living creature or kind", I arrive at one half the thesis, namely particulars are aggregates of qualities. The

other half, distinctness, is not far off and is presupposed by both the first half as well as Cornford's analysis of the first half.

In a footnote at the bottom of p. 48 in Plato's Theory of Knowledge, Cornford raises a series of difficulties which can be divided into three groups. The first group concerns the text itself and the translation of certain key words. The text is uncertain: it is not easy to make out the sense of $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\nu\ \zeta\omega\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \tau\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma$. Cornford asks if $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\nu\ \zeta\omega\acute{\omicron}\nu$ refers to an "individual animal" and $\acute{\epsilon}\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma$, a "kind" of animal. My answer to this question is yes. $\zeta\omega\acute{\omicron}\nu$ can be translated not just as "animal" but also as "a living creature". $\kappa\alpha\iota$ can be rendered as "and", "also", or "even" while $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \dots\ \kappa\alpha\iota$ and $\tau\epsilon\ \dots\ \kappa\alpha\iota$ come to "both ... and". $\tau\epsilon$ serves in the postposition as "and". As $\zeta\omega\acute{\omicron}\nu$ does not follow $\acute{\epsilon}\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma$, the phrase ends simply with "kind" thus scooping up any member of any species not covered by the first three terms. The effect of this is to imply and to include all particulars in the phrase $\acute{\alpha}\theta\rho\alpha\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \tau\epsilon\ \tau\acute{\iota}\theta\epsilon\nu\tau\alpha\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \lambda\acute{\iota}\theta\omicron\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\nu\ \zeta\omega\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \tau\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma$, "man and stone, and each creature and kind". All particulars, whether as wholes or as parts no matter the species, are assemblages of many, assemblages of qualities that is.

Particulars are aggregates of qualities. Cornford suggests physical objects are aggregates of sensible qualities " — all the qualities (white, hard, etc.) we should name in describing a stone that we saw."³ He points out the theory is limited to the subject of sensible qualities. And he is right except in lumping sensations with qualities, the effect of which is rippled throughout the entire

theory. A sensation is a bird of a different feather or rather is not a bird at all. Sensations spring from contact between senses and object and are detached from the object that produces them. Qualities pertain to the anatomy of an object. The structure of an object is part and parcel of the object: the two are inseparable. I see the colour white with my bespectacled eyes whereas the hardness of a stone is integral to its solidity and rigidity despite the ache in my knuckles from rapping on it. Some qualities are sensible; all are perceptible but none are sensations. Although Plato does not confuse the two himself, he occasionally speaks of both in the same breath and from hence arises the ensuing muddle. This is very much the case in the expository passage, Theaetetus, 151e-160e, containing the thesis. At 152b5-8, Plato states the wind may be "cold to the one who feels chilly, and not to the other" but the wind of itself is neither "cold or not cold". A little further down at 152d5-6, he tells of something that is both large and small, heavy and light. And at 154b2, he mentions sensations and qualities on the very same line, "if ... the thing we touch really were large or white or hot ...", thus giving the impression that they are equals. This misconception strengthens as Plato nears the thesis:

And so, too, we must think in the same way of the rest — 'hard,' 'hot,' and all of them — that no one of them has any being just by itself, as indeed we said before, but that it is in their intercourse with one another that all arise in all their variety as a result of their motion, ...⁴

This sentence alone coupled with the thesis beats a path to the false assumption that particulars are aggregates of sensations and qualities. But toss in Plato's theory of perception not coincidentally located in this very passage at 153d7-154a7 and again at

156d3-e3, and one finds once the dust settles that sensations and qualities are separate and diverse. Particulars are aggregates of qualities while sensations arise only in the advent of perceiving subjects.

The final hurdle Cornford places before the reader who accepts this thesis is already partially cleared. Cornford questions the sort of assemblage intended by Plato and I have shown it to be one of qualities. What still needs to be done is to define assemblage and to explain how distinctness fits in. To assemble means to bring together or collect and more importantly to arrange systematically or order. Things are grouped by an agent with a goal in mind.⁵ Pack-rats store everything by temperament but professional collectors are finicky souls. Different items are grouped with regard to various criteria. Butterflies are identified and classified according to structural characteristics and other details. The taxonomist's intent is scholarly. His organization of butterflies reflects nature itself. Nature is the ordering principle, the plan which things follow. Things fit as they were meant to fit, for order is as defined by the Oxford Dictionary the "condition in which every part or unit is in its right place". An assemblage is such a collection whereby things fit together. And just as a genus contains many species, so too a species contains many individuals and an individual many qualities.

Distinctness is the second and completing half of the thesis and is presupposed by the first half. To understand how, where, when or why distinctness fits in, one must begin with a definition of the word. Something distinct is something different from all

else. The word is most often employed in this manner. This Campbell's Soup can is different from a Coke can but is identical to any and every other Campbell's Soup can. But this Campbell's Soup can is the first off the production line and commands its own place on the store shelf. Moreover its shape although the same shape as the shape of that Campbell's Soup can is not that can's shape but this one's. Everything, particulars and qualities alike, differs in number and place. I can no more assign the same numeral to two things when counting than two things can occupy the same place at the same time. Distinctness separates and individualizes. That which is distinct is separate and individual. Without distinctness, only one thing could exist. As soon as there is more than one thing, there is distinctness. In other words, everything is distinct. Particulars are distinct and qualities are distinct. Distinctness is presupposed by and completes the first half of the thesis. When Plato states particulars are aggregates of qualities, he necessarily means particulars are distinct aggregates of distinct qualities. He cannot mean otherwise.

NOTES

- ¹ Plato, Theaetetus, 157b9-c2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1952).
- ² Plato, Theaetetus, 157b9-cl, trans. by F.M. Cornford.
- ³ F.M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The "Theaetetus" and the "Sophist" of Plato (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 48.
- ⁴ Plato, Theaetetus, 156e4-7.

5 It is curious to apply Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes to Plato's definition of particulars. The material cause of particulars is that out of which they are composed, namely qualities. The formal cause is the pattern the object takes, its species. The efficient cause, the primary source of change, is God, the creator. And last but not least, the final cause or the purpose of the physical world is a mystery to me. This line of thought becomes more apparent as I move on.

CHAPTER 3

A SECOND PASSAGE CONTAINING THE THESIS: THEAETETUS, 201c-210a

In examining and dispelling the last definition of knowledge suggested by Theaetetus in the final section of the Theaetetus, Plato reveals much about the nature of things. Particulars are aggregates of qualities. Certain qualities arranged in a certain way create this particular as opposed to that one. But demonstrative adjectives do not a definition make. Enumerating properties accounts for different species and not different members within a species. Species of qualities are copies of Forms and the design of the Theaetetus is the inference of Forms.

I proceed via an example of a particular. "For purposes of practice," Plato proposes, "... it is easier in every case to work on lesser objects rather than on greater ones".¹ A cake involves many ingredients. Ingredients are the components of a mixture as parts are the components of a whole. Plato says the same about particulars. Particulars are composed of qualities. Qualities are the constituents of a particular. He repeats it often in this last division of the Theaetetus, sometimes separately and sometimes in combination with various features of his theory. Plato begins at 201e1-2 with "what might be called the first elements of which we and all other things consist". At 202b3, he utters "things

composed of these elements", and then at 205c6-7, "the primary things of which other things are composed". To these words he adds at 205d8-10, "the syllable is the same thing as a number of letters and is a whole with the letters as its parts". And at 208c6-7, an account of an object lies in "going all through the elements to arrive at the whole". The inescapable conclusion is particulars are aggregates, aggregates of qualities. The only foreseeable objection is this: Plato does not mention at all the word quality.²

Instead Plato speaks of elements. Things are composed of elements. But in the case of particulars, the word "elements" refers to qualities just as it refers to ingredients on the subject of cakes. Elements are components just as ingredients are. Elements are the result of analysis. They are the simplest entities into which something may be resolved and as such are indivisible. They are the rudiments of a subject, the first principles or "primary things" as Plato calls them. They are the members of a set. They are qualities. The evidence that qualities are elements is rich and plentiful. In this passage alone, without the support of 151e-160e, there is over half a dozen instances to corroborate this claim. Beginning with 201e1-202a4, to attribute something to an element is to add to it. The same applies to qualities as when I say beauty is good. Elements are perceptible at 202b6-7 and 206a4-5. So are qualities. At 202e6-7, Plato introduces an analogy. Letters are "the elements of writing". When properly strung together, they form syllables.³ Similarly, qualities are the elements of the physical world. When properly

joined, they form particulars. Conversely, syllables can be broken down into letters and particulars into qualities but no further. What else can syllables and particulars be composed of? Such is the gist of 203a1-b8, 205b6-10, 205c6-10 and 205d2. At 206a8-b2, Plato briefly flirts with a second analogy. Notes are "the elements of music" as letters are the elements of writing as qualities are the elements of particulars. As I have been saying, particulars are aggregates of qualities.

Particulars are more than just aggregates of qualities. Each is an aggregate of specific qualities specifically arranged. This concept is neither as difficult nor as overwhelming as it sounds. I return to the example of a cake. In baking an angel cake, or a devil's food cake for that matter, I am obliged to follow to a T the recipe before me. Not only are exact amounts of appropriate ingredients required, but these ingredients must be mixed in the proper order and beaten till smooth, with the resulting batter baked for a definite amount of time at a marked temperature. Varying the ingredients alters the flavour. Turning up the heat burns the cake. The same is said about particulars. Particulars are intricate webs of qualities so to speak, respective qualities respectively arranged. Differing qualities and arrangements individualizes objects, determines the natures of objects and can even dissipate objects altogether. This is the theory Plato spells out in the final section of the Theaetetus.

In this last passage, Plato reverts to his old habit, the analogy. Reasoning from parallel cases, he states qualities are carefully selected and organized to create this object rather

than that one. The transition from talk of particulars and qualities or complexes and elements to talk of syllables and letters is easily worked in. Socrates begins:

What might be considered its most ingenious feature. It says that the elements are unknowable, but whatever is complex ('syllables') can be known.

Is not that right?

We must find out. We hold as a sort of hostage for the theory the illustration in terms of which it was stated.

Namely?

Letters — the elements of writing — and syllables. That and nothing else was the prototype the author of this theory had in mind, don't you think?

Yes, it was.

Let us take up that illustration, then, and put it to the question, or rather put the question to ourselves.⁴

Socrates proceeds to ask Theaetetus about the first syllable of the name Socrates. Theaetetus replies "So", comprised of the letters "s" and "o" and only "s" and "o." Other letters, some in pairs, some not, generate other syllables — "en", "a", "ble" — or words — "I", "yes", "no", "maybe" — or neologisms and the like, "tin pantithesis" and "super-califragilisticexpialidocious" being my two all-time favourites. Analogously, certain qualities properly organized form various objects — icing, a cake, or a cake without the icing on top. At 204a1-3, Plato says, "The syllable arises as a single entity from any set of letters which can be combined, and that holds of every complex, not only in the case of letters." Every complex refers to all particulars. The phrase "any set of letters which can be combined" carries with it the implication that not all letters nor all qualities unite. This is the state at 205d7-8 in which "the syllable is the same thing as a number of letters" — I stress the word "number" — and at 206a4-6 in which one must try "to distinguish by sight or hearing each letter by itself, so as not

to be confused by any arrangement of them in spoken or written words", the emphasis being on "arrangement". Although "stop" and "pots" are both four-letter words, words composed of four letters, the same may not be said of "go" and "og". "Go" spelt backwards is not a word at all. Plato injects the music analogy into the discussion at 206a7-b2. A musician recognizes the notes in a piece of music but notes poorly arranged are no more pleasant to the ears than a superfluity of notes. Similarly, the results of improperly organized qualities include broken objects, lumpy masses and vanishing bodies rather than wholesome particulars:

That any compound, whatever it be, that does not by some means or other exhibit measure and proportion, is the ruin both of its ingredients and, first and foremost, of itself; what you are bound to get in such cases is no real mixture, but literally a miserable mass of unmixed messiness.⁵

Particulars are compounds; qualities, ingredients; and "a miserable mass of unmixed messiness", unfulfilled particulars. A proper arrangement or "measure and proportion" is the key to successful particulars. Plato returns to the first analogy at 207e7-208a3. The first syllable of the names "Theaetetus" and "Theodorus" is the same. He who spells one "The" and the other "Te" is a poor speller. One must put down "all the letters in order" attests Plato at 208a10. In other words, syllables contain an exact number of letters meticulously disposed in a precise order. By analogy, particulars contain an exact number of properties meticulously disposed in a precise order. One is perfectly justified in reading particulars in the place of syllables and qualities in the place of letters. Such is the nature of analogies.

Having shown particulars are aggregates of qualities, each

particular with its own set, its own organization of qualities, Plato collides head-on with the unavoidable and seemingly antagonistic conclusion that individual things cannot be defined. Declaring objects consist of properties while the audit of properties of an individual does not constitute a definition seems tantamount to insisting the very same stairs leading from the ground floor to the second level do not lead back to the ground floor. I use the word "seems" because there is more to this comparison than meets the eye. The rub lies with the introduction of a second concept, the definition. Plato does not dispute the nature of equations whereby $3 + 2 = 5$ as $5 = 3 + 2$ or tallness, intelligence, snubness, etc. compose the boy Theaetetus as Theaetetus is composed of these qualities. Plato renders this acknowledgement in the closing section of the Theaetetus. Step by step, the argument runs as follows. If something has parts, Plato begins at 204a5-6, "the whole thing must be the same as all the parts." Regarding things "that consist of a number," he attests at 204d1-2, "the words 'sum' and 'all the things' denote the same thing." "The total number is", at 204d9-10, "the same as the total thing in each case." Since "the number of [units in] any collection of things cannot be anything but parts of that collection" and "anything that has parts consists of parts" and since "all parts ... are the same as the sum, if the total number is to be the same as the total thing", then "there is no difference between a sum and a whole" so that "when a thing has parts, the whole or sum will be the same thing as all the parts". Such is the turn of events at 204e1-205a10. Anyone with any quandaries at the start should have lain them

all to rest by now. There is no doubt anywhere particulars are the same as their qualities.

Nor does Plato challenge the character of a definition. The definition of a thing admits of nothing other than the precise nature of the subject, that which makes it the kind of thing it is and not the individual it is. Each class is structurally heterogeneous, diverse in character from all other classes. Each individual is a member of a species and hence shares an affinity with every member of the same species.⁶ No one can mistake Mickey Mouse for Donald Duck, not even on an off-day, but Hughy, Dewey and Louie can be distinguished only by the colour of their jerseys and caps and by the pitch of their voices. Identical natures are enjoyed by a multitude of objects.⁷ An object can be defined only as a member of a species. Species are definable but individuals as such are not.

In the last passage of the Theaetetus, Socrates proposes and rejects all three attempts at defining the boy Theaetetus:

But look here! If that was so, how could I possibly be having a notion of you rather than of anyone else? Suppose I was thinking, Theaetetus is one who is a man and has a nose and eyes and a mouth and so forth, enumerating every part of the body. Will thinking in that way result in my thinking of Theaetetus rather than of Theodorus or, as they say, of the man in the street?

How should it?

Well, now suppose I think not merely of a man with a nose and eyes, but of one with a snub nose and prominent eyes. Once more shall I be having a notion of you any more than of myself or anyone else of the description?

No.

In fact, there will be no notion of Theaetetus in my mind, I suppose, until this particular snubness has stamped and registered within me a record distinct from all the other cases of snubness that I have seen, and so with every other part of you. Then, if I meet you tomorrow, that trait will revive my memory and give me a correct notion about you.

The first account is a scant homespun definition of humanity. Every man falls under this interpretation making it impossible to differentiate between any two men. The second adds a peculiar physical trait, not altogether uncommon, in effect cleaving the population into two lopsided segments. On this note, I can compare Socrates and Theaetetus to Simmias and Cebes but I cannot tell Socrates and Theaetetus apart. The third isolates Theaetetus all right but at what expense? It emits a foul odour one can detect even from a great distance on a still day. "This" and "that" are demonstrative adjectives whose business is to call attention to or single out something in a crowd. They are the verbal equivalent of pointing. They no more shape a definition than my index finger does. Man and snubness can be defined; Theaetetus and this instance of snubness cannot. Man is a species of animal and snubness is a quality describing more often than not the kind of shape of a nose. Theaetetus and the snub nose of Theaetetus are prime examples of manhood and snubness respectively though many other creatures are human beings and quite a few noses are snubbed. As Aristotle so aptly discerns at 1040a35 in Book VII, Chapter 15 of the Metaphysics, "... attributes ... can belong to another subject ...". Cornford agrees, "A definition must consist of words whose established meanings can all apply to other actual or possible individuals.", and subsequently adds, "... species ... are definable precisely because no two species are conceptually identical, as any number of individuals may be."⁹ All things are exemplifications of one species or other whereas any species is one and only one.

What is the consequence of the character of a definition? I have demonstrated thus far that species and not individual things may be defined. Species is synonymous with class, kind, sort and variety. A species is a "group subordinate to genus and containing individuals agreeing in some common attribute(s) and called by a common name". You can never go wrong with a dictionary definition. This reading of species concedes both classes of particulars and classes of qualities as Plato alludes to at Theaetetus, 209b2-c9, and I mention in the preceding paragraph. Man is a kind of particular. A man is a human being, an individual "of genus Homo, distinguished from other animals by superior mental development, power of articulate speech, and upright posture". Men incorporate many kinds of qualities, among these, tallness and shortness, and temperance and intemperance. Tallness refers to the height of a body. Tall cowboys are frequently nicknamed "Slim" or "Stretch" in westerns. Temperance is one of the seven cardinal virtues. A temperate man is modest and self-restrained, abstemious and mild-mannered, the very image of the Virginian. The species of a particular incorporates all those qualities universal to all individuals of the same nature and then leaves one to define the species of qualities.

What of species of qualities? Plato warns against rush jobs with the proverb "more haste, less speed" at Statesman, 264b1-4. Properties may be described through other properties but they are elements unlike particulars which are composites defined by their properties. A description is a verbal portrait, a set of words denoting an object. Descriptions are said of individuals yet can

pass themselves off as loose-fitting or imperfectly tailored definitions of species. But never mind this now. The turning-point here is the metaphysical question of species. What is a species? It is neither animal nor mineral nor vegetable. It is not a physical thing. Indeed, it is not a thing at all. A thing is an object, animate or inanimate, material or immaterial, existing independently of any perceivers. It may be an object of thought but is not thought itself. An idea is the outcome of thought. It is a notion formed by the mind and dependent on the mind. Thought creates and sustains ideas. A species is an idea. The mind asks itself what a set of things has in common and at that time systematically conceives a species. So far so good. Keeping in mind what has been said thus far, the reader must consider next the meaning of knowledge. Knowledge is certain and infallible. Knowledge is about something. In order for something to be an object of knowledge, it must be unchanging and hence immaterial. Material objects are constantly changing and thus yield uncertainties and errors, the very nature of opinion. Ideas are not things. Species are ideas. Plato seems to be caught between Scylla and Charybdis, or in more current terms, a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, particulars are corporeal while on the other, ideas are not things. What then? What is the point of the Theaetetus? The Theaetetus does not leave the reader high and dry as the untrained eye might suspect. Species may be defined and although species are ideas, something more can be had: Forms. Forms are things — stable, immaterial, independent, intelligible entities. Forms are the objects of knowledge. The intellect derives Forms in its search

for truth. Shifting particulars slip through the reader's fingers. The mind develops species but species are ideas and not things. The mind has a natural predisposition to, is involuntarily, instinctively drawn towards the permanent and definite. Knowledge must exist otherwise nature would be frustrated. It would be senseless to receive the faculty but not the object. Therefore, objects of knowledge, that which Plato christens Forms, exist and species of qualities are copies of Forms. This deduction is the purpose and determines the scheme of the Theaetetus. Everything Plato says leads to Forms.¹⁰

NOTES

- 1 Plato, Statesman, 286a12-b2, trans. by J.B. Skemp.
- 2 This paragraph may be written as a syllogism:
 - Complexes are composed of elements.
 - Particulars are complexes.
 - Therefore, particulars are composed of elements.
- 3 Prof. L. Paquet suggested to me that the words "letter" and "element" share the same spelling and meaning in Greek. στοιχείον can mean "a simple sound of the voice, as the first element of language" or "the simplest component parts" as defined in Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon. Letters are the components of language. They like all other elements cannot be subdivided. As Prof. Paquet further counselled, it is no mere random act that Plato chose this analogy. The evidence mounts in favour of this view as the text progresses.
- 4 Plato, Theaetetus, 202d8-203a3.
- 5 Plato, Philebus, 64d9-e2, trans. by R. Hackforth.
- 6 Plato tackles the character of a definition at Theaetetus, 146d-148e. To define knowledge is "to find out what the thing itself — knowledge — is" (146e6-7) and not to list "the objects of knowledge" (146e5) or the "many sorts of knowledge" (146e5-6). The definition of knowledge admits "a single character to embrace all that

multitude" (148d6) or "a single formula that applies to the many kinds of knowledge" (148d7). In other words, the definition of knowledge is "the nature of knowledge" (148c6).

- ⁷ There can be literally billions of instances of one species as is the case with humans or members may be numbered or outnumbered like the African elephant or black rhinoceros while other species have gone the way of the dodo.
- ⁸ Plato, Theaetetus, 209b3-c9.
- ⁹ F.M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 162.
- ¹⁰ The last paragraph of Cornford's commentary on the Theaetetus found on pp. 162-3 of Plato's Theory of Knowledge runs as follows:

The Platonists will draw the necessary inference. True knowledge has for its object things of a different order — not sensible things, but intelligible Forms and truths about them. Such objects are necessarily unique; they do not become and perish or change in any respect. Hence we can know them and eternal truths about them. The Theaetetus leads to this old conclusion by demonstrating the failure of all attempts to extract knowledge from sensible objects.

CHAPTER 4

"SEEMS", "APPEARS" AND "IS"; BEING AND PREDICATION: REPUBLIC, 475e-480

The passage extending from 475e to 480 in the Republic seems to mark the clash between the authentic philosopher and an imitation, and appears to heed the disparity between the two orders of reality but is doubtless more elaborate than meets the eye. The riddle of the eunuch coupled with the workings of semantics in a language of particulars commissioned by Plato together generate the thesis.

In chapter 7 of Plato's "Republic", Cross and Woosley snip in two the passage in question. The first part, 475e-476d, addresses Plato's disciples who adhere to his doctrine. The second, 476d-480, attempts to win non-believers over. The immediate concern of both sections is the establishment of Forms through the recognition of the distinction between the various sorts of objects and their corresponding states of mind but a peek beneath the surface by the curious brings to light intense activity down below. The clue warranting such a peep is the thesis itself and it is reiterated for good measure. Although speaking of Forms, Plato blatantly, undeniably utters these words:

And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another

they present themselves everywhere, each as a multiplicity of aspects.¹

And again:

The lovers of sounds and sights, I said, delight in beautiful tones and colors and shapes and in everything that art fashions out of these, but their thought is incapable of apprehending and taking delight in the nature of the beautiful in itself.²

I feel as if I have gone fishing and caught a whale. Critics will swear I am telling a fishing story. Yet the principal quotation is no red herring. It is too loud to ignore and too clear to dispute. "And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, ... that in itself each is one" irrefutably refers to Forms. Plato says so himself with "and all the ideas and forms". Of Forms, he articulates "but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves everywhere, each as a multiplicity of aspects" or Forms are present as many qualities in the physical world or particulars are composed of qualities. Plato means what he says: "the same statement holds". The subsequent quotation backs up my claim. He pronounces "beautiful tones and colors and shapes and in everything that art fashions out of these" or particulars are "fashioned out of" qualities. Critics embarking on a fishing expedition will be saddened to hook three small fry that are easily decapitated. One objection challenges the legitimacy of the jump from "Forms are present as many qualities in the physical world" to "particulars are composed of qualities". The reply is straightforward. An asymmetric relation exists between properties and material objects. Another alleges "their communion with actions and bodies" means simply things include properties and not things

consist exclusively of properties. This allegation is short-sighted. Plato endorses three types of things — Forms, qualities and particulars — whereupon he replaces the latter with the Receptacle in the Timaeus. Particulars are not made of anything else except qualities. Forms are out of the question. Parts and pieces, molecules and atoms, and particles — all these are substantial, corporeal, sensible, in short, particulars themselves through and through. The last grievance is equally sinkable: two different arguments cannot share the same starting-point. This statement is as false as pyrite. Any mathematician will tell a layman a bucketful of theorems can be derived from only a spoonful of axioms. The reading I provide proves its validity as the discourse wears on. The thesis cannot be blackballed just yet. It is impossible to push aside the words of Plato cited above nor are they mere coincidence.

Having stated the thesis flat out, Plato goes on in a roundabout, madcap way. This is not to call him a gadfly wittingly confusing his suitors nor to dub him the absent-minded professor. On the contrary, the piece 475e-480 is almost perforated. It breaks cleanly into sections, the steps patently marked in each. But things are not always what they look like at the outset. Plato himself could have been the source of this maxim. Cross and Woozley test several possibilities with the aid of supplements when studying Plato's case. Their discussion is hedged at every turn. For the sake of argument, Cross and Woozley reluctantly grant a difference in the powers and objects of belief and knowledge. They split into two sets of predicates, non-relational and relational,

the properties mentioned at 479a7-b6 and then deliberate whether both might be non-relations or relations. The arguments from constant change and imperfection introduced by Cross and Woozley into the investigation are tentative as is the analysis of the transition from copula to existence. The quandaries the authors meet with are reflected in their choice of words. "Seem" and "if" are generously sprinkled throughout the chapter. "Assume", "might", "looks as though" and "at first sight" crop up each a couple of times. But most telling of all are the phrases with which the authors open and end their commentary: "the straightforwardness is in important ways deceptive" on p. 148 and "this part of the Republic from 476d-480 is puzzling and unsatisfactory" on p. 164. It seems this passage is subject to many interpretations.

The second portion, 476d-480, aimed at materialists holds several sizable catches. In speaking of this world, Plato plies a specific vocabulary appropriate to the nature of creation. I call his pick of words and phrases a language of particulars, a term which struck me while poring over Cross and Woozley. On p. 158 of Plato's "Republic", "these evaluative concepts, just, beautiful, etc., as used in everyday life" leads me to posit such a language. The authors describe a transaction taking place between two individuals, stop to consider the nature of actions but do not speak of a language of particulars reflecting the nature of this world. The secret is not to bend things to accomodate concepts but to manipulate concepts that suit changing things. Plato accomplishes this very feat. The most obvious characteristic of physical objects, that which determines the kind

of thing they are, is their mode of being. They come into and pass out of existence. This instability affects everything about them. One cannot speak of bodies as one would of Forms. Read on:

In the first place, we see that what we just now called water, by condensation, I suppose, becomes stone and earth, and this same element, when melted and dispersed, passes into vapor and air. Air, again, when inflamed, becomes fire, and, again, fire, when condensed and extinguished, passes once more into the form of air, and once more, air, when collected and condensed, produces cloud and mist — and from these, when still more compressed, comes flowing water, and from water comes earth and stones once more — and thus generation appears to be transmitted from one to the other in a circle. Thus, then, as the several elements never present themselves in the same form, how can anyone have the assurance to assert positively that any of them, whatever it may be, is one thing rather than another? No one can. But much the safest plan is to speak of them as follows. Anything which we see to be continually changing, as, for example, fire, we must not call 'this' or 'that,' but rather say that it is 'of such a nature,' nor let us speak of water as 'this,' but always as 'such,' nor must we imply that there is any stability in any of those things which we indicate by the use of the words 'this' and 'that,' supposing ourselves to signify something thereby, for they are too volatile to be detained in any such expressions as 'this,' or 'that,' or 'relative to this,' or any other mode of speaking which represents them as permanent. We ought not to app'y 'this' to any of them, but rather the word 'such,' which expresses the similar principle circulating in each and all of them; for example, that should be called 'fire' which is of such a nature always, and so of everything that has generation. That in which the elements severally grow up, and appear, and decay, is alone to be called by the name 'this' or 'that,' but that which is of a certain nature, hot or white, or anything which admits of opposite qualities, and all things that are compounded of them, ought not to be so denominated.³

This notorious and important passage is easily identified. It is straight out of the Timaeus. My interest in it lies in the word "such". The Oxford Dictionary lists thirteen senses for this entry, two of which fill the bill to a nicety. One could not ask for more. "Such" is an adjective meaning "of the same kind or

degree as". Plato points there, at the bright, red, hot, noisy thing and says it is "of such a nature" to be called fire or it is of the same kind we call fire. An object displays all of the properties that make up fire. Any and every instance of such a collection of properties is labelled fire. "Such" is also a pronoun substituting for the thing referred to. In Plato's case, "such" takes the place of inconstant things whereas constant things fall under the expression "this" or "that". Transient particulars are composed of shifting qualities: "what is of any kind soever, hot or white or any of the contraries and all that consist of these". The word "such" allows one to talk of dynamic objects as dynamic without falsely pinning them down to the static of eternity. It recognizes things in this world as being only instances of infinite things and permits one to name these instances after the Forms they resemble thus avoiding outright the objections to participation raised in the Parmenides.

"Such" acting as adjective or pronoun is not the only word to reflect the nature of these miserable beings. Among the regular concepts of "dreaming", "participation", "opinion" and "fallibility" in the Republic, 476d-480, stand the verbs "seem" and "appear". They are repeated over and over:

My good fellow, is there any one of these many fair and honorable things that will not sometimes appear ugly and base? And of the just things, that will not seem unjust? And of the pious things, that will not seem impious?

No, it is inevitable, he said, that they would appear to be both beautiful in a way and ugly, and so with all the other things you asked about.

And again, do the many double things appear any the less halves than doubles?

None the less.

And likewise of the great and the small things, the light and the heavy things — will they admit these

predicates any more than their opposites?

No, he said, each of them will always hold of, partake of, both.⁴

These two verbs are downright tricky. They belong inside a magician's black top hat along with the proverbial rabbit, a string of coloured handkerchiefs, a bouquet of flowers and a white turtle-dove. "Seem" coincides with "appear". The two are synonyms. Define one and you have the other. "To appear" is to "become or be visible; ... be manifest;" and to "have the appearance of being, seem (to be, do, etc.)."⁵ Something that manifests itself reveals itself by materializing and is discernible to all. The injustice witnessed in people is present then and there. To be present is to occupy a specific place or to occur at a certain period. The present is the here and now or "the time now passing". Eternity does not enter the picture. By contending a just action seems or appears unjust, Plato articulates a language of particulars. The vocabulary mirrors the nature of the objects. Particulars are always becoming and "appear" pin-points a point in space or time. But "to appear" also means to "have the appearance of being". An appearance is a look or aspect, i.e. an outward show or display; or a semblance, resemblance or image. It is something which is like or has a "similarity to or feature(s) in common with" something else or is an "artificial imitation of the external form of an object". When I watch this world, I observe both justice and much injustice. These properties among others forming the world are conspicuous at a glance. But first impressions are not always accurate. The air an object casts might be a ruse. Appearances can be deceiving and spectators can misjudge the facts. Bright coloured berries

look delectable but can prove fatal. That which is seeming is "apparent but perhaps not real, [or] apparent and perhaps real". On the other hand, properties themselves are by nature appearances. Copies, imitations and reproductions are things made in the image of other things. Qualities are copies of Forms replicated in their likeness and the perceptible realm is a poor imitation or bad reproduction of the intelligible.⁶ One is modelled on the other. I seem to have stumbled upon an additional riddle. An appearance appears along with its appearance: a physical object is present along with its guise. An appearance may be the phenomenon itself, the act of being present or the external look of the phenomenon. All three possibilities are valid: all three reflect the nature of particulars. That this is Plato's intention, that there exists a language of particulars, is the gist of 479b5-7. Socrates asks: "And likewise of the great and the small things, the light and the heavy things — will they admit these predicates any more than their opposites?" Glaucon replies: "No, ... each of them will always hold of, partake of, both." Speech represents reality. Predication reflects participation. The reality is particulars are impermanent compositions of fleeting qualities so that it is perfectly correct to say an object seems big and little or light and heavy. "Appear" reflects in every way the nature of particulars.

Lest the reader think I am done with the notion of a language of particulars, I turn quickly to the verb "to be". "To be" is no cakewalk but more like a minefield. One false move and this part of the chapter goes up in smoke. In "The Modern Greek Verbs of 'Being'", K. Kazazis reports six separate functions of εἶναι.

They are:

- i. copula with noun: 'He is a man';
- ii. roles: 'He is a soldier';
- iii. copula with adjective: 'He is tall';
- iv. identity: 'He is Charles';
- v. copula with location: 'He is in Paris'; and
- vi. existence: 'There is a man'.⁷

The Oxford Dictionary concedes all six but lumps the last two under its first division and the first four under its second. Senses of entries are structured so that only quite distinct meanings constitute a division and the succession of divisions parallels their frequency in use. For my purpose, it is enough to label the first division "existence" and the latter, "the copula", though neither heading represents accurately all of the senses falling under it. In the Republic, 476d-480, Plato utilizes "εἶναι" both in the existential and copular modes in that course.

"Be" as a full verb means "exist". "Exist" means "have place as a part of objective reality". That which is objectively real is external to the mind or is a thing as opposed to an idea. Particulars, qualities and Forms are things. All exist but some come and go as they please while others outlast even perpetuity. Due to an unstable nature as aggregates of qualities and as inhabitants of a sensible universe, particulars occupy a position in time and a location in space. They are not eternal and immaterial as are the Forms. What I am driving at is this: there is plain, ordinary existence and there are the things that exist. Existence accommodates everyone and everything. Eternity and different proportions of time and space differentiate intelligible objects from sensible ones and are included in the concept

of existence. How so? Time and space are continuous — uninterrupted duration and unbroken extension. Space parallels time but is itself an object measured in time. This fascinating turn of events equates time with existence. Time is "indefinitely continued existence". Time is infinite but can be divided into portions and moments. The nature of the object determines the allotment of time. Mosquitoes live only a summer, one summer too long. George Burns will celebrate his one hundredth birthday at the Palladium. Our sun is about five billion years old. God is eternal. It is correct to say all these exist. The definition of existence I cut short before endorses this view: "have being under specified conditions ... occur, ... live ... continue in being." Conditions or circumstances fundamental to a thing's existence include time and place or the thing's surroundings. "George Burns exists" means he is alive and well somewhere in America, perhaps beating Bob Hope at a game of golf at Pebble Beach or maybe sipping martinis in between stogies in a suite at the Waldorf. "God exists" means He is omnipresent. In the specimen that follows, Plato interprets "to be" as "to exist". I have underlined the relevant instances of "be" in the text and replaced them with "exist" in parentheses at the end of the sentence:

Does he who knows know something or nothing? Do you reply in his behalf.

I will reply, he said, that he knows something.

Is it something that is or is not? (exists), (exists not)

That is. How could that which is not be known?

(exists), (exists not)

We are sufficiently assured of this, then, even if we should examine it from every point of view, that that which entirely is is entirely knowable, and that which in no way is is in every way unknowable? (exists), (no way exists)

Most sufficiently.

Good. If a thing, then, is so conditioned as both to be and not to be, would it not lie between that which absolutely and unqualifiedly is and that which in no way is? (to exist), (not to exist), (exists), (no way exists)

Between.

Then since knowledge pertains to that which is and ignorance of necessity to that which is not, for that which lies between we must seek for something between nescience and science, if such a thing there be. (exists), (exists not), (exists)

By all means.

Is there a thing which we call opinion? (Exists there)

Surely.

Is it a different faculty from science or the same?

A different.

Then opinion is set over one thing and science over another, each by virtue of its own distinctive power or faculty.

That is so.

May we say, then, that science is naturally related to that which is, to know that and how that which is is? (exists), (which exists exists)⁸

Plato identifies two kinds of things: "a thing ... so conditioned as both to be and not to be" or particulars and "that which absolutely and unqualifiedly is" or Forms. A third, "that which in no way is", is not even nothing since nothing is still something. Particulars exist and do not exist while Forms simply exist. Time and place or eternity are implied as befits the object. All is as it should be. The only foreseeable objection rests on an apparent contradiction. "Particulars are and are not" comes down to particulars are and were or exist and existed. "X" number of phenomena exist during any snap of the fingers. Phenomena that cease to be are spoken of in the past tense. They exist no more but once existed. They are not less than nothing but memories of the past. The city of Troy was sacked and destroyed. The legendary T.E. Lawrence and Capt. Burton have since passed away. The contradiction disappears like magic. It was an illusion all along.

"Be" as a copulative verb is followed by a noun, adjective or adjective phrase known as the subject complement. The noun names an object, state or specific identity; the adjective, a quality or sensation. The copula connects or fastens together the subject and predicate to form the subject complement. The subject is the "member of a proposition about which something is predicated" and the predicate is "what is affirmed or denied of the subject". The subject complement reveals something about the subject by completing the predicate. The predicate complements the subject. The copula acknowledges or negates the complement:

And likewise of the great and the small things, the light and the heavy things — will they admit these predicates any more than their opposites?

No, he said, each of them will always hold of, partake of both.

Then is each of these multiples rather than it is not that which one affirms it to be?⁹

Particulars, multiples, aggregates, assemblages, complexes — "That which we call a rose/By any other word would smell as sweet." — are composed of qualities. Discourse is about the real and language reflects the real. In the brief passage quoted above, adjectives represent qualities and nouns, particulars. Adjectives are added to nouns to delineate things more fully. Adjectives occur before a noun or after the copula. An example of the first or attributive case is "the great and the small things". "Great" and "small" tell the reader something of the size of the objects in question and size can no more be separated from an object than a fish from water or a scrooge from money. The second or predicative includes the subject complement, the topic in hand. "Then is each of these multiples rather than it is not that which one affirms it to be?"

translates to "Then each of these multiples is rather than it is not that which one affirms it to be?" where the subject, "each of these multiples", refers to particulars; "is" and "is not" are the copulative verbs; and the predicate or subject complement, "that which one affirms it to be", bespeaks qualities. Switching the position of "is" does not transform the question or recast Glaucon's reply but merely exposes the true sense of the sentence. "Is" starring as copula marks the necessary coherence between a particular or subject and its qualities or predicates. The copula pursued by a subject complement is the grammatical form representative of the construction of bodies. The role of the copula squares with the constitution of things. "Is" echoes composition. Speech reflects reality and "is" states what is already the case. "Is not" notes the repugnancy between a thing and a property foreign to it. But "is not" simply means "is other than" or "is something different from" so that "is not" like "is" affirms the union between an object and its properties.¹⁰ For example, "the Eiffel Tower is not tiny" unravels as "the Eiffel Tower is huge" or "is handsome". From a great distance, the Eiffel Tower seems puny, almost as small as its image on postcards or postage stamps. Standing on the terrace of the Palais de Chaillot, one is taken aback by the sight. The Eiffel Tower is enormous, nothing like the Leaning Tower of Pisa which resembles a child's toy by comparison. But not until one lies at the base can one fathom its extraordinary dimensions and presence. Not only is the Eiffel Tower colossal, it is by no means a bad-looking structure either. It is not at all a "hunk of scrap-metal" as a disenchanted tourist might call it. Properties

make an object what it is. The two may be spoken of apart but may not be segregated. Tall and short, handsome and ugly are pairs of opposites existing sans peur et sans reproche in one and the same object. Becoming is, well, becoming. Material bodies are forever changing. This is what is behind the response "No, ... each of them will always hold of, partake of, both." to the query "will they admit these predicates any more than their opposites?" The expressions "hold of" and "partake of" suggest the doctrine of participation. Predication mirrors participation. Participation accounts for what takes place between particulars and Forms. Particulars possess qualities and qualities are images of Forms. Predication is the "attribution of [a] property to a subject."¹¹ To attribute is to "ascribe as belonging or appropriate to [something]" while an attribute is a quality. I need not resist the temptation of ascribing the property of beauty to the Eiffel Tower since this property indeed belongs to the structure. To belong signifies to "be rightly assigned to (as ... possession, natural or usual accompaniment, ... characteristic, part, member, ...)" or to "be resident in or connected with". Any number of these describes how properties stand with respect to physical objects. The verb "to be" predicates qualities to subjects. Particulars possess qualities. Predication is simply a snapshot of life. Predication draws in words what the camera steals on film. Both are tools to cast images. The structure and contents of prose as well as motion pictures verifies this much.

The riddle of the eunuch is the focus of Plato's discussion about particulars. The riddle serves as an illustration of the

behaviour of particulars while ratifying Plato's recognition, acceptance and employment of the two meanings of the verb "be":

Then is each of these multiples rather than it is not that which one affirms it to be?

They are like those jesters who palter with us in a double sense at banquets, he replied, and resemble the children's riddle about the eunuch and his hitting of the bat --- with what and as it sat on what they signify that he struck it. For these things too equivocate, and it is impossible to conceive firmly any one of them to be or not to be or both or neither.¹²

Socrates asks if physical things are or are not great, small, light, heavy, etc. Glaucon's reply draws a parallel between physical things and the puzzle of the eunuch. "They" stands for particulars. Particulars are the subject of the question and the answer. A child might wonder when Wile E. Coyote will capture the Roadrunner but grown-ups know Wile E./he/that mangy coyot' can no more outwit the Roadrunner than Elmer Fudd can hoodwink Bugs Bunny. In responding to an inquiry, the subject may be reiterated or replaced by a pronoun or synonym. "They [particulars] are like those jesters who palter with us in a double sense at banquets, ... and [they i.e. particulars] resemble the children's riddle about the eunuch ... For these things [particulars] too equivocate, ...". There is an ellipsis after "and". Since the subject of both clauses is one and the same, it need not be repeated before the second verb. That the topic remains unchanged is clinched by the sentence "For these things too equivocate, and it is impossible to conceive firmly any one of them to be or not to be or both or neither." It is clear the topic is material bodies and "too" keeps up the parallel between material bodies, jesters and the riddle of the eunuch. The word "like" invites the reader to make the comparison;

the word "for" is the proof. A comparison highlights the similarities between two or more objects. Corporeal beings resemble fools and enigmas in that all command the irritating quality symptomatic of the twentieth century: ambiguousness. Ambiguity entails duplicity. Ambiguous things are obscure and uncertain. Ambiguous expressions are evasive and misleading. Physical beings play with properties while buffoons like cunundrums play on words. It is the nature of material bodies as objects of becoming to exercise opposite properties. It is the nature of motley fools as masters of the pun and cryptic puzzles as the puns themselves to quibble. To that effect, particulars are double-faced; jesters practise double-talk and riddles have double meanings. The phrase "For these things too equivocate" seals the bargain. It is a done deal.

Plato increases lens power to focus solely on "particulars are and are not" and "the eunuch is and is not a man" much as high school students do when exacting the perfect diagram of the dreary amoeba. The riddle of the eunuch turns on the interpretation of "man", a word bearing more than one significance. The eunuch is and is not a man. A man is a human being. The difference between webster's definition and that of the Oxford Dictionary is quite amusing. The Americans allude to our esteemed lineage. A man is "a bipedal primate mammal (Homo sapiens) ... anatomically related to the great apes but distinguished esp. by notable development of the brain with a resultant capacity for articulate speech and abstract reasoning". But "man" is also a synonym for the adult human male. A male is "of the sex that can beget offspring by

performing the fertilizing function". An eunuch is a castrated man in charge of a harem or exploited as a court official in the not so distant past. An eunuch is a human but lacks the essential biological capacity that distinguishes males from females. The eunuch is and is not a man. Particulars are and are not¹³ -- "a thing ... so conditioned as both to be and not to be"¹⁴ and "is each of these multiples rather than is not that which one affirms it to be"¹⁵ -- as the eunuch is and is not a man. The verb "be" has two meanings like "man". This double entendre constitutes the riddle/the equivocation. Plato endorses both senses without a hitch. Socrates speaks of things as being this or that quality and as existing:

We would seem to have found, then, that the many, conventions of the many about the fair and honorable and other things are tumbled about in the mid-region between that which is not and that which is in the true and absolute sense.¹⁶

The "many conventions of the many about the fair and honorable and other things" refers to Forms, qualities as well as particulars and what is pronounced in connection with them by people. This expression invokes predication. There is no skirting the issue. The conventional is the socially acceptable. The general public holds certain views on things. For example, medical doctors harp persistently on the importance of milk as a source of calcium. "Milk is good for you!" they thump notwithstanding the burning claim that humans are the only species to consume milk beyond infancy. The property "good" is predicated of the subject "milk" by means of the copula "is". Through predication, the copula attaches what is said of something with the something it

is said of thus verbally mimicing reality. The idiom "that which is not and that which is in the true and absolute sense" can be paraphrased as "that which does not exist and that which exists always" or "not-being and the Forms". The mode of being of an object determines the kind of thing it is. Phenomena are becoming. They come into and pass out of being. They exist and do not exist. Plato exercises both senses of εἶναι in the sentence delivered by Socrates.¹⁷ Particulars are aggregates of qualities. Properties are predicated of material objects. As aggregates, material objects are unstable. Particulars are and are not. Particulars exist for a period of time all the while one affirms or denies something or other about them. In acknowledging the two meanings of the verb "be", the riddle format keeps pace with the nature and behaviour of particulars.

NOTES

- 1 Plato, Republic, 476a4-8.
- 2 Ibid. 476b4-7.
- 3 Plato, Timaeus, 49b10-50a3, trans. by B. Jowett.
- 4 Plato, Republic, 479a7-b8.
- 5 Definitions with quotation-marks around them are taken from the Oxford Dictionary unless otherwise specified.
- 6 "Poor" and "bad" echo the disparity in mediums, a difference not crossed in art forgeries or counterfeit bills. However, fakes even though replicated in the same mediums can never be the originals.
- 7 K. Kazazis, "The Modern Greek Verbs of 'Being'" in The Verb 'Be' and its Synonyms, Part 2, ed. by J.W.M. Verhaar (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), p. 71.

- ⁸ Plato, Republic, 476e7-477b11.
- ⁹ Plato, Republic, 479b6-10.
- ¹⁰ Plato, Sophist, 257b2-c2, trans. by F.M. Cornford.
- ¹¹ A. Flew, A Dictionary of Philosophy (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), p. 285.
- ¹² Plato, Republic, 479b9-c5.
- ¹³ The observation forwarded by Glaucon at Republic, 479c3-5, does not dent or scratch the surface of my discussion. How so? There are two points to be made here and separating them can prove to be as toilsome as disentangling overcooked spaghetti.
 1) Due to the instability of phenomena, I cannot "conceive firmly" anything about them but I may still speak of them and what Plato chooses to say is "particulars are and are not".
 2) This proposition does not offend in any way the assertion "it is impossible to conceive firmly any one of them to be or not to be or both or neither" since "are and are not" is a single predicate whereas "both" refers to two distinct predicates. In the grand scheme of things, particulars are wedged between Forms and not-being thus allowing the proposition in question. These two points I believe are the gist of J. Adam's commentary on 479c17 in The 'Republic' of Plato, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: 1965), p. 343.
- ¹⁴ Plato, Republic, 477a6-7. There are two other occurrences of "particulars are and are not" implying existence in this section of the text: "if anything should turn up such that it both is and is not" at 478d3-4 and "that which partakes of both, of to be and not to be" at 478e1-2. Curiously enough, this last reference includes the word "partakes", a word implying predication no matter which way one looks at it.
- ¹⁵ Plato, Republic, 479b9-10.
- ¹⁶ Plato, Republic, 479d3-6.
- ¹⁷ The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Investigating the combination of Forms, Plato puts into use $\epsilon\lambda\upsilon\gamma\alpha$ as existence and as the copula at Sophist, 256d6-e7. The stranger begins:

In fact, it is clear that motion really is a thing that is not (existence) and a thing that is, since it partakes of existence.

Perfectly clear.

It must, then, be possible for 'that which is not' (i.e., is different from existence) to be (to exist), not only in the case of motion but of all the other kinds. For in the case of them all the nature of difference makes each one of them different from existence and so makes it

a thing that 'is not,' and hence we shall be right to speak of them all on the same principle as things that in this sense 'are not,' and again, because they partake of existence, to say that they 'are' (exist) and call them things that have being (existence).

No doubt.

So, in the case of every one of the forms there is much that it is and an indefinite number of things that it is not.

Forms exist but are not existence itself: "It must, then, be possible for 'that which is not' (i.e., is different from existence) to be (to exist), not only in the case of motion but of all the other kinds." The function of the copula in the intelligible realm matches that in the visible realm, or rather, vice versa: "So, in the case of every one of the forms there is much that it is and an indefinite number of things that it is not."

CHAPTER 5

BECOMING

Particulars are becoming, always on the move, always evolving until they are jettisoned into the oblivion that is the past. Mountains spring up and crumble; flowing rivers run dry and people live and die. Change makes the world go round. It is as right as rain. But change presupposes composition and that particulars are composites — composites of qualities — is no accident. A syllogism lurks there or thereabouts and it is my task to set it out.

Becoming succeeds being. Being is the antecedent. "Being is logically prior to becoming, just as location is prior to motion and, in general, the concept of state is prior to the concept of a change of state", affirms C.H. Kahn on pp. 205-6 of The Verb 'Be' in Ancient Greek. Becoming depends on being as movement relies on space and a transformation in conditions demands the presence of conditions in the first place. In the Book of Genesis, God created the world in six days. God made Adam out of dust and sculptured Eve from one of Adam's ribs. Before something can exist, there must be existence. Existence predates all else by an eternity. In the Book of Exodus, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and at Mt. Sinai delivered to

them the Ten Commandments. After forty years of wandering in the desert, they reached the Promised Land. Movement is not possible if extension is absent. Motion, Kahn says on p. 206, "is defined in terms of position at different times." In the Gospel of John, Peter denied three times his association with Christ but later died a martyr. For someone to undergo a metamorphosis, the character one turns from and to must exist or be possible. A metamorphosis is a "change of form ... character, conditions, etc." Becoming, be it generation, locomotion or alteration, implies being. Without being, there would be naught and hence no birth, no action and no progress.

Kahn frequently describes the verb "become" as dynamic, kinetic or mutative, a verb of motion and change. Plato himself equates becoming with movement and change and then vacillates between the three synonyms when speaking. At Theaetetus, 152d7-9, Socrates states Heraclitus' metaphysical theory: "All the things we are pleased to say 'are,' really are in process of becoming, as a result of movement and change and of blending one with another." Plato does not confuse the objects of becoming with those of being as do others. Things become since they move and change. Without movement and change, becoming is impossible. At 152e6-7, Socrates interprets a line from the Iliad as "all things are the offspring of a flowing stream of change." At 153a4-8, Socrates mentions the doctrine in which "'being,' so called, and 'becoming' are produced by motion," so that "The hot of fire, which generates and controls all other things, is itself generated by movement and friction — both forms of change." At 157d5-7, Socrates asks

Theaetetus: "Once more, then, tell me whether you like this notion that nothing is, but is always becoming, good or beautiful or any of the other things we mentioned?" The act of becoming is the act of movement and change. There are scores of instances of Plato shuffling these terms throughout the dialogues. Even someone day-dreaming while reading is sure to stumble upon one example or other. In this part of the Theaetetus alone, a handful can be had: "a perpetually changing reality" at 177c6, "this moving reality" at 179d3, "everything is in motion" at 180d7 and "all things are in change" at 181c1-2. But if becoming is simply motion or change, what is motion or change? In Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, κινέω is translated as "to move, set in motion ... to move a thing from its place ... to change, innovate ... to set in motion, originate, be the author or contriver of a thing ...". Plato likewise subscribes to three kinds of motion but huddles together the last two under one heading. What Socrates calls local movement occurs "when something removes from place to place or revolves in the same place".¹ The earth rotating on its axis in orbit round the sun is local movement. A thing experiences alteration when it "stays in the same place but grows old or turns black instead of white or hard instead of soft or alters in some other way".² Aging or growth presumes conception and destruction along with the accompanying shifts in properties. The beginnings of the earth date back to roughly four and a half billion years and since then the world has evolved into the only life supporting planet in this galaxy. But these are only my examples of particulars becoming and not Plato's.

"Particulars are becoming" is a current that runs through the Platonic dialogues. Sometimes rippling the surface, sometimes surging deep, it nonetheless glides along undaunted by "the men of flux" or by "the partisans of the immovable whole". In the Symposium, Plato forwards a choice account of mortal men, one I would put money into, via the mouthpiece of Diotima:

Now, although we speak of an individual as being the same so long as he continues to exist in the same form, and therefore assume that a man is the same person in his dotage as in his infancy, yet, for all we call him the same, every bit of him is different, and every day he is becoming a new man, while the old man is ceasing to exist, as you can see from his hair, his flesh, his bones, his blood, and all the rest of his body. And not only his body, for the same thing happens to his soul. And neither his manners, nor his disposition, nor his thoughts, nor his desires, nor his pleasures, nor his sufferings, nor his fears are the same throughout his life, for some of them grow, while others disappear.³

Men come into and pass out of being. During this interval, they are becoming. Any onlooker can observe the physical alterations and expansion of faculties befalling men. In point of fact, he need seek no further than himself. As a tomboy, I swung from trees, turned cart-wheels up and down the length of our yard and regularly leaped from our roof. I would run away and join the circus if I could still perform these daring feats today. In adolescence, I listened to rock 'n' roll but nowadays I find it as pleasant as the chorus of lawn-mowers playing in our neighbourhood all summer long. Phenomena are becoming in that they are, so Diotima might pronounce, temporal — appearing and retiring, blooming and fading. Any material object is different throughout itself and with respect to others, is different at distinct times and from distinct perspectives, and is different to various

spectators.⁴ Particulars and qualities are not things in themselves as are Forms otherwise they, like Forms, would not be at the mercy of becoming. Men suffer the same lot that befalls all corporeal bodies asserts Socrates in the Theaetetus:

So then, if the thing that we measure ourselves against or the thing we touch really were large or white or hot, it would never become different the moment it encountered a different person, supposing it to undergo no change in itself. And again, if the thing which measures itself against the object or touches it were any one of these things (large, white, etc.), then, when a different thing came into contact with it or were somehow modified, it, on its side, if it were not affected in itself, would not become different.⁵

Indeed, the universe itself cannot wriggle out of this inescapable predicament. The nature of the universe figures prominently in the Timaeus:

Was the heaven then or the world, whether called by this or by any other more appropriate name — assuming the name, I am asking a question which has to be asked at the beginning of an inquiry about anything — was the world, I say, always in existence and without beginning, or created, and had it a beginning? Created, I reply, being visible and tangible and having a body, and therefore sensible, and all sensible things are apprehended by opinion and sense, and are in a process of creation and created.⁶

The world is created and is often referred to as creation. That which is generated is brought into existence by a predecessor or precursor. Production travels hand in hand with destruction. Something given can be taken; something built-up can be torn down. Being is eternal; becoming is not. Becoming covers a period of time of any duration, from a squeeze to a spell, from a season to a span. During the term a subject exists, it is continually becoming, constantly regenerating itself. Damaged parts are repaired or replaced and stores are replenished while the subject itself

is eventually superseded by its offspring. The earth evolves steadily. Continents drift as convection currents in the mantle shift plates. The inner core attains temperatures upwards of 4000°C. Volcanoes erupt, earthquakes rumble and mountains rise where plate edges collide. The distance between Palos and Guanahani increases some four centimetres per year as the Atlantic Ocean floor spreads while the Pacific contracts. Evolution is an on-going process of development. A process is a "series of changes" and change is the passage from one state to another. The world and everything in it is, as Plato shouts with such gusto, "in a process of creation and created." Particulars are becoming.

That which is becoming is heterogeneous. Change presupposes composition. A presupposition is an assumption "that involves either a necessary or a contingent truth."⁷ Motion rests on amalgamation. To deny amalgamation renders motion obsolete or more to the point, defunct. Becoming depends on composition but composition leads to becoming. They are a package deal, a twofer:

... motion never exists in what is uniform. For to conceive that anything can be moved without a mover is hard or indeed impossible, and equally impossible to conceive that there can be a mover unless there be something which can be moved — motion cannot exist where either of these is wanting, and for these to be uniform is impossible; wherefor we must assign rest to uniformity and motion to the want of uniformity. Now inequality is the cause of the nature which is wanting in uniformity, ...⁸

This passage from the Timaeus is an armful and requires some sorting. As Plato insists, "Unless a person comes to an understanding about the nature and conditions of rest and motion, he will meet with many difficulties in the discussion which follows."⁹ Rest is the negation of action. The Oxford Dictionary offers a far

more interesting definition: "abstinence or freedom from or absence of exertion or activity or movement". To abstain is to refrain oneself from something one would normally do whereas to be free of something is to be unrestricted by it. Something absent is not present at all or is inexistent. Each of the three nouns has a slightly different meaning. The significance shifts by degrees from avoidance to exemption to non-existence with the last best representing Plato's design. Rest is the absence of motion and not merely an abstention or a freedom from it. Exertion, activity and movement are examples of or synonyms for becoming. Rest is assigned to uniformity: "motion never exists in what is uniform." Plato returns to this principle on three other occasions in the Timaeus: at 35a1-2, "the being which is indivisible and unchangeable"; at 37d5-e1, "eternity itself rests in unity"; and at 45e4-5, "when they are equalized, there is rest".¹⁰ What is uniform is homogeneous. In order to remain consistent, it must be constant. A uniform object is identical all over, through and through, at all times. It is not devised of parts and thus cannot be dissected. Bits and pieces cannot be chipped off nor tacked on. Sameness reigns every whit. In essence, the object is invariable and hence eternal. All of that which is eternal is at rest. And so I return to where I started — the beginning— as is always the case with axioms. Fundamental truths form the basis of reasoning: they cannot be deduced. The most one can accomplish is to throw light on the meaning as one would with a definition. The same goes for change and composition. Motion reflects "the want of uniformity". The cause of such a nature is inequality.

To all intents and purposes, lack of uniformity and inequality are on a par with each other. That which is not uniform is diverse and varied, and hence multiple. Multiple things have "several or many parts, elements, or individual components". Inequable things are uneven and unbalanced and hence compound. It is these shortcomings that permit and are a result of motion. Compounds move: composition renders motion possible. Multiples can be put together or taken apart: "All that is bound may be undone".¹¹ This requires a second party, a mover or a cause: "everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause".¹² Inequality creates motion and motion springs from inequality. Two children of identical weight quietly perched on opposite ends of a see-saw are balanced. But if one is rambunctious and steps off, the timid one is sure to come crashing down. A single quotation out of the Timaeus illustrates the principle as I have:

... the elements are borne up and down and hither and thither toward their own places, for the change in the size of each changes its position in space. And these causes generate an inequality which is always maintained, and is continually creating a perpetual motion of the elements in all time.¹³

A compound is subject to change as are its elements. Inequalities arise thus leading to further change and further inequalities. Old unions dissolve and new ones flourish. That which is becoming is heterogeneous by rule. The principle is perfectly reasonable, not in the least far-fetched.

Particulars are composites. The conclusion follows steadfastly at the heels of the two premises. The argument is valid; its

components, true. Validity refers to soundness and sufficiency. Sound reasoning is "correct, orthodox, logical, well-founded, [and] judicious". Something sufficient is adequate and short of nothing. A valid syllogism cannot have true premises and a false conclusion. The first two propositions entail the third. Common sense dictates a statement is true if it corresponds to the facts or reality. Oddly enough, this counsel is called the correspondence theory of truth. Syllogisms may be valid despite false propositions. "Cats have nine lives. Sylvester is a cat. Therefore Sylvester has nine lives." is such a case. The major premise is clearly a figure of speech. Sylvester is a cartoon character. Besides, everyone knows Sylvester has hundreds upon thousands of lives especially now in syndication. "Particulars are composites." is likewise deducible from the propositions that precede it, but is it a true statement as I assert? The answer is a resounding yes!

There are well over a dozen instances in the Timaeus of Plato claiming particulars are composites or particulars are composed of qualities or something else to that effect. Beginning with "Now that which is created is of necessity corporeal, and also visible and tangible." at 31b4-5 and ending with "I have thus shown the various classes of bodies as they are diversified by their forms and combinations and changes into one another" at 61c4-5, Plato harps on the nature of physical things. A body can be a material organism or an inanimate object. It is in fact any "piece of matter". A man, a full moon, a crushed box of candy in one hand and broken flowers in the other — what do these things have in common, aside from the obvious? They are all pieces of matter.

Matter is simply "the basic stuff or raw material from which the diverse elements of the world are composed (that is, something analogous to the craftsman's wood or clay)." ¹⁴ A piece is "One of the distinct portions of which [a] thing is composed or into which it is divided or broken". A piece is a part of a whole. A whole is a "total made up of parts". Matter can be splintered into fragments. Particulars embrace matter. Therefore particulars can be dismembered into their components. Mechanical objects are taken apart when repaired. Plato states over and over that particulars are corporeal and thus are divisible into parts. If the reader pauses at each quotation to investigate thoroughly, he will notice Plato mentions bodies and composition in the same breath without hesitation every single chance he gets: at 32b6-c1, "he bound and put together a visible and tangible heaven"; 32c2-3, "the body of the world was created, and it was harmonized by proportion"; 33a4-5, "if heat and cold and other powerful forces surround composite bodies and attack them from without, they decompose them"; 37c6-7, "the father and creator saw the creature which he had made moving and living"; 41b8, "without them the universe will be incomplete"; 42a3-4, "and be always gaining or losing some part of their bodily substance"; 44c6, "the generation of the body and its members"; 44d4-7, "... the head ... to this the gods, when they put together the body, gave all the other members to be servants, considering that it must partake of every sort of motion."; 48b6-8, "we speak of fire and the rest of them as though men knew their natures, and we maintain them to be the first principles and letters or elements

of the whole"; 51a4-7, "... receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things is not to be termed earth or air or fire or water, or any of their compounds, or any of the elements from which these are derived"; 53c5-6, "every sort of body possesses volume, and every volume must necessarily be bounded by surfaces"; 54c4-d1, "... a great number of small bodies being combined into a few large ones ... when the greater bodies are broken up, many small bodies will spring up out of them ..."; 58b4-7, "those things which are composed of the largest particles ... those which are composed of the smallest particles"; 61a9, "bodies composed of earth and water"; and at 61c2-3 with "substances of the nature of wax and incense have more of water entering into their composition." The list seems chock-full but is by no means exhaustive. Still it conveys the message to the reader: particulars are composites. Running down the list, I am able to compile two catalogues, one containing the words which imply particulars; the other, the expressions which point to composition. A "tangible heaven" is the sky. The world, bodies, creatures, the universe, "created and visible and in any way sensible things" not to mention bodily substances or "substances of the nature of wax and incense" — these are all particulars. Parts, members, elements and particles are the components of material objects. A whole object is sound and intact. But particles themselves are material beings witnesses the Timaeus at 54c4-d1. This leaves qualities but I am not ready to attend to that just yet. Binding, putting together and breaking up like combining, composing and decomposing suggest composition. Wherever there is composition, there is multiplicity. It is

natural for multiples to gain and lose components. Experience confirms this. Life is not static. The world is not frozen in time. Generation along with other forms of motion signals composition as demonstrated by the minor yet telling premise. Proportional or ill-proportioned is how one thing — element or whole — stands to another. A proportion is a comparative share or a specific section of a whole. To partake is to have a share in something while to derive is to obtain something from somewhere. In each case, an object is added to the subject hence insuring the subject's multiplicity. Volume is the amount or quantity of space occupied by a body. Anything which has extension is separable into parts. The atom was split by Lord Rutherford during the beginning of the century. The Cullinan weighing in at 3106 metric carats was cut into nine principal gems, all part of the English crown jewels. In every instance cited above, Plato says particulars are composites. He never fails to communicate this via a subject-predicate format, a verb taking an object or a noun modified by an adjective, adjective phrase or adjective clause. But I have passed over a capital example, the one exhibiting Plato's long held view that particulars are aggregates of qualities: "that which is of a certain nature hot or white, or anything which admits of opposite qualities, and all things that are compounded of them".¹⁵ Particulars are those things compounded of qualities. The words are salient and well picked. There is no bone of contention, except perhaps one. The phrase "of properties" in "particulars are aggregates of properties" is outside the terms of my syllogism. That may be but it does not discredit my argument. I could drop "of properties"

altogether save that if material bodies are assemblages, they must consist of something. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, this something is properties since Plato acknowledges only three kinds of things — qualities, Forms and particulars or qualities, Forms and the Receptacle — with the last two ruled out as elements while particles, lumps and crumbs or what have you are bodies themselves. And so I am perfectly free to repeat particulars are aggregates of qualities and perfectly correct to attribute this doctrine to Plato.

NOTES

- ¹ Plato, Theaetetus, 181c5-6.
- ² Ibid., 181c9-d1.
- ³ Plato, Symposium, trans. by M. Joyce, 207d4-e5.
- ⁴ Ibid., 211a1-4.
- ⁵ Plato, Theaetetus, 154b1-8.
- ⁶ Plato, Timaeus, 28b3-c2.
- ⁷ A. Flew, Op. cit., p. 286.
- ⁸ Plato, Timaeus, 57e3-58a3.
- ⁹ Ibid., 57d6-e1.
- ¹⁰ The third instance crops up under a different context but the principle is always the same.
- ¹¹ Plato, Timaeus, 41b1.
- ¹² Ibid., 28a3-4.
- ¹³ Ibid., 58c1-5.
- ¹⁴ A. Flew, Op. cit., p. 224.
- ¹⁵ Plato, Timaeus, 50a1-3.

CHAPTER 6

THE RECEPTACLE

As I have been hinting with every chance, Plato moves from a two-level ontology to a three-level one, from talk of particulars, qualities and Forms to discourse on the Receptacle and qualities and Forms. It would be inaccurate to say Plato trades in one thing for another when what occurs is not an exchange but a development. As children discard their toys upon entering adulthood, Plato after many years of thought realizes the repetition in his system and opts for the Receptacle.

Platonic metaphysics springs up from this world. Plato takes a good, long, hard look around himself and what does he see but material objects: the sun shining in the sky, sheep grazing in the meadows, merchants hawking their wares in the market-place and so forth. The world is teeming with physical beings, more so now than ever before. Further consideration reveals another type of thing inhabiting the universe: qualities. Attributes are ascribed to bodies: bodies possess characteristics. The sun is round and the sky is wide. Sheep are peaceful animals. Meadows can be sloping, rolling or just plain flat. Merchants who sell shoddy goods especially at exorbitant prices are both unscrupulous and fraudulent. Many individuals share identical

properties. Circularity, for example, is not peculiar to the sun. All stars are round as are wheels, frisbees, melons and hair balls. From many instances of the same quality, Plato postulates a Form: "We are in the habit, I take it, of positing a single idea or form in the case of the various multiplicities to which we give the same name."¹ Forms are that in which things participate, the visible realm being a poor imitation of the intelligible one. Particulars, qualities and Forms, in that order, are the three things Plato first acknowledges and holds steadfastly to for the lengthiest time. Socrates invokes all three in the Phaedo upon instructing his companions in the theory of causality:

If someone tells me that the reason why a given object is beautiful is that it has a gorgeous color or shape or any other such attribute, I disregard all these other explanations — I find them all confusing — and I cling simply and straightforwardly and no doubt foolishly to the explanation that the one thing that makes that object beautiful is the presence in it or association with it, in whatever way the relation comes about, of absolute beauty. I do not go so far as to insist upon the precise details — only upon the fact that it is by beauty that beautiful things are beautiful.²

The word "object" in "why a given object is beautiful" and "the one thing that makes that object beautiful" refers to particulars. Beautiful things are particulars. "Beautiful" and "gorgeous" identify qualities as do many adjectives. "The one thing" responsible for the property of beauty exercised by some beings is "absolute beauty", a Form. Forms are the third kind of thing. Never one to conceal his convictions, Plato frequently lays his reflections on the line. Diotima speaks the same language as Socrates:

.... every lovely body, from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning, and from learning in general to the special love that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself ...³

Man starts with the glorification of bodies or particulars, advances to qualities such as beauty and closes with Forms, "the beautiful itself" for one. With the advent of the Republic, Plato's stand remains unmodified. Socrates sticks to his guns:

The lovers of sounds and sights, I said, delight in beautiful tones and colors and shapes and in everything that art fashions out of these, but their thought is incapable of apprehending and taking delight in the nature of the beautiful in itself.⁴

Works of art are particulars. Beauty seems to be one of Plato's favourite qualities. Beauty in itself is a Form. Plato recognizes only these three species of things but something is about to change. Something is about to give.

With the Timaeus well under way, Plato extrapolates a third level monopolized by a new kind of thing called the Receptacle. Two classes of objects — those belonging to being and those to becoming — sufficed until now but no more. At Timaeus, 49a1-4, Plato excuses himself for having been unaware of the inadequacy of the two and for not having distinguished previously the third kind. The Receptacle it seems is a thorny subject, difficult to define or comprehend and apparently non-essential up to this stage of the game. Although the visible and intelligible worlds remain within Plato's scope, he shifts focus to the new-found Receptacle.

There are three standpoints from which Plato inspects the Receptacle: purpose, nature and manner of apprehension. The Receptacle is so to speak "the nurse, of all generation".⁵ As a nurse, it fosters or promotes the development of the physical world. To that effect, it supports everything material much

like the earth sustains life. It is that "in which the elements severally grow up, and appear, and decay"⁶ or that "in which the generation takes place".⁷ In order for the Receptacle to accept corporeal entities, it must be of a nature receptive to but independent of all bodies. Due to a lack of form, it is capable of accommodating bodies without distorting them. It never assumes the guise of any of the things entering it:

... if the model is to take every variety of form, then the matter in which the model is fashioned will not be duly prepared unless it is formless and free from the impress of any of those shapes which it is hereafter to receive from without. For if the matter were like any of the supervening forms, then whenever any opposite or entirely different nature was stamped upon its surface, it would take the impression badly, because it would intrude its own shape. Wherefore that which is to receive all forms should have no form ...⁸

If the Receptacle had a shape, its shape would interfere with the admittance of everything not similar to it. Whenever disparate objects converge, one or more are altered. Pouring a bucket of water into a tub of water does not alter the water in the tub but water added to flour results in a messy paste. Seeing that things bursting upon the Receptacle are of a different sort altogether, the Receptacle must be formless to acquire them without causing ripples. Yet waves do traverse Plato's epistemology. The understanding engages Forms and the senses are absorbed by the tangible world. What grasps the Receptacle? There is no other faculty left. Plato weathers the tide with relative ease. The Receptacle is somehow intelligible for it shares many of the traits that distinguish Forms, characteristics such as insubstantiality, indivisibility, formlessness, eternity and indestructibility. Accordingly, the Receptacle is seized by the mind by fair means

or foul. It is apprehended, "when all sense is absent, by a kind of spurious reason,"⁹ spurious because knowledge is reserved for talk about Forms and the Receptacle is clearly not a Form, but reason nonetheless since it is the mind which deduces the Receptacle. The validity and pertinence of this inference becomes unmistakable as my discourse winds up.

Particulars are aggregates of qualities, specific properties specifically arranged. This is my thesis and it cannot help poking through Timaeus, 48e-52c, as it is the driving force behind this passage. Particulars are in constant flux. A seedling becomes a tree. If left alone, it lives out its life and then returns to dust. If cut down by man, it is made into boards and later on, furniture, cabins or homes. Plato forbids anyone to refer to a tree using the terms "this" or "that" which imply stability, something the tree lacks as do all particulars. The word "such" on the other hand recognizes the resemblance between copy and original. It expresses, and I quote Plato, "the similar principle circulating in each and all of them [copies]".¹⁰ What I see before me is of such a nature to be labelled a tree. It consists of all those properties I associate with trees. It is an aggregate of qualities I call a tree. This is said of every particular, from the first to the last without exception:

In fact, we must give the name 'fire' to that which is at all times⁹ of such and such a quality; and so with anything else that is in process of becoming. Only in speaking of that in which all of them are always coming to be, making their appearance and again vanishing out of it, may we use the words 'this' or 'that'; we must not apply any of these words to that which is of some quality — hot or cold or any of the opposites — or to any combination of these opposites. ¹¹

This little piece is a gem if ever there was one. The subject is everything "that is in process of becoming", elements and particulars alike. Plato describes a generated being as "that which is of some quality — hot or cold or any of the opposites — or to any combination of these opposites". Properties are generated too but the definition can apply only to particulars. Particulars are hot or cold, long or short, big or small, in effect any synthesis of properties. Crombie and Cornford agree with this interpretation. They speak of Plato's particulars in the same way. On p. 44 in Vol. 1 of An Examination of Plato's Doctrines, Crombie characterizes a pebble as "a certain hardness, texture, degree of elasticity, colour and so on ... manifested within a certain volume" and notes how "a thing vanishes into a group of properties manifested within a certain region". On pp. 189-90 of Plato's Cosmology, Cornford is preoccupied with "those combinations of qualities which we call bodies and which we see or otherwise perceive through the bodily senses". He construes Plato as maintaining that what "we perceive is a certain combination of shifting qualities in a certain place at a certain time". "Groups of properties", "combinations of qualities" and "aggregates of qualities" — all of these phrases relate a tale of particulars. Characteristics and organization together determine the species of a particular — whether it is a tree or a pebble. A poor arrangement of properties often spells disaster for the subject but the arrangement itself cannot transform a particular into another kind of thing, for instance a Form. Particulars are first and foremost aggregates of qualities.

The upshot of viewing particulars as aggregates of qualities is that qualities become bodily. It just so happens Plato had that in mind all along. In the Parmenides, Socrates dismisses as ludicrous the notion that particulars too might be copies of Forms. The question "Is there any self-existent fire, and do all those things which we call self-existent exist ...?" at Timaeus, 51c1-4, does not signify a change of heart — a rereading of old ground, yes, but not a deviation. Plato asks if there is a Form of fire and then, separately, if Forms exist. The next line down, he wonders if Forms are something. The response is immediate. Plato produces his triumvirate: Forms, qualities and the Receptacle. His hoary, nagging doubt falls to the side once again. He affirms the existence of Forms but walks clear around the issue of Forms of particulars much as a mountain man would avoid at all costs an encounter with a skunk. Not that a skunk is a match for a man, but the smell is pretty unpleasant. And so Plato's stand remains unmodified: there are no Forms of particulars; qualities are copies of Forms; particulars are not. Particulars are aggregates of qualities. The two are one and the same. That which appears to the left of the equal sign is identical to that which is on the right. This principle comes through loud and clear in the Theaetetus when Socrates identifies the whole with its parts. Particulars and aggregates of qualities are coextensive. The terms representing the two are synonyms. This does not banish the idea or word "particular" from Plato's outlook or vocabulary but it does mean that particulars are not a different kind of thing separate from the rest. Since Forms of particulars are

nonsensical and particulars themselves are not a distinct kind of entity and since the Receptacle does not contribute anything except space to the objects that materialize in it, qualities must be bodily as is indeed the case. At Timaeus, 48e7-49a1, qualities are "the imitation of the pattern, generated and visible". The pattern is the Form. There are Forms of properties and properties are copies of Forms. That which is generated comes into and passes out of existence. It is a physical and temporal being. That which is visible is sensible as sight is one --- arguably the most important one --- of the five senses. Plato's full definition of properties hits the nail on the head:

And there is another nature of the same name with it [the Form] and like to it, perceived by sense, created, always in motion, becoming in place and again vanishing out of place, which is apprehended by opinion jointly with sense.¹²

The points I have mentioned are included in this definition. I have neglected only motion and opinion. As objects move across space and time, so do their properties. All sensible things are subject to opinion. Properties are not exempted. Cornford reads Plato as I do. On p. 181, Cornford attributes to Plato the belief that it is "the qualities, not the Receptacle, that constitute 'the bodily'". Plato himself ascribes corporality to created beings at 31b4-5. On p. 188, Cornford intimates the context of this passage in the Timaeus implies the sensible nature of properties. With Cornford's stamp of approval, I noisily insist qualities are bodily.

Since particulars are aggregates of qualities and qualities are bodily, the notion of a material substratum fades from the

picture. As Cornford announces on p. 178, the properties themselves are things or substances; on p. 188, he infers the Receptacle cannot be a sensible entity. A property must be bodily by nature otherwise it would be an idea or a Form. Throw a physical substrate into the arena this late in the game and the referee will cry foul. A property occupying a portion of the physical substrate is like a flower in a vase or a vase on a table. A substance within or on top a substance results in two substances and not an explanation of reality. Yet qualities do need something to adhere to. Forms are intelligible things, immaterial and eternal, not bound by space and free from the constrictions of time. Properties are bodily, physical and temporal, and hence require a place for the duration of their stay. This place is obviously a part of space and in fact Plato does call the Receptacle "Space", for the first time at 52b1 and on many other occasions thereafter. The Receptacle or Space "provides a home for all created things".¹³ Plato justifies his introduction of the Receptacle by speaking of its exigency, but not until 52b5-7 does he state the principle behind its indispensability, the very same fundamental truth I have just finished discussing: "all existence ... must of necessity be in some place and occupy a space, but that which is neither in heaven nor in earth has no existence." Besides this principle and the corporeal nature of qualities, there is one other item in play here. The fact that qualities are images is equally instrumental in determining the kind of existence they lead:

For an image, since the reality after which it is modeled does not belong to it, and it exists ever as the fleeting

shadow of some other, must be inferred to be in another (that is, in space), grasping existence in some way or other, or it could not be at all.¹⁴

This quotation invokes the mirror metaphor. An object reflected in a mirror produces an image of itself in the mirror. The image corresponds in appearance to the object but finds its existence in the mirror. Neither the principle of form nor that of being belongs to the reflection. The same applies to qualities. The Form casts an image of itself in the Receptacle. This image is a property. Properties resemble Forms but must abide in Space on penalty of extinction. A property is no more responsible for its nature than it is for its existence. "The copy or image," Cornford states on p. 194, "not having the substantial existence of a perfectly real thing ($\delta\upsilon\tau\omega\varsigma \delta\upsilon$), but being 'the ever-moving semblance of something else', requires some medium 'in which' it may appear and disappear, like a mirror image." Forms and Space can never come into contact with each other any more than the object itself can enter the mirror. The two are incompatible, metaphysically in the case of the first pair, physically with regard to the second. Sensible qualities as copies of Forms rely on the Receptacle for their place in the sun.

NOTES

- ¹ Plato, Republic, 596a6-8.
- ² Plato, Phaedo, 100c9-d9, trans. by H. Tredennick.
- ³ Plato, Symposium, 211c5-7.
- ⁴ Plato, Republic, 476b4-7.

⁵ Plato, Timaeus, 49b1.

⁶ Ibid., 49e8-9.

⁷ Ibid., 50c7-8.

⁸ Ibid., 50d4-e5.

⁹ Ibid., 52b3-4.

¹⁰ Ibid., 49e6-7.

¹¹ Plato, "Timaeus", 49e8-50a3, trans. by F.M. Cornford in Plato's Cosmology (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956). Note 5 within the translation belongs to Cornford.

¹² Plato, Timaeus, 52a4-b1.

¹³ Ibid., 52b2-3.

¹⁴ Ibid., 52c2-5.

EPILOGUE

The patch is in place and it is a sticky one, much like those "pesky" Band-Aids children hate to remove. Particulars are aggregates of qualities. When Plato does not come out with the very words, what he does say points in that direction. I hope I have anticipated and answered most questions or problems people might raise regarding this position. I do not think anyone can deny too easily the evidence presented as I have tried to be as thorough, as precise and as logical as possible.

APPENDIX

1. THE MEANING OF "PARTICULARS" VERSUS "QUALITIES"

Things are objects existing outside any mind and independently of any mind. Things may be living and breathing or dumb and lifeless. Things may be sensed and they may be contemplated. Recall in chapter 6 the three kinds of things I state Plato recognizes; however, for the moment I wish to concentrate solely on particulars, the citizens of the visible realm which I examine on pp. 12-13. Physical objects are particulars. Animals, plants, minerals and man-made objects are particulars. A horse, sage-brush, sand and a saddle — no one would dispute my classifying these as particulars. Controversy sets in when I turn my attention to more difficult cases such as man or souls or actions or signs and shadows. Man is a particular but his soul is an immaterial object and not a particular in the sense of the word I use — the usual sense of the word "particular", namely "item", does not apply here. Despite the fact that body and soul coexist in this life, they may be considered separately without danger and are disjoined upon death. Man's nature is such that it includes both body and spirit just as a whale though a mammal possesses both fishlike and mammalian characteristics. My first instinct is to call a whale a fish since both dwell in the sea and have similarly shaped bodies, yet a whale is a mammal for each breathes air and gives live

birth to its young. I am free to refer to a whale as both fishlike and mammalian without intending what I say of one class to apply to the other. I am equally free to assert a man is a particular without the implication that his soul is such. And Plato does in fact speak of men as particulars. At Parmenides, 129a2-3, Plato unhesitatingly lumps human beings into the group of particulars: "that of these two forms you and I and all the things we speak of as 'many' come to partake". He does the same in the Sophist:

Well, when we speak of a man we give him many additional names — we attribute to him colors and shapes and sizes and defects and good qualities, and in all these and countless other statements we say he is not merely a 'man' but also 'good' and any number of other things. And so with everything else. We take any given thing₁ as one and yet speak of it as many and by many names.

We attribute properties to a man as we would to any other particular. This stance in no way signifies that souls are particulars or physical objects. On the contrary, souls are eternal, immaterial beings, the very opposite of temporal, material beings.

Actions are not particulars. The passage easily cited to prove otherwise is misleading. Plato mentions actions and bodies on the same line and pronounces their communion with Forms thus leaving the reader with the wrong impression that the two sorts are on a metaphysical par as a cat and dog although different species are both animals:

And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves everywhere, each as a multiplicity of aspects.²

Run fast, stand tall, sit up straight — it does seem as if actions command properties as particulars do but how can actions be

particulars? Actions are the movements of particulars. Action is change or becoming which I discuss in chapter 5 and which Plato confirms in the Theaetetus at 181c-d. Act is what a physical being does, whether on its own or with the aid of an agent. Physical objects extend themselves in a finite space and time. Actions are these extensions. It is just one short step from here to holding actions are things since both have a beginning, a middle and an end. I do not believe Plato would see this as a legitimate step in the later dialogues even if he almost seems to condone it in the Republic. In any event, as actions are not particulars in the sense of the word I use, determining their exact nature is outside my thesis.

What of signs and shadows and all those things Plato places in the bottom portion of the visible realm in his analogy of the Line — are they particulars? Some are; with others, it is hard to say. The inhabitants of this lower section are images or representations of the physical objects in the section directly above. A billboard is an advertisement representing a product but is also a physical object or particular in and of itself. The shadow I cast on the ground on a bright, sunny day has a shape and a length and a width. My reflection in the lake has all these properties plus colour too. Are these things particulars? I do not think so. Plato is preoccupied with images themselves. An image is a representation of something and appears in something else. My shadow is an image of me, a physical being, and appears on the pavement, also a particular, but without me or the sidewalk, and in this case the sun, the shadow vanishes. There are two important points to note here: i) more than likely, Plato

includes shadows and representations in the corporeal realm because they are visible, and though not particulars, are still things that exist and need to be classified; ii) the nature of an image and the relation between it, its original and the object in which the image is reflected is central to the Line analogy since Plato contends each section is an image of the preceding section, and indeed plays a pivotal role in Platonic metaphysics whereby qualities as copies of Forms appear in the Receptacle. Thus, with the exception of things like paintings or photographs which can easily reside in either division of the visible realm, the inhabitants of the lower portion are not particulars in my sense of the word.

Qualities are another kind of thing Plato recognizes as existing. My definition of "quality" on p. 2 is similar to McTaggart's. McTaggart proposes, "To say that something exists inevitably raises the question what this something is. And that question must be answered by asserting something of it other than its existence."³ I translate this short passage as meaning qualities are what specify an object's individual appearance and nature. Qualities are everything we sense of an object. McTaggart's talk of the "non-possession" of qualities prompts my discussion on p. 4. McTaggart states, "the non-possession of these qualities, would give the existent a nature besides its existence."⁴ Would not my saying the ball is not cubic and the ball is non-cubic amount to the same thing and would it not take forever to express all the properties an object has and does not have?

There are three categories of qualities: one including large

and short and all those properties we call physical in our daily life; a second class composed of sameness, oddness, etc.; and an undisputed class containing moral properties such as good and bad. I cannot imagine any obstacles to this third category of properties. Plato recognizes moral Forms and moral qualities are the copies of those Forms. I shall speak more on moral properties shortly. The first and second classes are the ones against which several objections may be raised but before confronting these objections, I wish to examine closer the contents of these two classes. For this, I turn to the Phaedo and then the Theaetetus. While putting forward a theory of causality and searching for a proof of the immortality of the soul in the Phaedo, Plato talks of Largeness and Smallness — "Then is it also by largeness that large things are large and larger things larger, and by smallness that smaller things are smaller?"⁵ — and of Tallness and Shortness:

So you too, like myself, would refuse to accept the statement that one man is taller than another 'by a head,' and that the shorter man is shorter by the same. You would protest that the only view which you yourself can hold is that whatever is taller than something else is so simply by tallness — that is, because of tallness — and that what is shorter is so simply by shortness, that is, because of shortness.⁶

He returns to Largeness and Smallness with regard to numbers:

Then you would be afraid to say that ten is more than eight 'by two,' or that two is the cause of its excess over eight, instead of saying that it is more than eight by, or because of, being a larger number, and you would be afraid to say that a length of two feet is greater than one foot by a half, instead of saying that it is greater by its larger size — because there is the same danger here too?⁷

Continuing with numbers as an example, he introduces Duality and Unity:

Suppose next that we add one to one. You would surely avoid saying that the cause of our getting two is the addition, or in the case of a divided unit, the division. You would loudly proclaim that you know of no other way in which any given object can come into being except by participation in the reality peculiar to its appropriate universal, and that in the cases which I have mentioned you recognize no other cause for the coming into being of two than participation in duality, and that whatever is to become two must participate in this, and whatever is to become one must participate in unity.⁸

However, the quality of unity is present not just in the number "one" but also in many particulars. The chair I am sitting on and the desk I am writing at, each has unity. The properties of large and small may be attributed either to numbers as Plato demonstrates in the quotation above or to particulars. On the other hand, the same is not true of tall and short. Particulars command these properties but numbers do not. In fact, if we look around, we shall encounter other things such as souls which do not possess qualities such as large or tall but which are unities. Accordingly, these two diverse classes of qualities cannot be grouped together. Not only do both categories of properties not always apply to the same things, but upon close inspection, we find that the kinds of properties in one class are remarkably different from those in the other which brings me to several stumbling blocks. My inclination is to label this first class "physical" since all these qualities pertain to particulars though some may also be said of things other than particulars. It also seems as if these properties along with many of those of the second class fall under the traditional heading of "primary qualities"⁹, a claim Plato never makes. I do not believe Plato holds the existence of Forms of colours, what we might call

secondary qualities, and have never come across anything suggesting the contrary:

As soon, then, as an eye and something else whose structure is adjusted to the eye come within range and give birth to the whiteness together with its cognate perception — things that would never have come into existence if either of the two had approached anything else — then it is that, as the vision from the eyes and the whiteness from the thing that joins in giving birth to the color pass in the space between, the eye becomes filled with vision and now sees, and becomes, not vision, but a seeing eye, while the other parent of the color is saturated with whiteness and becomes, on its side, not whiteness, but a white thing, be it stock or stone or whatever else may chance to be so colored.¹⁰

The reader should pay special notice to "something else whose structure" for this something else is a particular and particulars are physical objects and physical objects, in so far as we perceive them, have structure otherwise they would resemble the deflated clocks in a Dali painting. Plato reckons whiteness and the perception of whiteness arise simultaneously when a certain object is placed before the eye and the object becomes white and the eye, "filled with vision".¹¹ Like A.J. Smith¹², I too do not believe Plato postulates a Form for every common name. Given this and Plato's account of whiteness, I should not be incorrect in denying the status of Formhood to colours.

I am adverse to referring to the second category of qualities as "common". "Common" is the term Cornford uses on pp. 81-82 of Plato and "Parmenides" but he is only following Plato's lead in the Theaetetus:

You mean existence and nonexistence, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and difference, and also unity and numbers in general as applied to them, and clearly your question covers 'even' and 'odd' and all that kind of notions. You are asking through what part of the body our mind perceives these?

You follow me most admirably, Theaetetus; that is exactly my question.

Really, Socrates, I could not say, except that I think there is no special organ at all for these things, as there is for the others. It is clear to me that the mind in itself is its own instrument for contemplating the common terms that apply to everything.¹³

As this passage attests, Plato does indeed call likeness, difference, unity, etc. "common". But is not largeness or shortness common? Is not beauty or goodness common? Indeed, are not all properties common?¹⁴ Something common is something that belongs to more than one. There are many large objects and many instances of goodness. Perhaps Cornford and Plato have some other meaning of the word "common" in mind yet both my dictionary and I are unable to conceive of another. One might scold that existence and sameness and unity is ascribed to all things unlike largeness or goodness but my reply is that nonexistence, three or four, and even or odd, though all members of the same class, do not "apply to everything". Having successfully eliminated "common", I am sad to admit I do not have an alternative name for this set of qualities and am open to suggestions.

Moral qualities are the properties which set forth the value of something. By "value", I do not intend monetary worth but rather moral worth, that is, whether something is good or bad, or right or wrong. "Something" refers to an individual or an action. When I speak on p. 10 of a system of values which enables us to judge others, I simply mean we are born into a family and a community which possesses a set of values prior to our arrival into this world. As we mature and reflect upon life, we decide for ourselves which values to retain, modify or drop.

As life becomes more complex, so does our system of values.

2. THE MEANING OF IDEAS VERSUS THOUGHTS

The Platonic Forms are called both "Forms" and "Ideas" by scholars. The Greek term is "eides" or "ideas". However, the word "idea" also refers to the notions conceived by the mind. Platonic Ideas are an entirely different species compared to the ideas inside a mind. In order to avoid any confusion between the two, I will call Platonic Ideas by the word "Forms" and the ideas conceived by the mind, "concepts".

As I state on p. 14 of my text, Forms are imperishable, uninterrupted, unchanging, intelligible, single, incomposite, immaterial, independent, unique beings serving as the patterns for the visible world. Although there are numerous references to the Forms in books V-VII of the Republic, there is no out and out definition stated at once in its entirety and the reader must piece together various descriptions such as "that in itself each is one" at 476a5-6, "that which entirely is" at 477a3, "in itself always remaining the same and unchanged" at 479a3-4, "is one" at 479a6, "that essence which is eternal, and is not wandering between the two poles of generation and decay" at 485b1-2, "as a single idea or aspect, assuming it to be a unity and call it that which each really is" at 507b10-11, "the aspect of reality and the intelligible, which is contemplated by the power of dialectic, as something truer and more exact than the object of the so-called arts and sciences" at 511c5-7, and "that which always is" at 527b4. On the other hand, there is an excellent passage characterizing

the nature of Forms using Beauty as an example in the Symposium:

It is an everlasting loveliness which neither comes nor goes, which neither flowers nor fades, for such beauty is the same on every hand, the same then as now, here as there, this way as that way, the same to every worshiper as it is to every other.

Nor will his vision of the beautiful take the form of a face, or of hands, or of anything that is of the flesh. It will be neither words, nor knowledge, nor a something that exists in something else, such as a living creature, or the earth, or the heavens, or anything that is — but subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal oneness, while every lovely thing partakes of it in such sort that, however much the parts may wax and wane, it will be ¹⁵neither more nor less, but still the same inviolable whole.

The first paragraph in the quotation cited above describes the characteristics of Forms yet it is the second paragraph that tells us Forms are ontological entities. A Form is "neither words, nor knowledge, nor a something that exists in something else, ... but [something] subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal oneness". Forms are things independent of all else and hence, cannot possibly be concepts but rather are the objects of concepts. I shall speak more on this in a moment. First, I wish to concentrate on the Parmenides while continuing to examine the nature of Forms.

The argument of the Third Man turns on the nature of Forms:

How do you feel about this? I imagine your ground for believing in a single form in each case is this. When it seems to you that a number of things are large, there seems, I suppose, to be a certain single character which is the same when you look at them all; hence you think that largeness is a single thing.

True, he replied.

But now take largeness itself and the other things which are large. Suppose you look at all these in the same way in your mind's eye, will not yet another unity make its appearance — a largeness by virtue of which they all appear large?

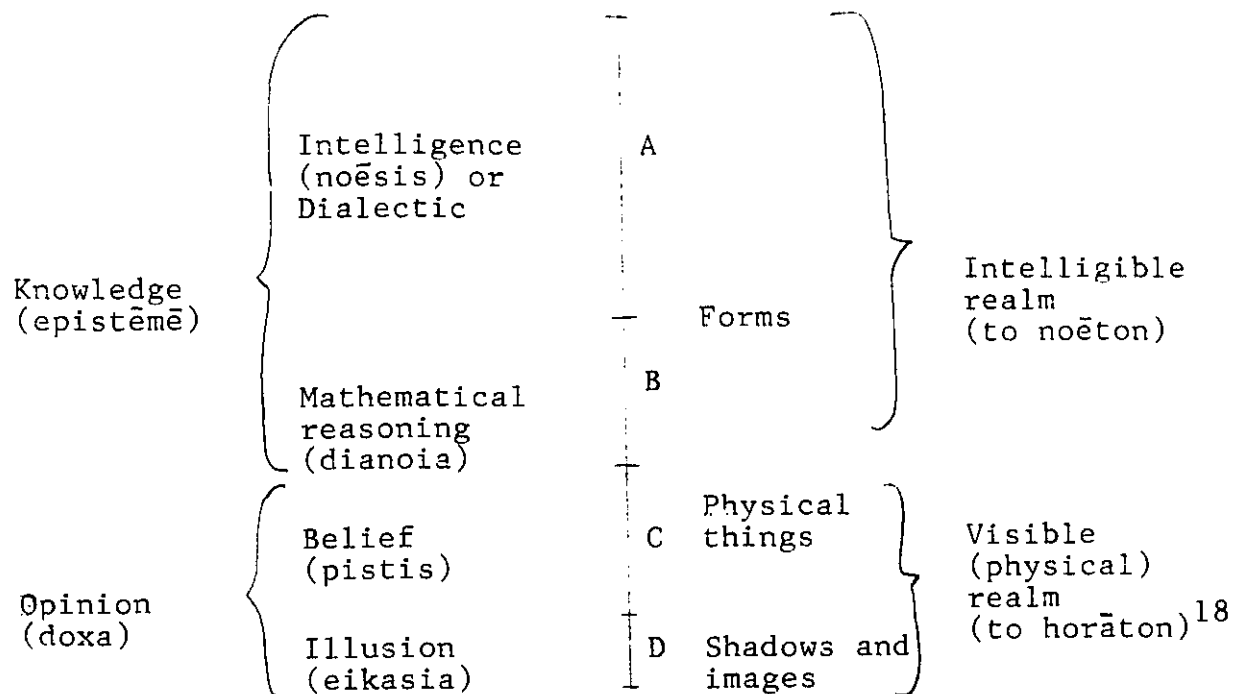
So it would seem.

If so, a second form of largeness will present itself,

over and above largeness itself and the things that share in it, and again, covering all these, yet another, which will make all of them large. So each of your forms will no longer be one, but an indefinite number.

If the Form possesses the character in the same manner as particulars, the Form will be reduced to their level and we will need to posit another Form over and above the rest. On the other hand, if the Form is the character itself in the manner described above, i.e. eternal, incomposite, intelligible, immaterial, independent, unique, etc., the Form is not only of a different ontological order from particulars but it is also as unlike them as a portrait is unlike the sitter. The sitter is alive; a breathing, living person, animated and filled with thoughts and emotions. The portrait is still and lifeless, merely paint on a canvas. One is an image of the other. One has the external appearance but not the internal nature of the other. Similarly, the quality "large" resembles the Form "Largeness" without being eternal, incomposite, unique, etc. as Largeness itself is.¹⁷

Concepts are conceived and sustained by the mind. Concepts are logical entities, completely dependent on a mind. They are subjective and hence, peculiar to each mind. As thoughts, concepts must be thoughts of something and thus, require objects. For instance, there is the image of this table in this mind and the image of the Form "Beauty" in that mind. Perhaps the simplest way to demonstrate where concepts fit into Platonic theory is to invoke the Line analogy:



All the things in the intelligible and visible realms are objects for thought. When we think, we think of these things. These things are all that exist otherwise we would think of nothing which we cannot do as Plato observes at Parmenides, 132b8-c2. Knowledge for us is made up of the concepts of Forms while our opinions are concepts of the physical world. Plato states:

... if ... a man refuses to admit that forms of things exist or to distinguish a definite form in every case, he will have nothing on which to fix his thought, so long as he will not allow that each thing has a character which is always the same, and in so doing he will completely destroy the significance of all discourse.

Forms are the objects of our concepts, "on which to fix his thought", and without Forms, we would never be able to communicate, "will completely destroy the significance of all discourse". The con-

stancy and uniqueness of Forms provides us with common terms, allows us to understand one another and permits us to form general laws about the universe.²⁰

3. MATTER

What is matter? Does Plato have a theory of matter? And can Plato hold such a theory according to the thesis? This section should clear up any misunderstandings resulting from pp. 40, 66-7, and 77-9.

On p. 67 of the text, I define matter as simply "the basic stuff" from which everything in the physical universe is made. For Heraclitus, this is fire.²¹ Empedocles maintains the world of transient things is composed of the four elements — earth, water, fire and air — and the two energies — love and strife — which bring together and tear apart the elements.²² Anaxagoras thought the world is infinitely divisible and that everything contains everything.²³ For Democritus, the universe is formed of innumerable, indivisible atoms constantly moving within the void.²⁴ In the case of each of these philosophers, the constituents of the universe are eternal.

For Plato, there is no comparable "stuff" out of which particulars are made. In the Timaeus, Plato recognizes time and again three kinds of things as existing, namely Forms, qualities and the Receptacle; and interprets the relation between them as that of original, image and medium:

One, which we assumed, was a pattern intelligible and always the same, and the second was only the imitation of the pattern, generated and visible. There is also a third kind which ... is the Receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation.²⁵

... we have only to conceive of three natures: first, that which is in process of generation; secondly, that in which the generation takes place; and thirdly, that of which the thing generated is a resemblance naturally produced.²⁶

Wherefore also we must acknowledge that one kind of being is the form which is always the same, uncreated and indestructible, never receiving anything into itself from without, nor itself going out to any other, but invisible and imperceptible by any sense, and of which the contemplation is granted to intelligence only. And there is another nature of the same name with it, and like to it, perceived by sense, created, always in motion, becoming in place and again vanishing out of place, which is apprehended by opinion jointly with sense. And there is a third nature, which is space and is eternal, and admits not of destruction and provides a home for all created things, and is apprehended, when all sense is absent, by a kind of spurious reason, and is hardly real — which we, beholding as in a dream, say of all existence that it must of necessity be in some place and occupy a space, but that what is neither in heaven nor in earth has no existence. Of these and other things of the same kind, relating to the true and waking reality of nature, we have only this dreamlike sense, and we are unable to cast off sleep and determine the truth about them. For an image, since the reality after which it is modeled does not belong to it, and it exists ever as the fleeting shadow of some other, must be inferred to be in another (that is, in space), grasping existence in some way or other, or it could not be at all.²⁷

Forms are immaterial but are qualities emulsified in matter and is "Receptacle" merely a whimsical name for matter? The Receptacle cannot be construed as matter for three reasons. 1) That which is material is sensible and the Receptacle is apprehended not by the senses but rather by "a kind of spurious reason" in the manner discussed on p. 75. 2) The image metaphor whereby qualities are images and it is the nature of images to inhere in something — "For an image, since the reality after which it is modeled does not belong to it, and it exists ever as the fleeting shadow of some other, must be inferred to be in another" — does not require this "something" to be matter. A medium is simply the means by

which other things are brought about. It need not be material. For instance, a mother's love for her child surfaces in her actions. Acts are said to possess qualities but are not particulars as I show on pp. 84-5. Plato speaks of the Receptacle the way he would of a medium²⁸: "forms which enter into and go out of her" at 50c3, "is to take every variety of form" at 50d4-5, "stamped upon its surface" at 50e2-3, "take the impression" at 50e3, "receive all forms" at 50e4, and "to impress figures on" at 50e7. Qualities pass in and out of the Receptacle. The Receptacle receives them as impressions. Plato does not say particulars are made out of the Receptacle as bread is made from wheat; or that when particulars move, they take part of the Receptacle with them²⁹ as when an animal stirs, it shifts its entire body from one place to another. Clearly, the Receptacle is not matter. Plato's description of the Receptacle's characteristics is examined on pp. 73-4. 3) As Cornford states on p. 181 of Plato's Cosmology, Plato never calls the Receptacle "matter".

If the Receptacle is not matter and qualities are simply the Forms' reflections in the Receptacle, how can qualities be bodily? Yet Plato does hold the existence of a world of becoming. Before answering this question, I wish to consider the gold analogy:

Suppose a person to make all kinds of figures of gold and to be always remodeling each form into all the rest; somebody points to one of them and asks what it is. By far the safest and truest answer is, 'That is gold,' and not to call the triangle or any other figures which are formed in the gold 'these,' as though they had existence, since they are in process of change while he is making the assertion, but if the questioner be willing to take the safe and indefinite expression, 'such,' we should be satisfied.³⁰

The figures themselves, though they can only exist in a medium,

represent the qualities. The gold is not a part of the triangle but the triangle is the imprint in the gold. Similarly, the Receptacle does not enter the quality but the quality is the reflection in the Receptacle. The inevitable conclusion is that the bodily must be simply the form.³¹ Keyt reaches the same outcome: "for Aristotle a body is a compound ($\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron\nu$, Met. 1023a31) of form and matter; for Plato a body is a form (character) alone."³²

As I have just demonstrated, Plato does not have a theory of matter. On pp. 96-7, I establish the Receptacle is a medium and not matter. A theory of matter is incompatible and in direct competition with Plato's own system. At Timaeus, 52a6 and 52b6, Plato speaks of the "place" of becoming; at 52b1, 52b6 and 52d2, Plato calls the Receptacle "Space". Space is capable of functioning as a medium and hence, does not conflict with the interpretation above. However, space is not matter. As Keyt claims, "A body in moving from one part of space to another carries its matter with it, but it does not carry its space or place with it."³³ It would be inconsistent of Plato to hold the Receptacle is both a medium which we may call "Space" and matter. Keyt points out Aristotle recognizes this inconsistency but falsely accuses Plato of it for Aristotle is wrong in asserting Plato identified the Receptacle with matter.³⁴

NOTES

¹ Plato, Sophist, 251a9-b3.

² Plato, Republic, 476a4-8.

³ J. McTaggart, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵ Plato, Phaedo, 100e4-5.

⁶ Ibid., 100e7-101a4.

⁷ Ibid., 101b3-8.

⁸ Ibid., 101b10-c8.

⁹ J. Bennett, "Substance, Reality, and Primary Qualities", American Philosophical Quarterly, 2 (January, 1965), pp. 8-17. In part 2 of his article, Bennett examines Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities and states that primary qualities are related to other things in many ways in which secondary qualities are not; that secondary-quality predicates have certain "logical connections with mental predicates" which primary qualities do not have; and that Berkeley failed to distinguish the appearance/reality distinction from the problem of substance and the primary/secondary quality distinction.

¹⁰ Plato, Theaetetus, 156d4-e3.

¹¹ See note 9.

¹² A.J. Smith, "General Relative Clauses in Greek", The Classical Review, 31 (June, 1917), pp. 70-1. Smith states:

Now, if we are to take the sentence thus, and understand quite literally, the rule would oblige us to posit an Idea, and one only, even for groups or aggregates which were only ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας, and such a wild Nominalism no one would suppose Plato at any time to have held.

And again:

... out of the sentence there cannot be extracted, and ascribed to Plato, any principle which tells us how many Ideas there are, or any doctrine that there are only as many Ideas as there are groups to which an Idea corresponds; all that is said is that if there is an Idea that Idea is indiscerptibly one, and must not be divided or multiplied.

¹³ Plato, Theaetetus, 185c11-e2.

¹⁴ These questions were put to me by Prof. Paquet. He suggested "common" is not the best term for distinguishing different kinds of qualities for all qualities are common.

¹⁵ Plato, Symposium, 211a1-b4.

- ¹⁶Plato, Parmenides, 131e9-132b3.
- ¹⁷F.M. Cornford, Plato and "Parmenides", pp.88-90.
- ¹⁸Plato, The Republic, trans. and ed. by D. Lee (Markham, Ontario: Penguin, 1974), p. 310.
- ¹⁹Plato, Parmenides, 135b5-c4.
- ²⁰F.M. Cornford, Plato and "Parmenides", p. 100.
- ²¹J. Burnet, Greek Philosophy (New York: St. Martin's, 1968), pp. 47-8.
- ²²Ibid., pp. 57-9.
- ²³Ibid., pp. 61-3.
- ²⁴Ibid., pp. 159-62.
- ²⁵Plato, Timaeus, 48e6-49b1.
- ²⁶Ibid., 50c6-d2.
- ²⁷Ibid., 51e8-52c9.
- ²⁸F. M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology, p. 177.
- ²⁹D. Keyt, "Aristotle on Plato's Receptacle", American Journal of Philology, 82 (1961), p. 297.
- ³⁰Plato, Timaeus, 50a4-b6.
- ³¹By "form", I mean the copy of a Form or the quality or character and not the Form itself.
- ³²D. Keyt, op. cit., p. 298. This is the conclusion to the argument which Keyt begins on p. 297. Keyt's argument and mine are identical.
- ³³Ibid., p. 297.
- ³⁴Ibid., pp. 291-300.

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