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THE PHILOSOPHY
OF PLATO

THE
PHILOSOPHY OF
PLATO

By

RAPHAEL DEMOS

Harvard University



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A



To
J. M. D.

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INTRODUCTION

IN this essay, I have aimed to reconstruct Plato's thought from his own works, ignoring almost altogether what Aristotle and the ancient scholars have reported Plato's doctrine to be. In this work, Plato means Plato's writings: the dialogues and, to a minor degree, the epistles. Furthermore, I have made no effort to draw a distinction between the Socratic and the Platonic elements in the dialogues, partly because the intent of this essay is not historical; but chiefly because, although I recognize that the influence of Socrates upon Plato is very great, I believe that that influence was assimilated by Plato and became part of his mind.

The purpose of this book is not scholarly but interpretative; not to analyze or to verify the text, but to present Plato's thought as conveyed in the text. Ideally, these two functions are inseparable; we cannot know what Plato thought unless we know what he said; but, for practical and pedagogical purposes, they may be separated. The scholarly work has been, and is being, done; and its results are taken for granted in this essay. Certainly, the English-speaking reader has adequate guides for the understanding of the text. But textual studies of individual dialogues must be supplemented with comprehensive interpretation. Now, it is hard to draw the line between legitimate interpretation and guesswork. Where I have indeed been conscious of giving a speculative hypothesis of Plato's thought, I have been careful to say so; and, on some occasions, I have deliberately made application of Plato's doctrine to contemporary problems. But any interpretation, no matter how carefully carried out, is apt to be subjective; and the author is liable to confuse his own problems with those of the text. Nevertheless, the remedy for inadequate interpretation is more and better interpretation. It is by checking one interpretation with another and still another, and all with the text, that we may hope to approximate the truth about Plato's thought.

For interpretation there must be. Plato's answers will have no significance for us unless we understand his questions. Without grasping what Plato's problems were, and especially why

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they were real problems for Plato, the texts will remain mere texts. The understanding of the texts is inseparable from the understanding of the problems and of the solutions to these problems; and, we may even say, from the consideration whether the solutions are plausible and true. Nevertheless, since all interpretation is tentative, the conclusions of this book are offered not in any dogmatic spirit but as suggestions. Almost in every case, alternative conclusions are possible; and where Plato seems to be defending both sides of the question, I have often repeated his apparently inconsistent answers without trying to make them fit into a logical pattern. After all, there is no such thing as *the* meaning of Plato; his thought can be formulated in a variety of meanings, all of them often equally good. Thus, any particular formulation is bound to be one-sided. The value, if any, of this book to the reader of the dialogues should be to initiate the process of interpretation in him and to provide him with some guidance along that path.

It would be wrong to assume that, because a thinker has lived at a certain date long past, his views are dated and to be studied from a purely historical standpoint. A philosopher who was intellectually alive in his day is alive today, though he be dead; and the student's approach to his written thoughts should be essentially no different from his approach to the spoken thoughts of a contemporary thinker. No doubt, the ancient philosopher used words which have become obsolete and propounded his doctrines in concepts which belong to another climate of opinion; and no doubt it is necessary to master, with the aid of the most exact and scholarly technique, those aspects of his thought and expression which are relevant to his special epoch. But no matter how essential, this work is only groundwork; a philosopher who has any merit raises problems which are universal to man at all times; and throughout this essay I have taken it for granted that Plato's problems are pertinent to ourselves now, until the contrary has been proved. In trying to understand what Plato wrote I have put to myself the questions, what is it that he means, what are the problems which concern him, why do they concern him, assuming as far as possible that his problems

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are also our own to the degree that we, too, are intellectually alive.

For the most part, writers on Plato have confined themselves to studies of separate dialogues, while, in this essay, I have tried to give a synoptic account of Plato's thought as it is exhibited in all the dialogues. The units in this book are topics, not dialogues. I have aimed to express, as it were, in every chapter the whole of Plato's thought from the perspective of a particular subject-matter. Inevitably, therefore, there has been repetition. To study Plato's thought dialogue by dialogue is right and proper, for every dialogue represents a fresh and individual envisagement of problems. But if we do no more than that, Plato is apt to dissolve into a plurality of Platos, and his work is liable to appear as an encyclopædia. It is important to proceed further and study the Platonic texts as the exhibition of a single mind, now occupying itself with one problem, now with another, or with the same problem but with a different emphasis at different times. Thus, the two approaches—the piecemeal and the synoptic—should supplement each other. It may be argued that I am begging the question, and that, in fact, the Platonic text is the product of many minds, not of one. But perhaps the habit of studying Plato piecemeal encourages the tendency to view Plato as a composite person. Anyway, the proof of a theory lies in its works; and it is for the reader to judge whether in this book the case has been successfully made out that the Platonic text exhibits the operations of a unitary mind, even when it seems to contradict itself.

To this writer at least, the unity of Plato is revealed in the fact that, as we proceed from dialogue to dialogue, we encounter a recurrence of foci of interest, of questions and problems, of ways of dealing with these, of intellectual attitudes and of general conceptions. We might take such an early and rather concrete dialogue as the *Lysis* and find in it quite a number of the problems and conceptions of the later dialogues, at least in germ; such, for instance, as the notions of the intermediary, of the good, of attraction and the *eros*, and of the limit. There is a transformation, as we go on, but it is continuous—as when a per-

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son grows—or abrupt, as when a person changes his mind. The unity is not one of doctrine but of an intellectual personality. A doctrine is explicit and coherent; it constitutes a system of propositions deduced from stated premises. Plato's thought does not form a system in this sense. What we do find in Plato is a unified point of view. A point of view need not be self-consistent in order to be one; there is such a thing as a persistent inconsistency. Also, a point of view need not be completely conceptualized; rather, it may generate a system, and it is not altogether unplausible to suggest that Plato's point of view generated Aristotle's system. Plato's point of view is exhibited in certain definite attitudes toward problems, and in his employment of certain general conceptions in dealing with these problems. For instance, in Plato we find the tendency to construe things as hierarchical, in terms of degrees of being and worth, as forming ladders; the tendency to establish continuities; to seek for links between things; the tendency both to isolate entities from each other and to relate them; the conflicting attitudes of otherworldliness and of this-worldliness.

In studying Plato, we should take note not only of what he says but of the manner in which he says it. There are the statements and there is the method by which he arrives at the statements. Now the method is not stated but is exhibited in the dialogues. Sometimes the statement and the method do not quite agree. In describing his theory of ideas, Plato talks of fixed, static entities in fixed relations; and of fixed innate concepts. But his method is that of a movement from hypothesis to hypothesis, his mentality is intuitive rather than rational, suggestive rather than definitive. In the *Phaedrus* Plato is a romantic rationalist, enraptured over the realm of eternal things. He identifies knowledge with certainty; yet, in his writings, he is doubtful, tentative, reflective, or again passionately convinced, and mystical. He sets forth the ideal of coherent knowledge, but he is not a systematic thinker himself. He speaks of mathematics as the prelude to dialectic; but his own method is anything but mathematical—at any rate, anything but abstract. Whereas Plato writes most sensuously of the realm of abstract

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things, Aristotle defends the reality of sensible things in the most abstract fashion. Plato's mind is an expression of his integral personality. His thought is, on the one hand, nourished from the emotional springs of his nature, and on the other, it is stimulated by a practical motive. By virtue of its emotional basis, his thought takes on a pictorial and dramatic form; and, as practical, it becomes profoundly moral. For Plato, the aim of philosophy is the reorganization of life; its product is less a body of ideas than a type of man. So Plato, while analytical and discursive in his approach to problems, is essentially a prophet, fervent and crusading. Problems for Plato are personal rather than formal; not inconsistencies among propositions so much as clashes within the experience of a mind concerned with ideas. The use of the dialogue form is significant in this connection; problems are voiced by interlocutors who are concerned with them, and hypotheses are set forth by characters who doubt or believe them. In the dialogues, philosophy is carried on in the dramatic and narrative forms—that is to say, it is philosophizing; thought is exhibited as the actual experience of a mind in wonder, deliberating over its problems and arriving at a solution which is also a satisfaction. And surely the way in which Plato thinks and argues, his emphases and his enthusiasms, are no less parts of Plato's mind than what he consciously presents as his conclusions.

I have formulated certain abstract and highly general notions which seem to me to lie at the root of Plato's thought; and in this sense I have aimed, in this essay, to provide an account of Plato's metaphysics. But I have been equally interested in giving an account of Plato's ethics and of his theory of human nature; and, above all, I have aimed to make clear the interconnection between Plato's metaphysics and his philosophy of life. The unity of Plato is primarily the unity of his abstract thought with his concrete intuitions. His concrete intuitions are not casual insights; they exemplify his general conceptions. And the latter are inductions from his concrete intuitions. Thus Plato's thought forms a pattern in which particular observations and abstract reflections are mutually adapted.

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Among the defects of this book, I must list two. I have practically made no reference to the second part of the *Parmenides*, for the reason that I wholly fail to understand its purport; and, owing to my ignorance of mathematics, I have omitted all detailed discussion of the mathematical elements of Plato's philosophy.

The reader who is not interested in the technical aspects of Plato's philosophy is advised to confine himself to the following chapters, reading them in the order as given: Chapters XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XII, XIII, V, I. I am grateful to the Harvard University Press for its generous permission to reproduce numerous passages from the translation of Plato in the Loeb Classical Library; to *The Journal of Philosophy* for permission to republish the contents of the first chapter, and also to reproduce my article on the *Eros*, which is here published in a revised form as part of the chapter on the soul; to *The Philosophical Review* for permission to republish the contents of chapters II and III; and to the Ἀρχαῖον Φιλοσοφίας (Athens, Greece), in which the contents of several chapters of this book were published in the modern Greek language. My greatest obligations are to those who have helped me in my study of Plato. Often suggestions have come to me unnoticed and I have absorbed them unconsciously. Perhaps for this reason their effectiveness has been all the greater, but also it is the more difficult to acknowledge. I am, however, deeply grateful, especially to my colleagues and students at Harvard, present and past, for ideas they have suggested to me and for the opportunity they have afforded to me to test ideas concerning Plato's philosophy in friendly discussion. I should like especially to express my obligation to the works of A. E. Taylor, F. Cornford, and A. N. Whitehead—to Professor Whitehead for his ideas as conveyed not only in his books but in his lectures and conversations as well. Needless to say, none of these thinkers should be held responsible for the views supported in this book. I am much indebted to Mr. Holcombe Austin for his help in the correction of the proofs and the preparation of the index.

R. D.

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PART I
THE CREATIVE FACTORS

CHAPTER I

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTIONS OF PLATO'S METAPHYSICS

ALTHOUGH to arrange Plato's doctrines into a system would be to falsify his views, it is possible to discover and enumerate certain essential notions, from the interweaving of which his various and varying doctrines arise; there are certain types of being under which all things may be subsumed. Plato speaks of the letters which enter into the alphabet of all things (*Politicus* 278c). What are these letters out of which all the syllables and all the sentences of the real world are composed? This is the question which we propose in this chapter; and to get an answer, we shall turn primarily to the *Timæus* and the *Philebus*.

In the *Timæus*, Plato propounds the question whether the world is something which has always existed, or that has come to be. Since the world is visible it must have come to be (*Timæus* 28b); and since it has come to be it requires a cause. In short, the world is sensible and temporal and therefore not self-existent. The world is a creature—a *ἡσυχονός*. The immediate problem is to ascertain its cause or causes. On the one hand, we have the actual world, which has come into being; on the other, the principles or causes (*αἴτια*) which have not. I shall refer to this contrast as one between the creature and the creative factors; the former are known by experience, the latter by reason (*Timæus* 28a), by metaphysical speculation. In the ensuing discussion, Plato demonstrates the creative factors presupposed by the creature.

(a) In enumerating the creative factors, Plato begins with God, who is the active cause of the universe. God is designated both as the maker and the father; and these two notions represent somewhat different aspects of the creative function. The

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artisan—the maker—has an external relation to his work, but the father a living relation, in that the child participates in the substance of the father.

By requiring God as a cause, Plato is denying that mechanical causation is sufficient to account for the world. He is refuting the atomists who explain the emergence of one physical occurrence by reference to another physical occurrence. A physical cause is an effect requiring another cause in its turn; it cannot initiate motion. We must therefore posit a primary cause of motion. In the *Phædrus* (245d) Plato maintains that if we are confined to the series of physical motions, we are reduced to an infinite regress. We must have a beginning, ἀρχή, a cause of motion which is itself uncaused. Unless there is primary motion, there is no motion whatever, and the whole framework of heaven and earth would collapse (*Phædrus* 245e). We thus posit a principle of inherent spontaneity, a self-initiating motion, and this is the psyche, and ultimately God.

The notion of mechanical causation is inadequate; similarly, the conception of the realm of ideas is inadequate to account for the becoming of the creature. The world is the realization of the ideas, but the ideas have no motion, they are static, and can not initiate their own embodiment. The psyche is the factor of activity whereby the union of ideas and things is brought about. Thus, God constitutes the energy of creation.

(b) God creates the world according to a Pattern which he contemplates, just as the artisan has a model before his eyes or in his mind while making his shoes or his bed. And since the world is the best of creatures, not only is God the best of causes, but the Pattern must be the best, that is, eternal. The Pattern is a creative factor—an ἀρχή—in that it is ultimate in the meta-physical situation, self-existent, and timeless. The factor of the Pattern accounts for structure and order in nature, its regularity, and the fact that things have definite characters.

(c) God works with something; the Pattern is embodied in something. Creation is the determination of the indeterminate. A third creative factor is required—and this is the Receptacle. At this early stage of our discussion, we cannot say much concerning this admittedly obscure notion. The Receptacle is also

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called space; in short, it is the locus of creation. Also, space as such is indeterminate; it is the potentiality of all shapes; thus, the Receptacle is the indeterminate which receives the determination of the forms.

The Receptacle is the primordial chaos. God finds discordant and disorderly motion, and brings it from disorder to order; he finds inertia, and brings in life. Or we can express the same fact from the other end. Souls obtain bodies; the forms get embodiment in the Receptacle. Thus, the Receptacle is the factor of concreteness whereby we are enabled to speak of "this" and of "that"; it is the aspect of brute fact, of sheer givenness.

In transforming the primordial chaos into an orderly world, God has recourse to the Pattern. God makes the so-called elements, fire, water, air, and earth, by arranging space according to certain geometrical figures and solids. The actual world comes about through the introduction of mathematical relations, of number and proportion into the Receptacle. Thus, the soul is a definite mixture of things (same, other, being) according to a certain ratio. These ratios, these geometrical figures, issue from the Pattern, but they are not actual except as embodied in the Receptacle.

(*d*) The actual world is brought about by the union of forms and the Receptacle. This union is transient. The copies of the forms go in and go out (*Timæus* 50c) and the actual thing is that moment between the going in and the going out. Thus, an actual thing is in the nature of a process, with a coming to be and a passing away. It does not endure. How then are we led to speak of enduring things? Elsewhere (*Symposium* 208b), Plato speaks of patterns repeating themselves in the flux; thus an enduring thing is a succession of becomings with the same pattern.

In short, the world points in three directions: to God, the energy of creation; to the Forms, the pattern for creation; and to the Receptacle, the matrix of creation. Add to these the creature, and we have four kinds of being, in the final analysis (*Timæus* 48e). The creature is doubly characterized as sensible (physical) and as temporal; it is a world of passage. But the creative factors, including the Receptacle, are unchanging, "never departing from their natures" (*Timæus* 50b), timeless,

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because self-existent and necessary. What is their relation to the concrete world?

The contrast between the two is that of cause and effect, of primary and derivative, absolute and relative. Further, the world is an image, a copy of being (*Timæus* 29b); an imitation of God. The forms are reproducing themselves in the world, so that, within certain limitations, the world represents the timeless, and bears its character. Finally, the world is a mixture, $\mu\acute{\iota}\xi\iota\varsigma$ (*Timæus* 41d), of the creative factors. This makes the relation of the creative factors and the creature immediate; the metaphysical elements are ingredients of the world, they enter into its composition; they are immanent. The world *is* the creative factors in their togetherness.

(e) To the above we may add a further creative factor, not singled out in the *Timæus* and yet indicated in the argument. This is the Good, which constitutes the *motive* of creation. The actual world is derivative in the sense that it is a means to an end beyond the world. There is the contrast (*Philebus* 53e) of that which is for something, and that for which something is; thus the contrast of the creature and the creative factor has a valuational as well as an ontological significance. The Good, as the ultimate end, is *for* nothing else, and therefore absolute; it is the source of all the goodness in the world. In modern terminology, the Good is the principle of perfection, the factor of value, and the world is an embodiment of value, as far as possible—"the best of creatures" (*Timæus* 29a).

The Good is a factor in addition to the mechanical cause or to necessity. The mechanical cause supplies the instrumentality of creation; but for a complete explanation, we must state what end its production serves. There is the "why" as well as the "how." The emphatic affirmations of the *Phædo* (97-8) are to the point here. The world is the outcome of the coöperation of reason with necessity.

What is the nature of the world which results from the interplay of these creative factors? The world is *complete*, since it is as good as possible. Nothing is left out; it is the realization of all the potencies in the Receptacle, the embodiment of all the forms in the living Pattern. Thus, there is no alternative

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to this world; no unrealized Leibnizian possible worlds. And there is no plurality of worlds. There is only this one world. Were there a number of worlds, we should have to posit another world, which would be the world of these worlds. Thus the world is alone, in the solitariness of the comprehensive being; nothing enters into it, nothing leaves it. There is nothing actual to which it may be related, and by which it may be affected; it is ageless. The law of conservation applies to it. And it is self-sufficient: its own companion.

Here we have an anticipation of the idea of substance, as of something which is all-inclusive, a whole, self-sufficient. But, of course, the world could be only an image of substance, since it depends on God.

Inasmuch as the world is a copy of the ideal pattern, it is internally integrated; all its parts are organized into a systematic unity. The parts are understood by reference to their place in the whole. This integration is according to a scale of values: the parts are arranged as higher and lower, and the whole is an architectonic structure. Thus the world is (*a*) complete, (*b*) integrated, and (*c*) hierarchical; and these aspects issue from its perfection.

Let us now proceed to the *Philebus*, to whose argument we have already had occasion to refer. In the *Philebus*, Plato is considerably more explicit concerning the abstract factors of the metaphysical situation than in any other of his writings; in an important sense, the *Philebus* is the most important of Plato's dialogues. It is not the best written; it is lacking in wealth of detail and even insight. But it has clarity, elimination of all but the essentials, rigorous analysis, and concentration on first and last things. I have especial reference to paragraphs 14-18, 23-30. Plato herein enumerates four classes of being: the Unlimited, the Limit, the Mixed, and the Cause.

I. The Unlimited is the factor of indefiniteness. We must not confuse Plato's use of the word "infinite" (*ἄπειρον*) with the modern use of the same term. The mathematical infinite is a complete, well-defined class; but the essence of Plato's Infinite is its indefiniteness. It is boundless; that is, without

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bounds, not a whole. A class is definite in that it is delimited; the boundary defines what the class includes and what it excludes. The absence of boundaries is the absence of wholeness. Moreover, it is the absence of individuation. A thing is itself in virtue of its not being something else; but in the Unlimited there are no bounds and no diversity. The Unlimited is the merging of all forms. Thus it is the principle of objective vagueness and confusion in nature. An example would be the manifold of sense, or even better, of dreams.

Aristotle, referring to Plato's concept of the Unlimited, describes it as the indeterminate dyad (*Metaphysics* 987c, 25-30); Plato's own illustrations are: more or less, larger or smaller, intensely or mildly, hotter and colder, these being quantities and intensities that have no definite bounds. If we picture the Unlimited as a line, we might say that it is unbounded in a twofold sense: (a) that the line goes on indefinitely at either end—*μη τέλος ἔχον*—more and more hot at the one, more and more cold at the other, etc. This is the aspect of excess and of violence. An example from the field of human nature would be appetite; greed is never satisfied, no matter how much it consumes; it has no end, no *τέλος*; greed is essentially the unsatisfiable. Or, take inordinate ambition where the satisfaction of one wish immediately sets up a new and more insistent wish.

And (b) the line is unlimited internally in that it is not cut at any definite point, but is divisible anywhere. The line is not segmented; "it has no beginning, middle, or end" (*Philebus* 31a). Thus the Unlimited is a continuum—not merely of space, but of time, of intensity, of magnitude in general. That it has no cuts means that it has no articulation, that in the Unlimited there are no distinct points, moments, entities, qualities. Plato speaks of indefiniteness both of quantity and of degree (27e). The Unlimited is sheer multiplicity and sheer qualitative confusion. In immediate experience, things pass into each other; the Unlimited is the flux in which all beings and shapes merge into a confused whole; thus, in a world of change, we cannot say of anything: this is white, since it already has turned into black. In politics, the Unlimited would represent the condition

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of a state which, internally, is not stratified into classes, where donkeys and men walk together on the pavement (*Republic* 563c); and, externally, a state that expands indefinitely, not knowing what it wants, insolently aggressive. In human nature the Unlimited is the condition of the democratic man whose character is the merging of the good and the bad, who excludes no impulse, who is indiscriminately a philosopher and a sportsman, a man of affairs and of pleasure. The democratic man has no definite bent. The poet, with his alternating moods, with his immediate susceptibility to the slightest change in the environment, is another instance of what Plato calls the Unlimited. He reflects Nature's moods, is one with the scenes which he depicts; he has no self-sufficiency, no definite character.

We cannot even speak of a multitude of things in the Unlimited, of the sheer many, for there are no distinct things, but only confusion and flux. Yet Plato does speak of the many, and this is because there are grades of indefiniteness. Furthermore, Plato points out that the Unlimited is itself limited, it is a *one*; it has the character of indefiniteness and change (*Philebus* 25a).

Shall we say that by the words "Unlimited" and "Receptacle," Plato is describing an identical situation? It would be rash to assume that Plato repeats himself from dialogue to dialogue; his approach is always fresh. Yet we think it would not be rash to assume that the four classes of being in the *Philebus* have a certain analogy to the creative factors of the *Timæus*. The Unlimited and the Receptacle seem to play a similar rôle in the explanation of nature. They are that *upon* which God works in creating a world. And they both seem to express the character of indefiniteness: the Receptacle, by complete *negation*, as the absence of all forms; the Unlimited, by complete *affirmation*—as the confusion of all forms.

II. The Limit is the principle of order. It sets boundaries within the flux, thus breaking it up into separate events. It arranges things into classes and ratios, and so converts the manifold into a system. Thus, the Limit is the factor of measurability and of organization; the basis of clearness and distinctness, as to quantity (*ποσόν*) and as to quality (*ποιόν*) enabling the mind

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to describe a given situation as so many, and as such and such.

On the one hand, the Limit introduces the *παῦλα*, the full stop, into the indefinitely extending line. It "binds the Unlimited" (*Philebus* 27d). It transforms a craving that is never quenched into a purpose that has a direction and therefore an end (*τέλος*). The democratic man is protean, passing from one impulse to another; but the just man puts bounds to his conduct; he excludes immoderate pleasures; he performs a specific function. On the other hand, the Limit makes the cut within the continuous range of time, space, sense, desire. White is separated out of black; this object is discriminated from that; it is itself and nothing else. The Limit is the principle of division, that is, of not-being, creating the world of definite qualities and objects, each of them separate, independent, self-sufficient. Their self-sufficiency is the measure of their distinctness from other objects; hence, the aspect of their boundedness. The weak man is at the mercy of fortune; that is, he has no being of his own, apart from circumstance; but the strong man is aloof and independent; he possesses his own life; he sets boundaries over which the flux of circumstance may not flow. Thus, the Limit is the aspect of individuation.

Further, it is the aspect of relationship: of comparison, commensurability, and proportion. Plato mentions as instances of the Limit, equality, and the equal, the double, or again, the proportional (25a). The good man has the right proportion of courage and wisdom; the perfect state has the just allotment of functions. Hence the Limit is the principle not only of individuation but of correlation too, of the one as well as of the many, of association along with division, whereby the world is constituted into definite entities in definite relationships; it is the principle of classification, which both divides all things into groups and unifies them into more general groups. Thus, more generally, it is the factor of articulation, and harmony; the bond (*δεσμός*) which joins the fluctuating appearances into one object, and constructs wholes out of elements. In this sense, the Limit represents a conception of greater generality than the Pattern. The forms are exemplifications of the Limit; they are its first creatures, like the gods which are created by God; they

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are the definite ways in which the Limit operates on the Unlimited, the various formulæ, ratios, according to which the manifold is arranged.

III. The third factor is the class of the Mixed. This is the actual world. It is the mixture of the Limit with the Unlimited; the "information" of matter; the introduction of configuration into space, of rhythm into the flux. In the *Timæus* (50d) we have the Father (Being), the Mother (the Receptacle) and the Child (the world of Becoming). In the *Philebus* (27a) we have, on the one hand, the things that come about—the mixture—and on the other, the things out of which they come about, that is, the Limit and the Unlimited.¹

The mixed class is a creature—γεγεννημένη οὐσία (*Philebus* 27b). But the concept of the mixture is fuller than that of the creature. The world is not only an effect of the creative factors; it is a concretion of them, and is therefore like them. Moreover, it is less a mixture than a *mixing*; it is the becoming of a mixture; generation into being (*Philebus* 26d). The actual world is a process of actualization, the realizing of the forms in the Unlimited. Thus, the class of the mixed is the world of temporality—things that are becoming, have become, or will become (*Philebus* 59a). It corresponds to the transient, visible copy of the *Timæus* (49a). Plato's examples are health, strength of body and soul, music, science (that is, knowledge), and the seasons (*Philebus* 25e, 26b). By the imposition of measure, the inchoate mass of conflicting elements becomes adjusted and we get health; the flux achieves a rhythm, whether in the movement of the heavenly bodies, in the changes of the seasons, in the alternation of life and death, or in the dance and the other arts. The welter of impulses is organized into a harmonious character; rational knowledge is a mixture—that is, the imposition of the highest forms (or categories) upon the manifold of experience; the welter of conflicting interests is organized into a unity by the imposition of the principle of the public good.

The actual world is a mixture of *all* the creative factors. Thus,

¹The reader might compare the argument of the *Philebus* with that of the *Politicus* (283–285) where three types of being are specified: (a) Measure, (b) Excess and Deficiency, (c) the Generation of Measure.

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it contains not only organization but life; it is an orderly and also an *animated* creature (*Philebus* 32b). As a creature it points in three directions: it is the *Chaos* bounded by the *Limit*, and animated by the *Psyche*. Consequently, actual things cannot be interpreted in any simple way, in terms of any one category alone, material, psychical or formal. They are complex. Nature is a teleological process, restricted by mechanical necessity (*ἀνάγκη*). There is no problem, for Plato, as to how the soul can play a rôle among bodies in nature; nature, to begin with, is psychical, matter which is animate, moving toward an end.

The concrete world is constituted by the implanting of the *Limit* upon the *Unlimited*; therefore, to be real is to be definite, orderly, uniform. Yet the mixture is dual; it is a union of order with chance. In the real world, there is something which eludes intelligence, an ultimate matter of fact. The world is organized *as far as possible*, not wholly. There is the irrational; the world exhibits both rationality and brutality. Plato does not conceive that the world of becoming can be wholly explained by science. In the *Timæus* (29c) he states that the world can be grasped under the aspect of probability; this probability is founded in the objective nature of things, and is not a reflection of our ignorance. In another context (*Philebus* 59a) he argues that the temporal world lacks fixity; thus, the knowledge of it lacks fixity, too. Our theories about it can be only approximate, and must be replaced by others constantly. Thus, the world is a stage for conflict; there is the process of determining the indeterminate, the stress between these opposites, the relative success in the adjustment, the constant failure. The duality in the mixture is the source of the moral problem.

Several specific points may be made concerning the mixed class. (a) Though each mixture is a concretion of all the creative factors, yet in each, some creative factor seems dominant in a special sense. The soul is an integration of all the factors, but primarily expresses the type of being which is God, in that the soul is self-moving motion; the forms, especially the highest forms or categories, express especially the character of the *Limit*; whereas the physical objects are nearer the *Unlimited*.

(b) There are degrees of mixture—that is, degrees in the

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success of the imposition of the Limit upon the Unlimited. We have mixtures which are well-mixed and others not (*Philebus* 61b). Hence mixtures form a scale, a hierarchy of actual things. In Plato we find the hierarchy of governments, from aristocracy to tyranny, the hierarchy of kinds of love in the *Symposium*, the ladder of being and of knowledge extending from dialectic to the fluctuating impressions of sense, the scale of virtues, of souls, and so forth. To be higher in the scale is to be nearer the intelligible than to the sensible; to be a mixture in which the Limit has successfully dominated the Unlimited. Hence the higher the mixture, the more compact and integrated, the more enduring. For example, human reason is a mixture so mixed as to remain indissoluble; but the passionate soul is mortal. Gradations of mixture represent grades of abstraction; they represent an approximation to the limit of purity and clarity (καθαρόν, ἐναργές). Reason, spirit, appetite are mixtures in a descending order of purity. Reason is pure in that it is a definite organization, and exhibits a form clearly; but appetites are confused, only faintly determined. As we rise in the scale, the forms separate out, and we are able to group objects under definite classes and to exclude them wholly from other classes. But as we descend it is not so; for example, physical objects are unclear: both white and black, good and bad, real and unreal at once.

The conception of degrees of mixture is the basis of Plato's notion of hierarchy, and ultimately, of his rationalism. The arrangement into higher and lower is the principle of division, whereby we proceed from a more to a less inclusive class; and classification is the organizing principle of science.

(c) We have not only an ontological but a causal hierarchy of mixtures as well. The higher is a cause of the lower, rules it and provides for it. Thus reason rules spirit, and spirit rules the impulses, and the whole soul rules the body. God (who is not a mixture) creates the gods (who are mixtures) and these in their turn create the mortal souls. The soul of the cosmos creates and controls the souls of the parts. Thus, the more general notions and ultimately the idea of the Good generate the specific notions; the universals, in their turn explain and

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organize sense-experience; the philosopher returning to the cave views the shadows in terms of the objects he has seen while in the light outside.

There is a hierarchy of creators. The creator creates a creature which creates a lower creature. The creature participates in the nature of the creator, and is itself a creative agent. The ultimate creator operates through intermediaries; just as the statesman uses ministers and heralds to carry out his intentions and transmit his orders, while he himself does nothing (*Politicus* 305d). So God uses the demons, among which is the Eros. God creates a first mixture which then becomes the creator of the universe. This point will become clearer as the whole exposition develops; at this stage illustrations may be proposed but not defended. Suppose, for example, we consider the following as an ontological hierarchy of mixtures: (*a*) the Limit (not a mixture), (*b*) the highest notions or categories (other, same, being, etc.), (*c*) the forms, such as man, justice, white, (*d*) the particulars. Now this is also a causal hierarchy in the following sense: the first mixture of the Limit with the Unlimited results in the categories. The mixture of the categories, in turn, with the Unlimited results in the forms. The mixture of the forms with the Unlimited, once more, results in the particulars. In short, the higher mixture is a cause of the lower, because it is an ingredient of it.

The conception of the mixed class, as it is presented in the *Philebus*, has not received the attention it merits from students of Plato. The rôle of the idea of the mixture is to give a metaphysical status to concrete things. Though the mixture is said to be an effect of the other three factors, yet it is also described as one of these; being includes the mixture as coördinate with the other factors. In some sense, the mixture is as ultimate as the other factors, possibly in the sense that, as the mixture is an effect of the creative factors, so they in their turn have their being in the mixture.

IV. The fourth class of being is called the Cause and is also characterized as a Creative Agent—Τὸ Ποιοῦν, that which makes (*Philebus* 26e). What it makes is the mixture (*Philebus* 27b); in short, it is the factor which joins the intelligible with the

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sensible, the finite with the infinite, and thus brings the world into being. The Creator not only brings the world about, but also sustains it and rules over it (30c). He is identified as a soul and as a mind. Thus the Cause in the *Philebus* describes the same factor as the Demiourgos of the *Timæus*.

Plato makes the point that we must not confuse the Cause with the servant of the Cause (27a). The first leads, the second follows (27a). The servant is the instrumental cause, and this is physical causation, which is transmissive and not initiatory; the minister carries out an order which he does not issue; but the king issues his own commands and does not receive any (*Politicus* 260e). Again, the general is one who knows how to wage a war, but is not competent to decide whether a war ought to be carried out. The choice of ends is the function of the king (*Politicus* 304). The general and the minister are auxiliaries to the statesman; so is the mechanical process an auxiliary cause to God (*Philebus* 27a, *Timæus* 48a). Thus God has the double rôle of initiating motion and choosing its direction.

God, then, is added to the other metaphysical factors; though present in them (*Philebus* 30b), he is distinct from them (*Philebus* 27b). It is remarkable that Aristotle should have accused Plato of overlooking the efficient cause, when, in the *Philebus*, Plato is so emphatic about its importance. Moreover, Plato's four kinds of being correspond to Aristotle's four causes.

V. The *Eros* is the connecting link between the creative factors and the creature—it is a principle of betweenness, the bond between the absolute and the relative. The *Eros* is only another word for the causal energy exhibited in the total scheme. The relationship is on both sides; in the *Symposium* the *Eros* is described as the aspiration of the mortal for the immortal, of the actual for the ideal. And, conversely, in the *Timæus* and in the *Laws*, we find described the love of God for the world. The philosopher must leave the cave and seek the Sun of the Good; the philosopher must return to the cave and pierce its obscurity with the light of the Sun.

Further, there is an irrational *Eros* described as the desire which leads away from the enjoyment of beauty (*Phædrus* 238c); this is the fascination exerted upon the mortal creature

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by the Unlimited. On the one hand, we have the lure of the Good, the rise of humanity to a state of justice under the rule of the philosopher-king; the ascent of the soul to the ecstatic vision of Beauty. On the other, we have degeneration and death, brought about by the irruption into the life of the creature of the wild irregular force, by the overwhelming intrusion of passion. Hence we have the cycle of rise and fall.

The idea of the *Eros* only partially expresses the intermediary. Coördinately with the *Eros*, we have the Light, which is the effluence of the Sun of the Good, and other spirits, which together constitute the class of demons, whose function it is to link the realm of the divine with that of the mortal. The *Eros* is one instance of the general factor of betweenness, of the link between contrasting factors.

We can now sum up the preceding discussion. The metaphysical situation has been analyzed into God, or the Cause; the Pattern, or the Limit; the Good, or the Principle of the Best; the Receptacle, or the Unlimited; the Creature, or the Mixture; and the *Eros*, or the Demons. God comprehends the realm of souls; the Limit includes the class of forms and mathematical relations; the *Eros* is generalized into the concept of the Intermediary; the Good is equivalent to Beauty. In this list we find all the elements for the making of the Platonic philosophy, all the letters from which to construct the syllables and sentences of his thought. The theory of ideas is one such syllable. But the list has an importance beyond the boundaries of Plato's own thought. It supplies a group of notions singularly adequate for interpreting the universal experience of mankind, a manifold of insights which, for comprehensiveness, has hardly been equalled since.

The *Eros* is the prototype of the familiar doctrines of the life-force, the will-to-live, the *élan vital*. The contrast of the Good and of Being (which is an identity as well) is the contrast between the normative and the descriptive, value and existence. The idea of the Unlimited establishes the conception of matter of fact, of that residuum in experience which remains forever opaque to intelligence. The idea of the Limit as the requisite

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of all existence is the idea of mathematical relations as lying at the base of all explanation of nature. The conception of the Psyche sets forth the idea of self-activity and spontaneity—indeed of any activity as opposed to inertia. These notions possibly overflow into one another, possibly all of them come together in one complex notion, yet each one represents a different emphasis, if not a distinct strain. The contrast of the Psyche and the Limit is the contrast of the rational will and the standards with which it is confronted. The contrast of the Limit and the Unlimited is at the root of the contrast between the classical and romantic in art, between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, between reason and passion, the values of balance and proportion on the one hand, of enthusiasm and of excess on the other. The contrast of God and Receptacle is that of teleology and brute fact. The contrast of the creature and the creative factors is the contrast of the phenomenal and transcendental, the relative (dependent) and the absolute (self-sufficient); the relation between the two is the space along which take place the movements of ascent and descent, induction and deduction, theory and practice.

There is something arbitrary in the listing of just these factors as the primitive notions in Plato's philosophy, and also in distinguishing them from each other. The *Philebus* mentions only four explicitly; the *Timæus* only three of these. So the list is not proposed as absolute, but as a convenient set of notions from which to construct Plato's thought. And provisionally once more, we state that in Plato's philosophy the factors of value, of order, of motion, are distinct factors (which, however, are mutually related). We will now proceed to some general considerations about this map of the metaphysical situation.

In the list there appears no principle of evil. The Unlimited is not antithetic to the Good; the Receptacle is not opposed to God, but is neutral. Moreover, there is no thing or stuff. The mixture is a becoming, not a static thing; the ideas are static, of course, but they are not things; and souls are motions. The place of motion among the ultimate constituents must not be overlooked. Too often Plato's view of being has been construed solely in terms of the world of forms, while motion has been

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relegated to the region of not-being; but souls too are real and they are motions, though to be distinguished from the flux, as spontaneous from dependent or passive motion. Thus motion is really real—*ὄντως ὄν*.

Though Plato is, as we would say to-day, antiphenomenalistic, though the concept of the transcendental is basic in his doctrine, his method is empirical; he proceeds not from definitions but from the given, from the actual world, from "this which is called the universe" (*Philebus* 28d). In the *Timæus*, his point of departure is the world of passage; he is driven to the notion of the Pattern by the attempt to explain the actual world. In the *Philebus* (29-30) he arrives at the idea of the Divine Mind from a study of the world around him. If there are mind and soul in the effect—he says in so many words—there must be mind and soul in the Cause. That is Plato's method consistently; to proceed like the philosopher moving along the divided line, from the particular to the universal. Thus in the *Phædo* (100-105) and in the *Parmenides* (129) the theory of ideas is represented as simply a hypothesis to explain the problems and contradictions of the world of opinion.

The metaphysical situation is complex; there is no one factor to which the world is reducible; the causes are several: God, the Pattern, the Receptacle; the kinds of being are several. In the *Philebus* (27b) God is said to be *other* than all. He is limited, on the one hand, by the standard of the Good; on the other, by the Receptacle. Thus, creation is the best *possible*. God is not absolute; nothing as such is absolute. No definite factor can be designated as the All; there is always something else. There is no Parmenidean One, no Spinozistic all-embracing Substance. Plato is not a mystic for whom all things are blended into a simple unity. To be Infinite would amount for Plato to being indefinite; since to be is to be definite, to exclude. Perfection is not all-inclusiveness. Thus, the ultimately real is a society of beings contrasted with each other. Given the One, there is also the Many; and from the Many we must proceed to the One. To apprehend is to compare, discriminate, and relate.

Not only is the metaphysical situation complex, but each one

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of its component factors is complex as well. The Limit subdivides itself into the forms and the mathematical relations. We do not have ingression of the Limit into the Unlimited *simpliciter*; the Limit enters the scene as expressed in this or that type of mathematical relation. Plato speaks of the Limit, and then also of the Limited ("that which has the Limit," "the offspring of the Limit." *Philebus* 24a). And the Unlimited, too, allows for distinctions within itself, namely, as indeterminateness of quality, or of quantity. Plato states that both the Limit and the Unlimited are split up and scattered (ἔσχισμένον καὶ διεσπαρμένον, *Philebus* 23e). In sum, each of the creative factors is a one in a many, and this quite apart from its relation to the temporal world. There is an aboriginal complexity in the creative factors. So, too, God generates subordinate gods who, in their turn, create other souls and the world. The idea of a plurality of gods is apt to be taken as a survival from primitive polytheism. For Plato, however, the plurality of gods issues from the rational character of the divine; it is division, the many in the one. Wherever there is being, there is hierarchical order. Governments are arranged in an ascending order, so are the parts of the human soul, so are the types of knowledge. The hierarchy of gods culminating in God is analogous to the hierarchy of forms culminating in the Good.

Let us now return to the primary complexity, in virtue of which the metaphysical situation is distinguishable into God, the Good, the Receptacle, the Mixed Class. This complexity is not to be construed as a plurality. The ultimate elements are in a reciprocal relation. One of the aspects of being is power, that is, relationship (*Sophist* 247e); nothing exists in isolation (*Philebus* 63b). The totality of being is not a sheer unity, but neither is it a sheer multiplicity: (a) God is good; the soul is akin to the ideas. (b) The forms have being in relation to motion and the soul (*Sophist* 248). (c) The Good is the fair, the harmonious, the orderly; that is, it is constituted by the Limit. (d) Yet the forms have being only in so far as they participate in the Good. (e) In some obscure fashion God and the Forms are internally related to the Receptacle. God, says Plato, persuades necessity; purpose coöperates with necessity.

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But if God can persuade, it must be that the Receptacle can listen and understand. Also, God would be unable to elicit an orderly world from the Boundless, unless there were a primordial aptitude for the coming together of the Limit with the Unlimited. Since it is possible for God to find in the Receptacle enough material for the realization of all the forms, it follows that the Receptacle is intrinsically adequate for the purposes of the ideal pattern. And in the *Philebus* (25a) Plato points out that the Unlimited has unity; which would mean that it participates, by its very nature, in Number, and in the Limit.

Thus there is an aboriginal relevance as well as a diversity among the metaphysical factors. Each has its being as such and also in relation to all the rest. The internal relationship of the metaphysical factors makes it possible arbitrarily to treat any one of them as a principle from which to derive all the rest. Starting with God, one can regard the Good as his purpose, the forms as his ideas, the Receptacle as the negation of his being. But so could one start with the Good, as Plato does in the *Republic*, and regard all the other factors as derivative from it. On various occasions, Plato treats every one of the ultimate factors (except the Receptacle) as supreme; it would seem, then, that none of them, taken as such, is prior to the rest, but that they are coördinate in their togetherness.

Practically the same point is involved if we raise the question of the relation of the creative factors to the creature. We have asserted that they are ingredient in it; may we proceed farther and maintain that their being is exhausted in their ingredience in the actual world—that the creative factors are simply features of the mixture, and when taken as such are abstractions? This, is, of course, a far cry from the *Phædo*, in which the realm of forms is affirmed to possess absolute being, apart from the world of opinion. And yet if we free ourselves from the traditional interpretation of Plato—which has been erected chiefly on foundations derived from the *Phædo*—and if we study the dialogues with a fresh approach, especially the later ones, the hypothesis just propounded is seen as not unpalatable. The later dialogues make much of the creature; the intelligible and the sensible are joined. Thus, the universals may be construed, not as inde-

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pendent entities, but as the formulæ expressing the structure of the mixed class. The psyche (and God with it) may be interpreted as the life which animates the world ("the Cause exists in all things" *Philebus* 30b). The Good, which in the *Republic* is presented as the apex of the column of being, may be regarded as the principle of integration, the nexus of the actual world. If so, the Good would not be something reached when the actual world is left behind, but the very principle which constitutes it into a world. Thus, the actual world would seem to be the total world, and the Good, the Limit, God, the Receptacle, would be the diverse dominant strains in the world; real to the degree that they characterize it, but not otherwise.

At this stage of the inquiry, it is not possible to settle the problem; in fact, the question cannot be solved on the basis of texts. But it is true that the account of Plato as other-worldly is one-sided; there is also his this-worldliness.² Yet to admit this is not to imply that the actual world exhausts the situation. The idea of beyondness, of the transcendence of the given, is fundamental to Plato. In knowledge, experience is a necessary but not an adequate condition; experience is useful because it pushes the mind beyond its bounds. Also, the forms are suggested by, not embodied in, the particulars. The actual does not contain the ideal; it only foreshadows it. Plato invests the creative factors with an ambivalent nature; they are both immanent and transcendent; they inhere in the creature and also have a life of their own. That this is possibly a contradiction is beside the point; the impartial student can only indicate that both aspects—consistent or inconsistent—enter into Plato's philosophy; not so much as explicitly formulated, but as coloring his mental attitude. When Plato is thinking of being as summed up by absoluteness and self-sufficiency, he makes the creative factors independent; when Plato is thinking of being as relational, he presents the creative factors as immanent in the creature. In the myth of the *Politicus*, God takes leave of the world, and then God comes back to the world. In the *Philebus*, God in one passage is stated to be distinct from all things; in another, to be present in them (27b, 30b). There is the rapture of the

²See A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, pp. 31 ff.

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vision of Beauty unalloyed, and there is the interpretation of each particular in the light of this vision. In short, there is both the distinctness of the creative factors from the creature, and there is their mutual interplay; thus, the relation of the two is one of polarity, with both attraction and repulsion.

There is a unity in Plato's mind, more subtle, less obvious, than that of a logical system. There are dominating strains, operating not as premises—for they are not formulated—and yet determining the texture of his thought. These are not conceptions; but they are the source of his conceptions. There is the unity of an activity, the enthusiasm which is Plato's intellectual life. It is the balance of diverse and even opposing strains. Thus, some inconsistencies in Plato are regular inconsistencies running throughout his thought, and intelligible to that extent. Other inconsistencies are just there, and must be left as such, arising as they do possibly as a consequence of Plato's view of the inadequacy of verbalized thought.

In this chapter we began with Plato's later dialogues; we have done this not because we consider the earlier ones less important, nor because we assume any divergence between the two sets of dialogues. Plato is fond of saying that progress in understanding consists in supplying the "reason why" of true belief. The later dialogues start with the affirmations of the earlier ones and supply the reasons for them. Thus, we take the standpoint of the continuity of Plato's philosophy, with progress in penetration and generality and with a certain loss of concreteness.

Usually, an account of Plato's philosophy makes the theory of ideas central. That is not the position of this study. This is not because we hold that the theory of ideas is non-Platonic, nor even that it is not central in Plato's thought. We take the view that the theory of ideas is part of a larger framework, which becomes clear in the later dialogues. In the chapters that follow, we will aim to present the general framework (consisting of the notion of the metaphysical factors) and then to place the theory of ideas in it. Thus the theory of ideas will be exhibited as a consequence, rather than as a premise in Plato's

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philosophy—an illustration of the conceptions of the definite, the self-sufficient, the in-itself—these being general categories of the real. In the later dialogues the theory of ideas is not abandoned, but is reformulated in the light of the general considerations.

Is this to deny that there is any change in Plato's thought? No—or rather, yes and no. The question of whether Plato did change his mind or not cannot be posited as one of sheer sameness or difference between his earlier and later works. That would be far too simple a way of stating the problem. There is the change which consists in expansion—in the reaching of ideas of wider generality, of hypotheses of more ultimate import. There is the change which consists in a shift of emphasis; as, for example, when a writer, returning to old ideas, only hinted at before, now realizes their significance, and makes them more effective in the metaphysical scheme. Or it may be that he merely utilizes them in a different setting of meanings. Thus, he may be rethinking old doctrines in the light of new experience and greater maturity. Correspondingly, other ideas may fade into unimportance; there may even be loss of vividness throughout. Finally, there is the change which definitely consists in the adoption of new views inconsistent with the old. All these phases of change are discernible in Plato's thought, taken in its history. But changes though they be, they do not disrupt the unity of his thought, far less do they constitute him into a double personality—Socrates-Plato, or Pythagoras-Plato. These changes occur not separately, but all together as aspects of one process of change. When the mind is active, it moves—forward or backward, as the case may be. Such movement is complex and also continuous, like the life-history of a personality which in its unity finds place for both contrast and similarity. Moreover, any thinker is apt to be indebted to his intellectual contemporaries and predecessors; and especially in the early part of his intellectual life, he may be even a disciple, not attaining independence until well beyond youth. But in any case, what he receives a great thinker makes his own; and the pre-Socratic and Socratic elements in Plato's thought are part

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of Platonism; once received, they were dissolved and re-fashioned according to the individual pattern of Plato's mind.

In the pages that follow, we will do no more than elucidate the conceptions and doctrines presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE RECEPTACLE

THE notion of the receptacle as presented in the *Timæus* is of fundamental importance in the philosophy of Plato. And yet it receives no mention in any of his works outside the *Timæus*.¹ The reader may well ask to what degree the account in the *Timæus* should be taken seriously; and this question is all the more important as, in the present essay, the *Timæus* will be largely drawn upon in the discussion of God, the soul, the good, as well as of the receptacle.

Now an important group of Platonic scholars have viewed the *Timæus* as a figurative account, an allegory not to be taken *au pied de la lettre*. The evidence comes from Plato himself in the *Timæus*, and is copious. In 29b-d he says there is a kinship between knowledge and its object. The *Timæus* is an exposition of the world of generation; as generation is an image of being, so an account of it is only an *image* of the truth. A doctrine concerning becoming partakes, itself, of flux; it is not final, but has to give way to other doctrines. All such doctrines are infected with probability; their status is that of myths (69b). The exposition in the *Timæus* lacks experimental demonstration (*βῆσσανος*, 68d); therefore it is not fixed, and is without the invincible quality possessed by truly rational knowledge (29b). Plato speaks of the study of probabilities as a relaxation for the philosopher, from which he derives innocent amusement, just as in the *Phædrus* (276e) he describes the writing of books as a pastime for tired old men.

But to grant that the cosmological account in the *Timæus* is a myth does not solve the matter. What is a myth? The question is not one of facts but of the interpretation of facts. What is the status of probability in knowledge? Is a likely story just a fantasy, or is it a definite way of conveying the truth? Thus

¹Except possibly in *Cratylus* 412d.

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the whole question hinges on the place of probability and of myth in the scheme of valid thought.

Absolutely true and abiding knowledge is found only in dialectic; this is knowledge from first principles, and finally from the idea of the good. But such knowledge is to be had only by the gods and their friends among men to whom they choose to reveal it (53d). Presumably it is not to be achieved by unaided human effort; or, if it is, it may be achieved by rare spirits at rare and fleeting moments. Plato makes much of the difference between divine and human nature, and of the limitations of the latter. "Whereas God is sufficiently wise and powerful to blend the many into one, and to dissolve again the one into the many, there exists not now, nor ever will exist hereafter, a child of man sufficient for these tasks" (68d). And again, "We should be content to furnish accounts that are inferior to none in likelihood, remembering that both I who speak and you who judge are but human creatures, so that it becomes us to accept the likely account of these matters and *forbear to search beyond it*" (29d).

In short, inability to attain the level of dialectic is all but universal among the children of man. But, if this is so, the account in the *Timæus*, in its character as probable, is no better but no worse than many other portions of Plato's philosophy. After all, this is a relative matter; if the cosmology of the *Timæus* is probable in the same sense as is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, we have made the point that the former should be taken seriously. And as we propose to show almost immediately, the theories both of ideas and of the soul lack final demonstration; they are only hypotheses. Man's failure to attain absolute knowledge does not, for Plato, imply that we should forsake the quest. Man should frame reasonable hypotheses, and this is a venture worth making (*Phædo* 114d). As is familiar to all students, Plato has the category of the second best, which he uses in all kinds of circumstance. Failing the best, we should avail ourselves of the second best. Such are books as compared to the spoken word; such is the spoken word as compared to the unspoken word. Such are written laws as contrasted with the rule of reason. They are second best because

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they involve a compromise with the limitations of human nature; and this compromise Plato was willing to make. In fact, it is an inevitable compromise so long as the soul is in the body. And this is true of many, if not all, of the Platonic theories; they represent a second best. All speech is infected with the element of accident, since we ourselves are infected with it (*Timæus* 34c). Take the theory of the good. "Now I would gladly be the pupil of any one who would teach me the nature of such a cause [*i.e.*, the good]; but since that was denied me . . ., do you wish me, Cebes, to give you an account of the way in which I conducted my second voyage, in quest of the cause?" (*Phædo* 99c). Thus the theory of the good, and of the ideas, is a second voyage. Plato speaks of the hypothesis of ideas as plain and foolish (*ἄτεχνος, εὐήθης* *Phædo* 100d), just as he describes his cosmological account in the *Timæus* as unusual and novel (*ἄηθες, ἄτοπον* 48d). The theory of ideas may be demonstrated only within the limits which human nature prescribes (*Phædo* 107b). Neither the account in the *Phædo* nor that in the *Timæus* possesses complete certainty.² They are both hypotheses.

And this is our main contention: For Plato, thought does not divide itself into true and false, or simply into completely certain and completely uncertain thought; there are degrees of knowledge, of certainty, of clarity. To say that the cosmological account of the *Timæus* is not dialectical, is not necessarily to damn it; it is to assign to it a certain definite rating as knowledge. We suggest that it belongs to the third segment of the divided line, which is understanding (*dianoia*). In the third level, propositions are believed which are not demonstrated from first principles (*Republic* 511a). So is the account in the *Timæus* stated to leave out "the higher causes" (53d). But though it is not a demonstration, it is knowledge of a certain degree. In the level of understanding—for example, in mathematics—one only *dreams* about being. So is the cosmological account of the *Timæus* a myth. Now what a myth is can be understood from a study of what mathematical thought is according to Plato. "They summon to their aid visible forms, and

²E.g., that the forms are indissoluble is *likely*. *Phædo* 78c.

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discourse about them, though their thoughts are busy not with these forms, but with their originals, and though they discourse not with a view to the particular square and diameter, which they draw, but with a view to the absolute square and the absolute diameter, and so on. For while they employ by way of images those figures and diagrams aforesaid, . . . they are really endeavoring to behold those abstractions which a person can see only with the eye of thought" (*Republic* 510d). This passage provides an account of the function of symbolism in thought. Symbolism consists in the use of a particular in order to apprehend a universal. And this is the sense in which the cosmology of the *Timæus* is a myth. It is a treatment of eternal things by the symbolism of the passing. The discussion, clothed in imagery, is really about the Good, God, the Receptacle, the Mathematical Relations. In Plato's words, "I will essay to give as likely an exposition as any other—nay, more so—regarding both particular things and the *totality of things from the very beginning*" (*Timæus* 48d). And earlier he speaks of his exposition as relating to the gods and the generation of the universe (29c). Thus it is an account not of the passing primarily; it is about the timeless through the symbolism of the temporal.

Of course, the mere failure of an exposition to reach dialectical certainty is not by itself a reason for putting it into the rank of *dianoia*. Such an exposition may have the lower rating of *doxa*. The question is whether the likely story of the *Timæus* belongs to the third or to the second level of knowledge. Plato himself is not clear in his own mind on this matter. When he speaks of his account as being infected with the accidental, as being inconsistent (29c), he seems to imply that it is opinion. In other passages, however, he speaks of his account as having the greatest probability (48d).⁸ Here probability is not the negation of proof; it has its own type of rigor. It is a form of demonstration (*apodeixis*, 40e). Plato distinctly says that he is proceeding according to a method which combines the probable with the necessary (*Timæus* 53d); and later he refers to the true account and the probable (56ab). In brief, probability of

⁸Compare with *Phædo* 100a, where he speaks of the hypothesis of ideas as the *strongest* one.

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this sort is a type of proof, wherein a hypothesis is validated; with this proviso that its validation is by reference not to first principles, but to phenomena.⁴ And whereas Plato aims in the *Timæus* to give an exposition provided with just this degree of rigorous demonstration, he suspects that he falls short of it, and thus sometimes he refers to his account as methodical, and at other times as casual. Thus he does not have the same degree of conviction about the cosmological account as he has about the hypothesis of a realm of ideas—though the latter is no more than a hypothesis, he believes that it will never fail (*Phædo* 100d). We will conclude then that the account in the *Timæus* is somewhere between opinion and understanding; that it is an instance of knowledge of the “second best” kind; that, on account of human limitations, the second-best sort is all but universal; that for these reasons the account in the *Timæus* falls short, in respect of certainty, of some of the Platonic doctrines, and is coördinate with a majority of them.

Plato introduces the notion of the receptacle by way of a critique of the Ionian philosophers and the atomists. He is looking for a creative factor; now the preceding schools had put forth the four elements—earth, fire, air, and water—as the explanation of the world of generation. Plato’s point is that this explanation does not go far enough and therefore is not truly metaphysical. The four elements are not really “elements” (στοιχεῖα); they are not ultimate; they, themselves, belong to the world of generation. They come and go, each passing into each. Thus they lack self-identity, being indistinguishable from each other. We cannot call them “this” and “that” (49d). They cannot even be designated, for they run away while being designated. But a true being remains identical with itself, and therefore undergoes no change. In sum, the four elements do not really exist; they are only fluctuating *modes* of being. The Ionian school has mistaken effects for causes; we must abandon their solution, or rather use their ending-point as a point of departure and thence proceed to discover the truly ultimate

⁴“Proceeding not to a first principle but *epi teleuten*,” *Republic* 510b.

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constituents of the real. If the so-called elements are determinations of being, what is it they are determinations of?

And so the notion of the receptacle comes on the scene. The receptacle is the enduring thing underlying the transformations of the elements into one another. The receptacle is a hypothesis to explain data of experience—more specifically, the facts of change. We have here an instance of Plato's method of validating a notion by relating it to the world of sensible things. On the other hand, the receptacle, although presupposed by experience, is never given in experience ("apprehended without sensation," 52b). It is not a datum, and is known as in a dream.

The receptacle, as it is described by Plato, has the distinguishing marks of a creative factor. It is invisible and belongs to the intelligible world (though in a fashion not to be understood, 51a). While things pass into and out of it, the receptacle itself remains unaffected, never departing from its own nature. It is changeless and timeless. Finally, it is the cause of the world of generation.

As changelessness and self-identity are the marks of the realm of forms, one might raise the question whether the receptacle may not be a form. It would clearly be wrong to draw such an inference. The receptacle is like the realm of forms in that both are contrasted with the world of created things, in their character as creative factors. But there the similarity ends. They, each, belong to different grades in the hierarchy of the creative factors.

Or shall we say that the receptacle is Newtonian matter? The receptacle is called space and contains motion; as the basis of the sensible, bodily aspect of the world, it might be material. In a narrow sense, it could be defined as extended matter in motion. And it is a passive cause; it has the property of inertia. Finally, it acts by necessity, not by teleology.

Such an attempted interpretation of the receptacle would be wholly superficial. Physical matter is definite, divisible, organized, operating according to law. Physical matter is a creature, not a creative factor; it arises from the ingression of the limit into the unlimited. Both physical space and physical motion are relatively determinate, bearing the impress of the

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forms. The receptacle is wholly indeterminate; therefore it can be identified neither with physical space, which is a definite pattern of positions, nor with actual motion, which is a measurable phenomenon. It must be rather construed as the potency of matter, and of space, and of physical motion; as that which, when impressed by the patterns, becomes matter, space, motion.

What is, then, the receptacle? In answering this question, our method will be to offer successive approximations to the answer.

Plato notes that the world of generation is not self-complete. It cannot function as a logical subject in a sentence; it is a qualification of something else, or rather of two things. On the one hand, it is relative to a "wherefrom" ($\delta\theta\epsilon\nu$) and, on the other, to a "wherein" ($\epsilon\nu \Phi \zeta\omicron\varsigma$). The first is the timeless pattern, of which the creature is a copy; the second is the timeless receptacle, wherein the world is born and passes away. The actual world is the enactment *somewhere* of the forms.

I. From the start, a possible confusion must be removed. The receptacle is not stuff or matter. It is true that Plato compares the receptacle to the metal gold, from which gold figures are made, and to the liquid ointments used in the production of perfumes; and it is true that both the gold and the liquids are materials used in a variety of products. But we must remember that this is an analogy, and distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant features of the analogy. What Plato is concerned with in the relation of the gold and liquids to their products respectively are (*a*) that there is an enduring identity in what is changing and (*b*) that there is something formless and yet capable of receiving all forms. Now the character of enduringness or eternity pertains to all creative factors; the joint characters of formlessness and receptivity are those of a creative factor which, in this particular instance, is a determinable.⁵ Now space, without being stuff, possesses these characters; it is formless and can receive any form; that is, it may be divided into any kind of segment; it may be impressed with any geometrical figure. Plato's receptacle is an underlying factor for concrete

⁵But see p. 41.

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things, which need not be stuff, need not, in fact, be anything.

The receptacle is the *container of events*; it is itself nothing, a void in which events thrive and perish. Now, the container (δεξαμενή) is further identified as space, χώρα. Plato speaks of space as though it were a basket into which events are thrown, yet, as it were, a basket without bottom and without sides. At other times, he speaks of it as a principle of position. "We say it is somehow necessary that all being should be in some place and occupy some space, and that whatever is neither in earth nor anywhere in heaven is nothing" (*Timæus* 52b).

II. We propose the hypothesis that the receptacle is not simply space, but *space-time*. Though there are strong objections to such a construction, which immediately occur to one, the writer would like to defend this hypothesis without, however, pressing it on the reader. But, first, what are the objections? The receptacle is timeless, and so cannot be the principle of time. The answer to the objection is that there is no contradiction here; only a paradox. Time itself does not change, and does not occur; time is timeless. A more basic objection issues from a consideration of Plato's explicit doctrine of time in the *Timæus*. Time is described as a creature, contrived simultaneously with the creation of heaven (37e); it is measured motion, and therefore must belong to the mixed class. Space, on the other hand, is a creative factor, logically prior to time.

This interpretation of time as contrasted with space will not stand. The receptacle is not space, if by space we mean a pattern of definite positions. Definiteness is a product of the impression of the forms upon the receptacle. The receptacle can only be the potency of a definite space in which definite things occupy definite positions; as such, it is indefinite extendedness. Thus actual space is a creature, as time is. The considerations in favor of the view that the receptacle is space-time are as follows. Measurable space presupposes an undifferentiated extendedness on which definiteness has been imposed. So does measurable time—regarded as a creature—presuppose a primordial state of affairs on which measure has been impressed. This state of affairs is sheer passage. As we will try to demonstrate below, the receptacle is

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the principle of wild surging motion—that is, of undirected activity. Thus, in the receptacle, there is undifferentiated or latent time, in the form of indeterminate change which, by the creative intervention of God, is transformed into ordered time.

In support, the reader is referred to the passage (51a) in which Plato refers to the receptacle as fitted to receive *frequently*, and *throughout its whole extent*, copies of intelligible things. In this passage there is a double characterization of the receptacle, as an extensity both temporal and spatial. The receptacle is a potency for time as well as for space. It is the reason why things succeed each other, as well as why they are extended. On this view, it is a spatio-temporal continuum, in which determinate events take place. The events arise as images of forms in space-time.

It would follow that the word, time, is used ambiguously. It may refer either to measurable motion or to undifferentiated flux. In its first sense, time belongs to the mixed class, having been created by God along with the world. In its second sense, time denotes an uncreated, primordial fact; and is a character of the receptacle. In the former rendering it is actual, and in the latter it is latent, time.

The receptacle is the locus of creation, just as God is the energy for creation, and the Good its purpose. And the world of concrete things is nothing more than the relevance of the forms to the receptacle, such that we have not merely “man” as such, but “man” at a moment and at a place. Thus the receptacle is the factor of the *πολλά*, or sheer plurality. Each form is one; there is one form “man” or “white”; but each form may be repeated many times and in many places. There are many individual men, either as generated in successive generations through time, or, if at the same time, as occupying different places in space.

We must contrast this type of manyness with intelligible multiplicity. As against Parmenides, Plato maintains that the One is divided into a Many; that, in fact, the One and the Many are necessary forms of thought (*Philebus* 15d). To think is to compare parts within a whole, to analyze a genus into many species. There are many forms, and many genera.

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Thus multiplicity (as well as unity) is a character of the intelligible world. This is rational multiplicity in the sense that diversity is difference; each distinct entity is a form. Also the variety of forms is referable to the principle of the best; thus the multiplicity is derived from the One. But in the world of generation diversity is sheer plurality, it is repetitive; things multiply themselves for no reason, that is, without reference to any principle of value. The plurality cannot be deduced from any rational ground; it has to be noted by sense-perception; it is a given fact.⁶ This plurality is unintelligible in a further sense as well. The forms are things in themselves (αὐτὰ καθ' ἑαυτά), possessing self-identity. Thus they can be designated and distinguished. But the plurality of things is more like a mob in which individuals merge into one another. Concrete things are relative to a context; they vary when the context varies; thus they have no distinct being. Real plurality implies self-identity in the members of the group, and is to be found in the world of forms. As for concrete things, it is more true to say of them that they are confused and indefinite than that they are many.

We can now draw certain definite conclusions from the preceding considerations.

(a) The receptacle is a void; it is not-being.

(b) The receptacle is a determinate void; it is a space-time continuum.

(c) The receptacle provides a seat (ἔδρα) for events, and is not defined by them. Plato states that the receptacle existed before the heaven (*i.e.*, the cosmos) was created. Thus space-time is not an abstraction from concrete things; it is presupposed by them; it is a creative factor for events. But such an assertion must be properly safeguarded. Measurable time and space do not exist apart from measurable changes. Similarly, undifferentiated time and space are aspects of a more complex fact which includes undifferentiated change. Thus we can validly say only that the primordial uncreated space-time is prior to the world of definite things.

(d) The receptacle is a principle of multiplicity. The forms

⁶But see p. 54.

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are simple, but space-time is divisible. Hence the receptacle accounts for plurality in the world of generation.

(e) The receptacle is a principle of relatedness among the many concrete things. The passing events meet and merge in it. It is the common background in the interpassage of things; by virtue of their common relation in the receptacle, the events are members of one family.⁷

(f) There is one unique space-time container common to all events (*i.e.*, becomings). This proposition is an immediate consequence of the preceding one. Thus there is only one framework of reference.

III. We must now retrace our steps and embark on a fresh study of the receptacle. What we will proceed to say does not contradict what we have already said; it supplements or rather includes it. The notion of the receptacle is that of *matter of fact*. In explaining the world of generation we point to the realm of forms, which Plato calls the cause of passing things. Yet it is not a sufficient cause; it explains their structure, their order, their nature; it does not explain their existence. We have the truth that such and such a form is embodied in fact; and this is not accounted for by the realm of essence. Now the factor which accounts for the transition from ideality to actuality is the receptacle; it is the principle of existence.

The receptacle as the factor of actuality is conveyed by Plato through the notion of *anagke*—necessity. *Anagke* is the givenness of ideas, their sensible immediacy. Fact is what we find and are compelled to accept. Things are simply so, and there they are. In human nature, *anagke* makes its appearance in what Plato calls the mortal soul. While our rational actions are self-determined, our impulses are compelling. We do not choose our passions; they are given. In the world at large, there is the sheer happeningness of things, not referable to the principle of the best. The receptacle is the aspect of brute fact in things. We have on the one hand rationality, which is the presence of the good in the mixed class; and on the other brutality, which

⁷See A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 240 ff., for an elaboration of this view.

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expresses the presence of the receptacle. In brief, the receptacle is the irrational factor in nature.

IV. The receptacle, further, is the factor of *movement*. Plato speaks of the receptacle as filled with powers which are neither similar nor balanced. Motion in the receptacle is random, non-purposive, irregular, unpredictable. Upon such motion God engrafts order so far as possible, and thus creates the rhythmical movement of the heavenly bodies, of living things, of time itself.

Irregular motion is the factor of passage in things. According to Plato the destiny of all sensible things is to perish; they are tainted with death. "For everything that has come into being, dissolution is appointed" (*Republic* 546a). Even the philosophic state eventually succumbs to a less admirable polity, and so on until it descends to the level of the tyrannical state. Nothing, no matter how good, can escape destruction, whether it be an internal achievement in the character of man, or an achievement of orderliness in nature. The conquest of desire by reason is a task which is never completed and never secure; at any moment, the wild surging force of passion may break out and work havoc with our settled dispositions. Thus character is a precarious edifice. The institutions of man are collective habits and virtues; they are mixtures; they arise from the imposition of order upon human relations; these, too, perish inevitably, for they are constructed with a material which is incurably indeterminate. And so, to the extent that he is conscious that there is something rotten in things, Plato seeks to escape from this world. Likewise, the mutual adjustments in the world of things, which today we call laws of nature, will pass, since they have come to be. The receptacle affirms its own indeterminateness against the Demiourgos who impresses it with the forms, and thus perpetually defeats him by the method of passive resistance.

The receptacle is not only the factor of perishing; it is also the principle of birth into novelty. There is the passing away, and the coming-to-be. In the democratic man, in impulse, there is a restlessness, the getting tired with the old, a change to new

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things, just because they are new. The receptacle shakes off the old forms and moves on to others. It is both destructiveness and creativity—it is the aspect of transience. Plato says that while the copies of the forms come into the receptacle and go out, the receptacle itself is ever-existing and does not admit of destruction (*Timæus* 52b). It is eternal creativity issuing into particularized motions, that is, impulses, lives, processes. Thus it is the vital force in all things, passive like the female principle, probably unconscious, inexhaustible in its creative power, since, while all creatures come to be and perish, it remains; yet inert, becoming creative only when activated by the forms.

In the *Laws* (897 ff.) Plato speaks of an irrational soul which moves wildly and irregularly. It seems reasonable to identify the irrational soul with the wandering cause of the *Timæus* (48a). In the *Symposium* (207e ff.) Plato describes the soul as ever changing, one in which no ideas, no memories, no knowledge remain; where the old is replaced by the new. This is the empirical self, the soul as issuing from the receptacle. We do not propose to identify the conception of the receptacle with that of the psyche; rather, we maintain that the psyche is a creature of which the receptacle is the underlying cause, by way of contributing the mortal aspect of the soul, namely, its appetites and passions.

We have said that the receptacle is a space-time container; we have further described it as the principle of actuality and of motion. Here are two pairs of notions which must be correlated with each other; also the members of each pair must be correlated among themselves. We will begin with the second pair, and in our attempted explanation we will go beyond any of Plato's explicit formulations. What is actuality, and what is passage? The concrete world exhibits two phases: one of incompleteness, and one of completeness. In the first place, things are in motion, point to a state beyond themselves, are in a process of attaining completeness. This is their character as becoming. In the second place, things *are*; they are there, they are completed bits of being; this is their character as actualities. There are both the passage and the givenness, the

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dynamic and the static aspects. The phase of the present as incomplete arises from its relevance to the future; the phase of the present as complete arises from the immanence of the past in the present. Becoming deposits being; being issues into becoming. Thus the concrete thing is both an actual fact and a process. Now the spatio-temporality of the receptacle is an abstraction from its dual character as actuality-activity. Space is the character of things as actual, and time is their character as activities. Furthermore, we have the notions of matter and soul. What Plato calls body—σῶμα—is a mixture of the receptacle as space, with the forms; what he calls psyche arises from the reflection of the forms in passage. *Eros* is the character whereby things are not, but are striving to be. Conversely, body is the character of things as simply there, and as unchanging in their character as fact. Hence it would be wrong to identify the receptacle solely with passive activity. When Plato compares it to a matrix, or to a determinable which receives the impress of forms, he is not thinking of it as activity. But it would be wrong to identify the receptacle with Aristotle's matter, in so far as the latter is contrasted with motion. Plato's receptacle is a more confused, less determinate, and a richer conception than Aristotle's matter.

V. We will now attempt to analyze still further the nature of the receptacle in order to find, if possible, the ground for its dual character as space-time. A useful approach would be to note the difference between the receptacle and the realm of forms.

The receptacle is the principle of indeterminateness, as the forms are that of definiteness. Plato attributes to it a fixed nature (50b). But this fixed nature consists in the fact that it remains indeterminate, throughout its relevance to the forms. Correlatively, it is the aptitude for all forms. As its name suggests, it is receptive. Thus it is absolute indetermination and absolute catholicity. These two poles of the receptacle—negative and positive—must be noted separately. Though indeterminate, it is a potency for determination. And again, though determinable, it asserts its nature as indeterminate and rejects its de-

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terminations. At the same time, the two poles exist through each other. Because it is devoid of all forms, the receptacle may receive all forms; and because it is catholic (*πανδεχέξ*, all-receptive), it really is without form. Its nature as receptive is responsible for the fact that copies of the forms come to be; its nature as indeterminate is responsible for the fact that copies of the forms pass away. Thus the nature of the receptacle is ambivalent; it is both receptive and resistant; and these two aspects are summed up in the notion of the receptacle as pure potentiality.

For example, God is able to persuade the receptacle to receive the patterns. And even antecedently to God's intervention, the receptacle contains *traces* of the forms. The random movement in it sifts like from unlike and brings the like together (53ab). There is in it a primordial aptitude for order. Nevertheless there are limitations upon the aptitude. (a) The receptacle does not embody the forms adequately. Thus the world of sense is a distorted representation of the ideas; ideals are never fully realized; actuality is a frustration of the forms (e.g., equality between two concrete things is never exact equality, *Phædo* 74c). (b) Consider the following quotation: "Reason persuades necessity to conduct to the best end *the most part* of things coming into existence" (*Timæus* 48a). Thus persuasion of the receptacle by God is never wholly successful in any one instance, and not at all successful in some instances. There is both a qualitative and a quantitative limitation. (c) Further, no embodiment is permanent. The submission of the receptacle to the forms is like the acceptance of a lover; the relation is not stable. In short, the receptacle is refractory, and the outcome of God's creative action is good only *so far as possible*.

In the reciprocal relation of pattern to receptacle, the first functions as an active cause, the second as a passive one. The receptacle corresponds to absolute patience, to sensitivity; it is a transparent mirror reflecting whatever shapes are held before it. But the problem arises as to how a relation between the two is possible at all. The receptacle is essentially indeterminate and yet partakes of the patterns. Plato says that the relation is obscure; the receptacle participates in them in a most per-

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plexing manner (50c, 51ab). The relatedness of the two cannot be explained; it is an ultimate fact, the ultimate polarity among the metaphysical factors.

We will now return to the contrast of the receptacle with the forms. The defining feature of the forms is that they remain in themselves, neither receiving anything, nor passing into anything. They are identities; fire is fire, and water is water, timelessly. They are things in themselves (51c). The receptacle expresses the opposite property, of being not in oneself but in something else; it is the passage to otherness. That is exactly the sense in which it is a receptacle; it is receptive to something else, namely, to the totality of forms. These are *for* nothing; they receive nothing. But the receptacle is nothing in itself; essentially, it is being through otherness. The actor or, shall we say, the man with a dramatic temperament has no nature of his own; he is constantly projecting himself into some one else. So the poet projects himself into the scenes which he depicts (*Ion* 535b); the poet is outside himself. Again, the poet is under the spell of the Muse, the rhapsode under the spell of the poet, the audience under the spell of the rhapsode. The enthusiastic man is borne along on other people's ideas; he is a disciple thinking through other people's minds. The actor, the poet, the disciple, the man of sensibility, are beside themselves; they are projected into others. Moreover, they are continually changing the objects of their enthusiasm. The receptacle is catholic. Hence the instability of the creative achievement; to be receptive to all, the receptacle is enduringly receptive to none.

Passage to the other corresponds to what we call *need* or desire. In so far as I need something, my being is not through myself. Plato contrasts (*Philebus* 53d) the things that are self-existent with those that are ever in want of something. The good man is self-sufficient, contained in himself, unaffected even by the loss of his closest friends. But the uninstructed man is gnawed by desire; he depends on others and on fortune; his being is outside himself. And, in general, nothing in the world of generation is adequate to itself; all things are ever in search of what is beyond themselves, namely the Good. The *eros*, as the appetite of the good, is the receptacle exhibiting itself in

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actual things. The gods desire nothing. *Eros*, life, desire, quest, movement—these are all types of being through another.

To copy, to participate in, to embody—these are all cases of passage to otherness. The concrete thing which is a copy of the forms refers, and is relative to, them. To embody is to enter into something else. The forms embody nothing, since they remain in themselves. Embodiment of forms in the receptacle is the basis of predication in discourse; for predication is the affirmation of the participation of a particular in a universal.

Seeing that the receptacle intrudes no form of its own and that it therefore is wholly patient to the forms, the problem arises why the embodiment of the forms in the receptacle is never wholly successful. The answer is that embodiment is spurious. The actor who enacts the rôle of Macbeth is not Macbeth in the sense in which Macbeth is himself. The relation of the actor to Macbeth is not a genuine participation; he is playing at being Macbeth. Contrast the communion of forms amongst themselves with the participation of a particular in a form. The first is a relation of determination to a determinable, as when we are enabled to affirm that white is a color. The communion of forms is a timeless fact; white is always a color. The receptacle, it is true, embodies the forms, but it is not a timeless truth that the receptacle is "impressed" with this or that form. White *is* a color; but it is not a fact that "this" *is* white. We can only say that "this" is happening to be white. The receptacle is essentially indeterminate; and *any statement to the effect that the receptacle is thus and so would render it determinate*. So, too, the volatile disciple who projects himself into the ideas of his master does not really embody them. His enthusiasm is only passing, and his reception of the truth a deceptive appearance. In sum, the spuriousness of embodiment arises from the fact that the receptivity of the receptacle is qualified by its indeterminateness.

Before proceeding with the exposition, we must go back and clear up certain obscurities in our treatment. We have said that the receptacle is the factor of passage into otherness, whereas the forms remain in themselves. Yet, the reader may ask, do not the forms participate in each other? Now the passage is

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radically different in the two cases. It is important to realize that the communion among forms does not abrogate their distinct identity; whereas the relativity of generated things is one whereby they fuse with each other. The first is a non-contradictory relation; the second is not. Plato asserts in the *Phaedo* (101c) that forms commune with each other; thus the number two partakes of duality. He also says that each form is in itself. Thus we have both the self-identity of the forms, and their relatedness. Communion is a relation between entities which maintain their self-identity; in fact, there can be no relation unless the terms be distinct and independent. But passage in the world of generation is such that things depend on each other and lose their self-identity.

Enthusiasm is communion with the forms. Here, likewise, we must draw a line between the *eros* which partakes of the receptacle and is a form of relativity and the *eros* which is pure and involves maintenance of self-identity in relationship. On the lower level, the *eros* arises from incompleteness, as with the philosopher who seeks wisdom because he lacks it. All achievement is passage from not-being to being and is a sign of imperfection. This is *eros* as need, hence as dependence. On a lower level still, we have the enthusiasm of the democratic man. He fluctuates in his enthusiasms; he is open to all suggestions and influences; he has no self-being. Most important of all, his enthusiasms are spurious; he is drawn to a variety of occupations by way of "fancying" them. He plays at being a philosopher, an athlete, a man of affairs. He is never convinced; he is only impressed.

Consider the *eros* on its higher levels. The love of reason for the ideas is based on inward conviction; it is a fixed purpose; therefore it is enduring. In the ideal polity, each citizen has a specific function, selected with reference to the pattern of the whole. By virtue of his function, he possesses a self-identity. Moreover, he is selective in his enthusiasms.

On its highest level, the *eros* arises from completeness. We have spoken of love and action which spring from lack; there is also love which springs from strength. God, being perfect, bears a grudge to no one; he alone can transcend himself and

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sustain a relation to others. In the *Phædrus* (246e) and in the *Laws* (900 ff.) Plato speaks of the care of God for the created world. Such love is not an attainment of perfection; it is love without dependence on the object loved.

We have spoken so far of the relation of the receptacle to the world of generation, and to the forms. There is also its relation to God. We have, in sum, the relation of the receptacle to the mechanical cause, to the formal cause, and to the efficient cause. God is able to persuade the receptacle to work for the best. As there is the aptitude in the receptacle to receive the forms, so there is the aptitude to be persuaded by God. But again there is an ambivalence. The receptacle is refractory (35a). But it can be won over. This victory is never final; the submission is not enduring.

Necessity submits voluntarily to God under his persuasion. Reason rules over necessity. We have the victory of persuasion over force. Nevertheless there are limitations to the aptitude of the receptacle to be persuaded. The result of God's intervention is good *as far as possible*. This phrase is repeated in the *Timæus* over and over again (30a, 32b, 38b, etc.). Hence God is not omnipotent; he must cooperate with necessity, and the result of the co-operation bears the impress of both causes.

If the receptacle is capable of being persuaded by God, it must be because it can understand God. The conclusion seems inevitable that the receptacle has the potency of reason, and that there is a primordial relation between God and the receptacle. But there are degrees of understanding; the intelligence in the receptacle can be of no higher rank than that of the intelligence latent in desire. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1098a), Aristotle says that the soul may be rational in two senses: in being capable of thinking, and in being capable of understanding reason. Desire is not a faculty of thinking, yet it is rational in this second sense; it can understand and obey reason. The receptacle might be deemed rational in a similar sense. Plato states (71a, c; see also *Republic* 431) that man's beastly desires may be brought under the control of reason either by threats and violence, or by the exercise of a spell over them. We must, then, assume an ultimate relatedness between God and the re-

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ceptacle, a fascination of chaos by the divine, remembering also that the fascination is possible because of "the innate sweetness of desire" (71c).

Shall we say that the receptacle is evil? Though we cannot answer this question dogmatically, the tenor of the relevant passages suggests a negative reply. The receptacle is "other" than God but not antithetical to him. Necessity cooperates with the principle of the best (48a); God uses the wayward cause for the production of the good (68e). Yet the fact remains that the receptacle is reluctant, never completely won over. Its participation in the generation of things means that the world has an aspect of chance and confusion. So, in the *Theaetetus*, Plato says "It is impossible that evils be done away with, Theodorus, for there must always be opposition to the good" (176a). And in the *Laws* he refers to the immortal conflict between good and evil (906a).

Perhaps our problem is only verbal. If by evil we mean instability, casualness of attachment to the good, then the receptacle has an evil nature. But it is not evil in any other sense of the word. God is good, in the sense that he is timelessly wedded to the good; but the receptacle is not evil in the sense that it is identified with evil; it is not identified with anything, good or bad. As between the two, it is neutral, because by its nature it is indeterminate. It is true that good things pass, but so do evil creatures. If the receptacle resists God, so would it resist the Devil (were there one) in order to maintain its indeterminateness.

Another question is whether the receptacle is real. We have seen that it is not-being; yet in some sense it is real, since it may thwart God. It is a cause—a passive cause; it is power, and is therefore real. Against its reality may be brought forward the argument that it is given neither in experience nor to reason. How then is it known to be, at all? Now it is only natural that the receptacle should not be given in experience. Experience is of the "mixed," of the indeterminate as determined. Experience is of a creature, not of a creative factor. Again, it is only natural that the receptacle should not be conceived by thought, since to conceive is to determine; it is to

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apprehend a form, or to assign a form to a particular. In fact, none of the creative factors enters the world of discourse, whether of experience or of reason. They are the causes of the world of discourse, and are known by inference only. The receptacle is known to be, because it is a necessary inference from the world of experience; it accounts for the element of chance and of flux in things. It is known without being given; it is apprehended by "a bastard sort of reason" (52b). Like the realm of forms (as discussed in the *Phædo*) it transcends the world of generation; it is brought in as a hypothesis to account for phenomena.

But it may be asked: is it consistent with Plato's philosophy that what is unintelligible should nevertheless be real? It is true that in many passages Plato identifies the real with the rational, but it is also true that there are passages (especially in the later dialogues) in which he seems to abandon that identification. Thus in the *Politicus* (283e) he says that excess (absence of measure, negation of the Limit) is real. In the *Philebus* (26c) he speaks of the Unlimited as having a unity. One's position on this question depends on one's interpretation of Plato's philosophy as a whole; on whether one understands Plato to be a thoroughgoing rationalist or not; and this, in its turn, depends a good deal on whether one forms one's opinion about Plato from the early dialogues (especially the *Phædo*) or whether one attaches equal importance to the later dialogues. To the writer it seems clear that, for Plato, reality includes an irrational factor, a surd—brute and inexplicable fact.

The reader must bear in mind that the receptacle is not the only irrational factor mentioned by Plato. Beauty is beyond concepts, and the Good is beyond truth. Further, the Good is said to be beyond being (*Republic* 509b). In a sense, both the receptacle and the Good are not-beings; and yet, in another sense, they are real, because they are the causes of being.

The notion of the receptacle is one of the outstanding insights in Plato's philosophy. He treats it in a meager fashion and hesitantly, furnishing hints rather than statements. He is similarly modest and reticent in the treatment of all his out-

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standing insights, as for example, of God and of the Good. Obviously, this attitude is due to the difficulty of the subject-matter; perhaps it is also due to his conviction that the most important truths may not be written up in books and flung, as it were, to the public indiscriminately; but must be reserved for the few and the initiated, who have undergone the proper discipline of thought. Thus Plato leaves us at the "vestibule" and we must be content with glimpses from a distance.

To grasp the receptacle in its full significance is to realize that any account of Plato as a rationalist is inadequate. The receptacle is the factor of brute fact; it accounts for the failure of the forms as causes in the world of generation. In creation there is something not in accordance with the eternal pattern. And even to the extent that order is established, this order may be overthrown; laws come and go. The receptacle functions as a principle of entropy in nature. It is the cause of the perverse *eros*, whereby nature disintegrates. Beyond a point, the natural processes are unpredictable and contingent. Science is faced with objective chance and therefore is not science; accounts of the world can be no more than probable at best. Similarly, no exact description of an individual thing is possible. Thus the world is opaque to reason.

It is possible to separate Plato's description of the receptacle from his appraisal of it, to accept the first and to reject the second. For Plato, the receptacle represents a loss in being, a fall from the classic perfection of the forms, into the darkness of the cave. But that very darkness may seem to another as endowing the receptacle with importance. The concrete object is obscure to reason, because by virtue of its infinite complexity it may not be comprehended by a formula. It is indeterminate, because no form may exhaust its content. And the conflict between the patterns and the receptacle, the risk of defeat by the latter, is of the very essence of activity. The flux, which Plato decries, is the display of the endless creativity of being. In short, it is possible, departing from Plato, to construe the receptacle as a contribution to reality, not as a diminution of it.

Plato's own mind exhibits the traces of the receptacle. His dialogues are a flow of thought, meandering from argument to

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argument, carrying a point and then losing it, now confused, now clear, gradually gathering force and issuing into brilliant insights, never resting in a system. In his works, the end is not contained in the beginning, but thought is made in the process of thinking. Plato's practice does not conform to his theory; nor should it do so, if the alternative view be correct that the factor which escapes determination in knowledge is also the factor which furnishes content and novelty to life and to thought.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA OF THE GOOD

THOUGH, according to Plato, the Good is the most important of all topics to man, though he refers to the Good as often as to the other metaphysical factors, at no point in his writings does he come to grips with the Good, as a topic to be treated exhaustively. This does not mean that Plato has failed to carry his thought through, but only that he did not choose to put his detailed reflections concerning the Good into writing. We can safely believe the legend that Plato lectured on the Good to his pupils in the Academy. However, his pupils had a friendly and a personal relation with the master, and had gone through the intellectual discipline indispensable to philosophical understanding. But the written word is addressed to an amorphous and unselected public which need have neither intellectual preparation, nor even a love for the subject of philosophy. Thus, reflections on important and fundamental matters may not properly be treated in books. For, in addition, the written word is immobile and dead, in contrast to the spoken word which is flexible and alive, adapting the idea to the particular question in hand. Yet, to the misfortune of posterity, it remains a fact that living things die; only lifeless things like books survive. And so we are forced to confine ourselves to Plato's scattered references to the Good in his writings especially in their relatively more concentrated form in the *Republic* VI and VII, the *Philebus*, and the *Timaeus*. Even in these dialogues the references to the Good amount to no more than hints.

In the beginning, it is important to make clear what we are talking about. In discussing the Good, we are not talking of moral virtue; the Good is value in general, of which moral virtue is only a particular instance. We are dealing with the theory of value, not with ethics. The Good is "greater than

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justice and the other virtues" (*Republic* 504d). Ethics is not an ultimate science; it deals with specific values, and makes hypotheses about them. These need to be validated by a study of ultimate principles, and this is the study of the Good as such.

Plato's treatment is empirical in its starting-point. In experience we note good things and we ask ourselves what it is that makes them good. Thus a line is beautiful, a dance is graceful, a moral action is admirable; and we proceed to isolate the common factor in terms of which all these are good. Like the other creative factors, the idea of the Good is posited as a cause to explain the given; thus it is a principle, ἀρχή, αἴτιον. But the Good is suggested rather than embodied in experience. The idea of the Good is not only an hypothesis to explain experience; it is also a criterion by which to test empirical valuations. Our study, therefore, is empirical only in the sense that our problem is set for us by experience. But the study must be really carried on by reason, in that the Good must be grasped in an *a priori* fashion.

Analogous to the distinction between the immediate and the abstract good, or between good as effect and good as cause, is that between good as means and good as end. There are things which are sought for the sake of something else; and there are things on account of which other things are sought (*Philebus* 53e, *Republic* 357b). The first represents the class of instrumental goods. When one object has value as a means for another object, and that for a third and so on, there must be something which has value in itself. There can be no infinite regress (*Lysis* 219c). Unless there are intrinsic goods, there can be no instrumental goods either.

Correspondingly, we have two kinds of science. We have (to use a modern word) technology, which is concerned with the questions of organs or tools alone; and we have the science of ends which determines the purposes for which the tools may be employed. The second presides over the first. The flute-maker is under the orders of the flute-player. The military officer knows how war may be waged, but it is the task of the statesman to decide whether war *should* be waged. Indeed, military science is a servant of political science in a double sense.

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The statesman both chooses the ends and initiates the activity of the general (*Politicus* 304-5). In sum, the statesman contemplates the Good; the general, the means to the Good.

Goodness as an end and goodness as a cause; both of these convey the nature of the Good as an ultimate principle, sharing with the other factors in Plato's scheme the character of ingreience in the world of experience, and also of transcendence. Also, as happens with all conceptions about first and last things, we cannot be absolutely certain about the Good. "The idea of the Good is a surmise (ἐλαπίς) and only God knows if it be true" (*Republic* 517b). "It is very hard to accept and very hard to reject" (532d). As soon as Plato, in his endeavor to explain experience, is forced to assume a realm beyond experience, he invests his statements with a very real tentative-ness. But his state of mind with respect to the metaphysical factors is a mixed one; he is both doubtful and certain. In so far as he is a human being, a soul imprisoned in the body, he is doubtful. In so far as he rises beyond the body and is inspired, he is certain. So, too, he knows the Good with absolute conviction. "If I could"—says Socrates to Glaucon, speaking of the Good—"I would show you no longer an image and symbol of my meaning, but the *very truth* as it appears to me." Yet he adds immediately, "Though whether rightly or not, I may not affirm" (*Republic* 533a). This mixture of doubt with certainty is characteristic of Plato in all his writings. His doubt is more like an undogmatic conviction; his conviction, more like a faith.

We will begin our discussion by considering the *grounds* of the Good, which in the last resort are criteria for ascertaining the presence of the Good in any entity.

GROUNDS OF THE GOOD

In the *Philebus* Plato gives two sets of grounds of the Good, each set consisting of three members. The Good, he says, is that which is desired, the self-sufficient, and the complete. The second triad is of the Good as beauty, measure, truth (20d, 60c, 61a). We will treat the first triad as basic, adding measure from the second triad. The other two members of the second

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triad are, as we hope to show, repetitions or variations of the other four.

I. The Good is the universal object of desire. It is the goal of all wish, action, and art (*Gorgias* 468c, 499e). Universal to whom?—we may ask. The Good is desired by all rational beings; by all human beings; by all living things, animals, and plants; finally, by the universe (*Philebus* 20d, 11d, 22b, 64a). Thus Plato is ambiguous; whereas he begins by posing explicitly the problem in terms of the Good as desired by *rational* beings, implicitly he conceives of the Good as desired by *all* created things. The Good is the object of all nature. Now that which all nature desires is the Good as such. On the basis of isolated passages (such as 11d), commentators have been misled into supposing that Plato is concerned in the *Philebus* with the Good in a limited sense, namely as the Good for man. For Plato, however, this is only a starting point; what he is considering in the dialogue is primarily the Good in general, “the highest good for man and *for the gods*” (65b).

Plato specifies or rather expands his notion of desire. “Every intelligent being pursues it [the Good], desires it, wishes to catch and get possession of it” (20d). The Good is the object of a desire, which incites man to action, for the purpose of possessing the Good, with the intent of preserving that possession. Thus desire is not for a mere esthetic enjoyment of the Good; it is desire as the impetus for action.

The Good does not constitute a separate realm of values. It is the universal object of desire. Students of the theory of value have created problems for themselves by separating human nature from the Good. *There* is the Good, and *here* is man, and the question then arises why men should seek the Good. In answering this question philosophers have been forced to resort to extrinsic factors, as, for example, the pleasure which is attended by the Good, or the compulsion of an external authority like God. On either of these constructions what man is seeking is not the Good; it is pleasure, his own or God’s. Once the two have been separated, they cannot be brought together. But Plato starts with an intrinsic relationship between the soul and the Good. The soul, by its own nature, loves the Good. And the Good is what men seek.

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Now what men seek is something real, not a projection of their own desires. The Good is desired because it is good; it is not good because it is desired. So Plato designates the Good as the desirable (61a). There is a realm of absolute values which we seek and find and recognize as such—a realm which is unaffected by time and circumstance and social convention, which imposes itself upon the soul and is not created by it. Human life, as a quest for values, has an objective meaning. The Good is what we desire, and we desire it because it is good—good for itself, and eternally. In seeking the Good man transcends his own particularity. The sophists had been maintaining that man is the measure of all things—of the real and the unreal, of the good and the bad. Plato's doctrine is that man is not the measure either of being or of value. This statement must be taken in its strongest possible sense. The Good, of course, is not relative to the empirical self; what should be emphasized is that the Good is not relative to the intelligible self. The Good is such by its own nature. Therefore it cannot be defined as satisfaction. Not all satisfaction is good, but only the satisfaction of the desire for the Good.

The discussion in the *Euthyphro* is to the point. Holiness is dear to the gods. But to be dear to the gods and to be holy are not the same thing (10e). To be dear to them is something which *happens* to holiness (11b); it is an added fact, to state which is not to state the nature of holiness (11b). Thus men and gods love the Good because it is lovable (11a).

To repeat, the Good is discovered in the context of desire. But relationship does not exclude distinctness of being. The Good is independent; but it is not separate. And just as it is independent of mind, so it is independent of being. It is not determined by what happens, or even by what is; it is a standard for that which is. Value is independent both of desire and of nature; by reference to the Good, desire may be judged and fact criticized. Thus the whole area, not only of temporal but also of eternal beings, may be evaluated by the norm of the Good. This is the sense in which the Good is *other* than Being. The Good is a norm for Being.

II. The second ground of the Good is self-sufficiency (*Phile-*

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bus 20d, 61a). Self-sufficiency is a causal category; to be self-sufficient is to be master of one's destiny. The good man is unaffected by the vicissitudes of life, even by the death of those dearest to him (*Republic* 387d). He is independent of his surroundings; as far as is possible to man, his actions and his beliefs are self-determined. The immortal soul moves, but is not moved by, other things; it is self-moving. Self-sufficiency is also a formal notion. To be self-sufficient is not to require anything else for one's definition; it is to be identical with oneself and so to be definite. Thus worth consists in "in-itselfness" or self-hood. Now, in so far as something is definitely "this" and not "that," it is really real. The notion of self-sufficiency merges into that of the really real. In sum, worth attaches to being, *simpliciter*; and anything, in so far as it really is, is good. It is good to be.

III. Thirdly, perfection is found in *plenitude* of being. Plenitude is a further qualification of self-sufficiency. An object may be self-sufficient, because, while there are other objects as well, it is wholly independent of them; or it may be self-sufficient because it includes all things. These are two different senses of self-sufficiency, and goodness entails self-sufficiency in the latter sense of inclusiveness. Thus worth lies in completeness or totality (*ἄπλον*, *Timæus* 41c). To be perfect is to be comprehensive; for instance, the sphere is the most perfect of all shapes because it contains all the other shapes (*Timæus* 33b). Similarly, to be perfect is to be complex—to be a "one in a many." It will be convenient to distinguish complexity into two kinds, horizontal and vertical. Whether this distinction is ultimately valid will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. We will begin with horizontal complexity.

Plenitude is formal diversity. The cosmos achieves perfection by reason of the fact that it represents all the forms in the ideal pattern; to every kind in the intelligible realm there corresponds some object in the actual world (*Timæus* 30c, 39e, 41b, c). Thus actuality exhibits the greatest conceivable variety of character. In the just state each man has a specific function different from that of every one else; whereas injustice is the overlapping of functions and so homogeneity. The city comes

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about through the interrelations and interactions of diversified individuals; so does knowledge emerge from dialogue in which differing standpoints are evoked.

Plenitude means contrariety, as well as diversity. That man is good who unites opposites in his person: the modesty and gentleness of a cultivated mind, with the firmness and aggressiveness of the soldier; the virtue of wisdom with that of courage (*Charmides* 159-160). The divine—that is, the perfect—bond is one which unites unlike and opposed parts of virtue (*Politicus* 310a). Easy-going individuals seek like-minded people for their associates, finding the unlike unendurable. But the business of the great king is not to let opposites be separated; he weaves boldness with self-restraint (*Politicus* 310 ff.). Thus goodness exists in contrast; and contrast leads to balance. A trait of character, unless combined with its opposite, is apt to become excessive to the point of madness (*Politicus* 310d). Opposites temper each other; the courageous is prevented from becoming ferocious by being joined to the wise; so enthusiasm is moderated by the critical spirit. On the other hand, opposites stimulate each other; the conflict of opposites makes for vividness in each trait. Intelligence, without boldness, is apt to degenerate into lethargy; boldness makes the intellect alert and keen (*Politicus* 307c, 308a). Thus opposites both moderate and enhance each other.

Not all contrasts are desirable; some are disruptive. The right contrast arises from a basis of similarity and unity. Thus the various virtues are also alike (*Protagoras* 331b). The wise king weaves the pattern of contrast upon the canvas of common beliefs and valuations (*Politicus* 310e).

Beyond qualitative complexity there is quantitative complexity. In the cosmos, not only are all the forms in the intelligible pattern represented, but all the potencies of the receptacle are realized, too (*Timaeus* 32c, d). That is to say, perfection is the maximum of actualization. Existence is good; and in the perfect world all possible particulars under a given form are embodied. An unwise ruler would destroy all the wicked citizens; the wiser ruler allows the wicked to live, persuading them to the good; and the wisest of rulers reconciles all citizens to each

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other (*Laws* 627e, 628a). Thus the good king saves all the individuals. Reason, confronted with the presence of lawless desires in the "inner city," must try all possible ways of converting them to the good, by threats or persuasion, before proceeding to weed them out (*Republic* 571b, *Timæus* 71a). The philosopher is concerned not only with all essence, but with all *time* as well (*Republic* 486a); and he loves all the accidental variations in things (*Republic* 474d ff.). Thus perfection in the world implies the greatest formal diversity and contrast, along with casual and incidental variety; it is wealth of character and wealth of actuality.¹

The complexity that we have been dealing with is on a horizontal line, so to speak; it is a multiplicity of coördinate characters and things. We will now discuss vertical complexity. Goodness is plenitude in the sense of embracing all *degrees* of perfection, lower as well as higher. Perfection may be defined by selection or by inclusion; it may be construed as the best, or as the best with the worst; as the really real exclusively, or as the real along with all grades of reality down to the least. Plato vacillates between these two notions of perfection; and passages can be adduced in support of either. But on the whole the second seems to prevail; perfection is the plenitude of all grades of reality. This conception is dialectical in a sense; perfection entails imperfection. Vertical complexity cannot be regarded as a modification of self-sufficiency; it is an additional ground. The Good is (*a*) the really real, and (*b*) the less really real, in a descending order. According to the cosmological account of the *Timæus*, God, after creating the immortal soul, commands the inferior gods to proceed to the creation of the mortal souls; for "if these come not into being, the Heaven will be imperfect" (*Timæus* 41b). Thus, without imperfection, perfection could not be. Here we have, so far as the writer knows, the first statement of the doctrine of the Great Chain of Being, which has played such an important rôle in the history

¹The implications of this line of argument (as further explained on p. 55) are inconsistent with the statements in an earlier chapter (p. 33). There, the multiplicity of things appeared to be an accidental fact; here, it appears as a rational fact and an exemplification of value.

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of thought. The cosmos is a hierarchy, starting with the perfect, going through all the grades of the imperfect, down to the least perfect; a hierarchy of higher and lower forms; a hierarchy inclusive both of forms and things; a hierarchy of higher and lower grades of things. The Great Chain links the eternal pattern with the eternal receptacle.²

From the principle of plenitude we arrive at the law of continuity. According to this law, in any scale, there are intermediaries between the highest and the lowest, and still others between these intermediaries. Continuity means that all the points on the line of being are filled. As Plato says in the *Philebus*, a rational account must not jump *at once* (εὐθύς) from the many to the one, or from the one to the many, but should proceed step by step, going through all the intervening stages (16c ff.). Thus from the many we rise to a species, thence to a genus, thence to a higher genus, until we attain the highest genera. The law of continuity is the source of the innumerable kinds of ladders in Plato's philosophy. In sum, from the principle of perfection, we reach the principle of plenitude; from the principle of plenitude we derive the principle of continuity; and the principle of continuity provides the ordered character essential both for a world and for knowledge. Such is the sense in which the Good is the source of being and of truth.

The Good, construed as vertical plenitude, supplies the reason for the creation of the actual world. The question is: why should the Demiourgos not be content with the realm of the forms, which is the realm of the really real? Because the forms without their embodiments are a lesser perfection than the forms with them. The creature is inferior to the creator; but the creator with the creature is more perfect than without it.

²Compare the following passage from Spinoza: "But to those who ask, 'Why did not God create all men in such a manner that they might be governed by reason alone?' I make no answer but this: because material was not wanting to him for the creating of all things from the highest grade to the lowest; or speaking more accurately, because the laws of his nature were so comprehensive as to suffice for the creation of everything that infinite intellect can conceive." *Ethics*, Bk. I, Appendix.

The doctrine of the Great Chain of Being was first suggested to the writer by Professor Arthur Lovejoy, in his book by the same title.

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The world was created in order to fill up the interval between the intelligible pattern and the receptacle. In support of the above, consider the concluding paragraphs of the *Philebus* (66a, 67a), in which the final hierarchy of goods is formulated. At the top is *measure*, the really real; to this are added the proportional, then wisdom, mind, pleasure. And in the *Republic* (358a) the highest good is defined as that which is good both in itself and in its consequences. Hence the Good, as vertical plenitude, is the cause for the existence of the world of particulars.³

To sum up, plenitude is both horizontal and vertical; the demand of perfection is that all the points along the horizontal line and all the points along the perpendicular line—and thus all the points along the plane of being—should be filled up. The realm of being is a plenum, without a void. But there is a reservation: that which is inherently destructive is excluded. For instance, in discussing the eligibility of pleasures, Plato insists that discordant pleasures must be eliminated. Immoderate and frenzied pleasures are obstructive (ἐμπόδισμα, *Philebus* 63d); they prevent the coming to be of other elements; or they destroy what has come to be. We must leave out of the good life whatever impedes achievement or destroys it. From the plenitude of being the exclusive only is excluded.

The objection might be raised that striving has no place in a doctrine according to which imperfection is good. To strive is to endeavor to remove imperfection, and this, on Plato's view, would be to diminish perfection. To make things better would be to make them worse. Our answer would depend on how we construe striving. If striving be the endeavor to change one's status, then striving is excluded from Plato's philosophy;

³Thus the aspect of quantitative complexity which we considered under the general notion of horizontal plenitude may with equal propriety be included under vertical plenitude. There is however an alternative theory as to Plato's doctrine of creation. God is without envy and desires that everything should be good as far as possible (*Timaeus* 30a). Consequently, he orders the potencies and motions in the receptacle according to the ideal pattern. On this construction, the motive for creation is the bringing about of a greater degree of perfection rather than of a lesser one; since the receptacle as such is less real than the actual world.

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since every status, no matter how imperfect, is good. I must occupy my place whether as king or as cobbler. The artisan is to remain an artisan. There is no place for progress in the sense of an ascent from a given function to one that is higher. But striving taken as the effort to express one's function adequately has a place in Plato's philosophy. Actual things inevitably partake of not-being; to this extent they fail to express their natures, they fail to be what they are. Such failure and such not-being have no part in perfection; and striving is justified as the transition from not-being to being, as the effort of the soul to remove the distance between what it is actually and what it is ideally. A bad carpenter is not even a real carpenter; he must try to become a good one. Correspondingly, we may say that imperfection is of two kinds; first, imperfection as representing a certain degree of being and therefore as part of reality; second, imperfection as not-being. For example, conjecture and opinion in knowledge, or the types of the democratic and the tyrannical man respectively, represent imperfections of the second kind. They do not form part of the good life. On the other hand, the artisan class expresses a certain function, a certain type of order in life, and, therefore, a certain grade of reality. It represents imperfection of the first kind.

The characteristics of the Good are exhibited in the parts as well as in the whole. Every member of the whole is a microcosm reflecting in itself the shape and worth of the macrocosm. Thus each part of the plenitude is both self-sufficient and complete, as far as possible. The members are definite, separate, autonomous. Each individual has a self-identity; he is distinct from the other individuals; he possesses a specific nature that he must cherish and fulfil. Furthermore, the individual possesses an internal completeness; he is an integration of the three parts of the soul. Now these parts correspond to the three metaphysical factors: reason to the Limit, desire to the Unlimited, and the spirited part to the Mixed Class. Thus he reproduces within himself the complexity of the metaphysical situation.

Naturally however, neither the self-sufficiency nor the completeness of the individual is as perfect as that of the state. The

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individual is self-sufficient under limitation; he is as self-sufficient as the condition of his being a member of the state permits. But neither is the state as self-sufficient and complete as the cosmos; and the cosmos falls short in these respects of the realm of forms. There are degrees of self-sufficiency and completeness; and the characteristics of the whole are diluted while being reproduced in the parts. Thus every individual exhibits the Good in a dual way. In the first place, he is a factor in the achievement by the state of its own perfection. In the second place, each individual is a world by himself, an "inner city," and therefore achieves a perfection for himself, which is measured by the degree of his self-sufficiency and completeness. We might perhaps speak of the internal as contrasted with the external perfection of the individual.

Similarly, the plenum of universals is split into subordinate plena. The totality of forms is not anyhow; it is subdivided into subordinate realms each presided over by a different genus. We are told in the *Sophist* (251 ff.) that a given form mingles with some forms and not with others. There are therefore autonomous constellations of forms—autonomous in the sense that the forms in one constellation are not included under the defining genus of another. So knowledge consists of distinct sciences (*Sophist* 257d) each with its own premises and genus. These separate areas in the realm of forms and in knowledge are unified into one group by their common participation in the form of the Good. In short, they come together by the fact of their difference; they all exhibit perfection under its aspect of self-sufficiency.

Now each particular constellation of forms and each science is a plenum; it consists of all the possible species under a given genus; and of all the possible sub-species under a given species, down to the indivisible (*Sophist* 229d). Thus each area exhausts all the possible determinations of its defining concept. In a different language Spinoza asserted later what perhaps is a similar point when he states that every attribute is infinite. In an organism the parts are organisms; so the realm of forms is divided into parts each of which is a complex hierarchy of forms. Each hierarchy is complete within the limitation of its genus

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and therefore self-sufficient; also each hierarchy constitutes the province of a distinct science. And Plato says that the cosmos is a whole compounded of wholes (*Timæus* 34b); thus the Good is a plenitude of plenitudes.

IV. We have qualified self-sufficiency by plenitude; we must now qualify plenitude by measure—measure which is ranked as the highest in the list of perfections (*Philebus* 66a). A mere plenum is a mere aggregate; the plenum must be integrated into a whole; and the concept of measure or harmony introduces the difference between a whole and a class. If we limit ourselves to plenitude, we find it impossible to distinguish the philosopher from the democratic man. The life of the democratic man is a plenum; in fact, that is its distinguishing mark. He gratifies every impulse and every need—the impulse to think and the impulse to drink; the motive of profit and the motive of public service (*Republic* 561c, d). The democratic man is unable to say “no” to any stimulus, external or internal. But this inability does not qualify him as either a strong or a good man. He has plenitude; what he lacks is integration. The absence of integration leads to internal warfare and finally to internal impoverishment. He has no organization of impulses; no measure in their gratification; no adaptation to time and place. “A mixture which lacks measure and proportion must necessarily destroy its components and first of all itself; for it is in truth no mixture but an uncompounded jumble” (*Philebus* 64d, e).

Plenitude is the notion of the many; wholeness or integration is the notion of the one. Species join together to form a genus; individuals live together in a state. Thus there are constellations of species and of particulars; and the relation of the constellation to its members is that of a whole to its parts. Such a constellation is limited; it must exclude, as well as include. Also, in such a constellation there is a mutual dependence of parts; thus a constellation is an organism in which the organs involve each other and the whole. The notion of harmony is relevant at this point; there is adaptation of part to part. This adaptation is construed mathematically, as a ratio. In the *Gorgias* Plato speaks of that orderliness (τάξις) by which heaven and

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earth, gods and men, are held together, and he describes it as geometrical equality (508a). In brief, measure, and indeed the Good, are geometrical conceptions, mathematical ratios.

Harmony is particular harmony, that is, relevance among particulars. The Good—we have pointed out above—is a plenitude which includes both the realm of forms and that of particulars. The Good is not a definite good unless we specify the particular entities and the particular circumstances to which they are adapted in a particular way, in accordance with a general principle. The Good is the fit, the timely (*καίριον*), the just. Morality is not a matter of precepts; justice is not a rule of conduct to be repeated uniformly. Rather is it like an algebraic formula, whose expression varies as the values given to the variables are different. There is no general good; every artifact and every living thing has its own specific nature and its own specific good (*Republic* 353c, 441e; *Gorgias* 506e). The virtue of a knife is cutting; the virtue of a hand is handling. Man's good includes wisdom; the dog's does not. Or more accurately, there is a general good, and a particular good. The good of everything alike is self-sufficiency, plenitude, measure; and also the good of every thing is different, in that these general conditions yield different results in so far as they are applied to different situations. Both you and I must conform to the ideal of harmony: but the pattern of conduct imposed by this ideal is not the same for the two of us, given the difference of our natures and of our circumstances. We have generality of principle with variety in its application. Thus the good is both absolute and relative, both the good *simpliciter*, and *my* good (*Republic* 352e, 353a, b).

In order to complete our account of measure, we must supplement the notion of integration by that of *subordination*. The question is how to distinguish the philosopher from the tyrant. The latter is completely integrated; all his passions are subordinated to a ruling passion. He is strong where the democratic man is weak. The tyrannical man is not swept from his purpose by any lure of pleasure. In his own way he is highly intelligent, using reason to promote power and to justify his acts to others and to himself. Yet his strength (such as it is) is not goodness.

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The integration achieved in the soul of the tyrannical man is not "according to nature" (*Republic* 444d). Integration is not anyhow; the welter of desire should be organized in a specific type of order, such that reason rules and impulse obeys; but with the tyrant this order is reversed. Plato would allow the lower perfections to enter the total mixture only on the condition that the highest is already included (*Philebus* 63a), and presumably in its proper rôle as king. The lesser good has no value in itself, but only derivatively, from its co-presence with the highest good, as supplying a field of action for it. "He who receives the greater acquires also the less, or else he is bereft of both" (*Laws* 631b).

Thus we have integration of the members in a plenitude both horizontally and vertically; both formally, and as an integration of particulars. When a whole is so ordered, it has beauty. In sum, beauty is defined through measure.⁴

It would be a misconception to regard the tetrad (desirableness, self-sufficiency, plenitude, and measure) as a definition of the Good. The Good is simple and indefinable; therefore it does not consist in these characteristics; in fact, the Good cannot properly be said to consist in anything. For example, the proposition that self-sufficiency is good is synthetic. In short, while enumerating the above-mentioned traits we have not been engaged in analyzing the Good. These traits *partake* of the Good. Their relation to it is (inadequately) analogous to that of instance to essence. Now goodness is no more constituted by its exemplification than a universal by its instances. The analogy may be developed one step further; it is to be doubted whether exemplification in this case is adequate, *i.e.*, whether the Good is wholly present in these traits. The particular embodies the universal only imperfectly; it does not contain the universal; it suggests it. So does the tetrad suggest the Good; but the Good lies beyond it.

⁴We have now dealt with the first triad: of desirableness, self-sufficiency, and plenitude, as characterizing the Good. From the second triad we have added measure. The other two members of the second triad may be regarded as repetitions of the characteristics already mentioned. Thus truth is the really real (*Sophist* 240b); it describes the characteristic of reality as opposed to appearance; whereas beauty is measure in its aspect as desirable.

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We must, then, revise our previous statement that the tetrad constitutes the *ground* of the Good. The Good has an intrinsic being, and does not depend on anything. The four traits constitute the *most general exemplifications* of the Good; of all the genera, they are those nearest to the Good, in the sense that whatever else exemplifies the Good does so by virtue of its participation in the tetrad. Thus the tetrad is a necessary intermediary between the Good and everything else. In so far as the tetrad is a ground, it is a ground for the further embodiment of the Good in any entity. And in this sense it is a summary of the criteria by which to test whether anything has worth, and in what degree.

In his portrait of the philosopher, Plato depicts his conception of the good life. The philosopher loves truth; but he gazes at the realm of temporal things as well. He is indifferent neither to the small nor to the ignoble, thus imitating God who cares for the least as well as for the greatest of his creatures (*Republic* 485b, *Laws* 903a). The virtue of magnanimity is just this insight into the value of lesser things (*Republic* 486a, b). The philosopher ever seeks integrity and wholeness; he is both contemplative and practical; both solitary and sociable; both enthusiastic and critical; a dialectician, but in his highest moments a poet; living the life of reason, but also cherishing his impulses in the manner of a gardener who cultivates his plants.

Thus the good life is characterized by plenitude. Plato's chief complaint against the oligarchical man is that he is parsimonious; he represses the useless desires which are harmless. The oligarchical man is an enemy of the lower appetites; but the philosopher is experienced in the pleasures of all three parts of the soul. We must note, however, that the parts in the plenitude of desire are graded; there is diversity as to rank and status. Reason is superior and rules; the philosopher is king over the masses. Yet ruling is through persuasion. The state is pervaded by the virtue of temperance, which is an attitude of mutual friendliness between rulers and ruled. Government is based on good-will (*εὐμείνεια*, *Laws*, 723a) and consent. The bond between the parts in the state is not mechanical but

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living. Moreover, the very fact that persuasion is necessary indicates the existence of conflict, making for sharpness of individuality.

Two points may be noted with respect to Plato's conception of the Good. (a) The Good is described formally, even mathematically; it is ratio. It is not an immediately felt quality; beauty is not sensuous. Plato regards the immediate apprehension of beauty in music by way of feeling as inferior to the analytical consciousness of music as a structure (*Republic* 531a). Yet this point must be no sooner made than revised. The Good is *exhibited* formally; it is revealed in measure but is not identical with it. Measure is the Good in so far as it can be grasped by reason. Ultimately, the Good is ineffable; in so far as known at all, it is discovered in ecstasy. We must therefore distinguish between the felt apprehension which is inferior to rational thought, and the immediacy which is above rational thought, and for which the latter is a prelude.

(b) The idea of the Good stands alone in Plato's philosophy, differing in a fundamental sense from all his other conceptions. All creatures, all forms, all the metaphysical factors save the Good, have their being through limitation; the real is constituted through negation. Consequently, every entity is contrasted with something else. There is always a "more." Every particular and every form, every person and every virtue, is situated in a general environment of being, on which it depends and with which it sustains relationships. Thus every entity is self-transcendent; every entity save the Good. The Good is a totality; its nature is to include, but not to exclude; and not-being, which mingles with all being, does not mingle with the Good. The Good has no reference to anything beyond itself. In this respect, *the idea of the Good and the idea of Being stand in contrast to each other*. Hence the Good is not a being and is beyond being, and is the source of being. The world is radically divided into two parts; on the one hand, the individual entities, whether particulars, or forms, or metaphysical factors, including God. These are instances of a plenitude which involves exclusion; they are restricted plena. On the

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other hand, there is the absolute plenitude, which is the totality of the restricted plena; and this is the Good.

A critic might perhaps be justified in holding that Plato fails to give an adequate account of the Good, just in so far as he makes it all-inclusive. A Good which is everything is nothing. In Plato, all contrasts fall within the Good; they are contrasts between higher and lower perfections. For Plato, further, all men desire the Good; he has no place for a free and conscious rejection of the Good as such; no place for a conflict between a good desire and a bad one. It may be questioned whether Plato has not lost the Good by expanding its meaning.

THE GOOD AS AN ONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

To say that the Good is a norm is to disclose only one part of its nature. The Good is power. It is not only a standard for evaluating the real; it is also a cause of being; it is both an axiological and an ontological principle. These two aspects are together. An ideal is a force bending the world to its pattern; perfection generates its own realization. The Good is creative.

There have been philosophies which have divorced value from being, conceiving standards as ineffective in nature. According to these, the fact that an entity is good is immaterial to its arrival or to its survival. There is a mutuality of indifference between ideals and things. But for Plato this bifurcation does not exist. The Good is efficacious. Perfection is a law for nature, in the sense that phenomena proceed according to the rule of the best. And Plato is not satisfied with mere lip-service to this doctrine. Anaxagoras, once having granted that nature is governed by the principle of the best, then proceeded to explain the details of phenomena by the operation of mechanical causes. Plato insists that nature, not only as a whole, but in its every part and its every individual movement, should be referred to the *real cause*, namely, the Good.

(a) The Good is a cause without itself being caused; it is an absolute cause. (b) The Good explains not only why things behave as they do, but why there are things at all. It supplies an answer to the question why a world should exist at all. Nature exists because existence is good. (c) Beyond the realm

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of existence is the realm of essence, of which the former is a copy. Now the Good is the source of *all* being (*Republic* 509d), whether existential or essential. Of course the realm of essence has no beginning in time. None the less it is derivative from the Good, and therefore a creature.

In Plato we find what is perhaps the first formulation of the ontological argument, in his statement that "as the sun is the author of the generation of visible things, so the Good is the source of being and essence in the intelligible world" (*Republic* 509b). Perfection entails being. Plato's formulation of the ontological argument is free of any subjectivistic tinge. It is not an inference from idea to being; it is simply the statement that perfection is the necessary and sufficient condition of being.

We will now proceed to consider in detail the respects in which the Good is the cause of being. Let us begin with the cosmos. Everything comes about for a purpose, and its behavior is with reference to a goal. Things *are* in so far as they are good *for* something. This is the affirmation of the teleological principle. The goal at which all things aim is perfection. The mechanists and the materialists "make the earth stay below the heavens by putting a vortex about it" or they "regard the earth as a flat trough supported on a foundation of air" (*Phaedo* 99b). But in fact the state of the earth and moon, the sun and the stars, their speed and revolutions, the shape of the earth, be it flat or round—all these are determined by the principle of the best. The orbits of the stars are circular because the circle is the best of all shapes (*Timæus* 33b). The Good contains and holds all things together.

Let us now consider the efficacy of the Good in the realm of forms, taking up each trait of the Good in turn. (a) The efficaciousness of plenitude is exhibited in the fact that the realm of forms is a totality which exhausts the range of the conceivable. Every possible shade of meaning is represented in the world of ideas. The young Socrates, who, impelled by motives of sentimentality, would restrict the area of being to what is noble, is rebuked by Parmenides. When the spirit of true philosophy—Parmenides says in effect—takes hold of the mind, replacing conventional opinions, then one despises nothing and

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is willing to include mud and hair, along with justice and temperance among the essences (*Parmenides* 130c-131a). The range of forms embraces all the general characters, and also all the possible determinations of these characters. (b) The plenitude of forms is not to be confused with the plenitude of the unlimited. The former is thoroughly articulated, with its members distinct from each other, and in definite relations with each other (such as the relation of class-inclusion). Thus the realm of forms is a structure. At this point the efficaciousness of the Good is exhibited in another one of its traits, namely, measure. Essences entail one another under appropriate limitations. There are systems of essences which themselves enter into more inclusive systems. To sum up, from the principle that the Good is the source of all beings, it follows that all things are good.

THE TRANSCENDENT NATURE OF THE GOOD

However, the doctrine which identifies the real with the ideal seems to leave no place for the moral struggle. If the real is perfect, there is nothing to be achieved by action. By virtue of the fact that I am, I am good. More generally, this doctrine seems to exclude the critical judgment. Criticism can be valid only provided that norms and facts are distinguished from each other. Plato and Spinoza lay themselves open to one and the same objection. Spinoza reduces perfection to being; Plato, being to perfection. Both alike are monistic, and both are compelled by their position to reject the ethical and normative judgments. The doctrine of the divine immanence in Spinoza's philosophy implies that all modes are perfect. Consequently, there is nothing to improve. The conception of ideals as standards for self-reform is a confused idea. For Plato similarly, to be is to be perfect. The goal is already achieved; there is nothing to strive for.

Now it is hardly necessary to state that the above account is a travesty of Plato's thought. For Plato, ethical action is significant. One of the doctrines that most clearly stand out in his dialogues is that of the essential contrast between the actual and the ideal. No actual equality is an exact equality; none of the actual men is an ideal man. The realm of nature inevitably

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falls short of the intelligible realm, at which it aims. In human experience, there is the divorce between actual pleasure and the good life. Life is not to be sought at *any* price; virtue is not reducible to self-preservation; the good life may entail a battle with one's self, even a sacrifice of one's life (*Gorgias* 513d). To live and to be good are not the same thing.

The contrast between ideal and fact is inherent in the cosmological situation. Motion and change in nature are a manifestation of the *eros*; they consist in the attaining of value. But if value were adequately realized, then there would be no motion and no change. Activity in nature is the aspiration of the mortal for the immortal; and the existence of the aspiration presupposes the existence of a gap between the two.

Confusion and evil abound. There is more evil than good in this world, and the warfare of the gods against evil is undying. "It is impossible that evils be done away with, Theodorus, for there must always be something opposed to the good." Plato goes so far as to suggest that there is a pattern of evil. "Two patterns, my friend, are set up in the world, the divine, which is most blessed, and the godless, which is most wretched" (*Theætetus* 176a). Let us analyze the nature of evil. A distinction must be made between a lower degree of perfection on the one hand, and a frustration of the Good, on the other.⁶ The latter is evil, the former is not. Whatever is not completely real is not necessarily evil. The tradesman when submitting to the rule of the philosopher, the particular as revealing the universal, desire when under the control of reason—all these are necessary ingredients of perfection, construed as vertical plenitude. Our problem arises from facts like the existence of the tyrant, in whose life passion dominates reason, or of the sophist who has no values or false values, or of the existence of *doxa* as divorced from rational justification, of particulars as distortions of their nature, and finally of the fact of transience, whereby even the best of states is doomed to perish.

The obvious and easy answer would be to say that, for Plato, evil and motion and frustration are unreal. The discrepancy which constitutes our problem is one between the *actual* and the

⁶See p. 58.

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ideal; not between the *real* and the ideal. To the extent that things fall short of goodness, they fail to be. The receptacle is the factor of perishing; it hinders things from achieving genuine reality. The moral struggle is the opposition between reason in man and the wild surging motion from the receptacle. But only the rational essence of man is real; the receptacle is the factor of not-being. The conflict is one between being and not-being. The Good contributes the ingredient of being in human nature, and thus the soundness of the ontological principle remains unshaken.

This solution is unsatisfactory, for it yields new problems. If we say that the moral struggle is against not-being, then we are also driven to say that it itself is unreal. We have solved the problem of the moral struggle by denying its existence. Yet Plato is acutely aware of the fact of moral tension. The root of the matter lies in the notion of the receptacle. The receptacle, we have said, is not-being. But it can and it does thwart the Good. The receptacle has power and to that extent it partakes of being. It is a not-being which can act on being and so is a being in a more general sense of the word. In short, to reduce evil and motion to not-being does not solve the matter. Not-being is a real factor. The actual world consists on the one hand of being as being (that is, as plenitude and measure), and on the other of not-being as being. If the ontological principle is to be established, it must be demonstrated that the Good is the source of being in these two senses.

Before proceeding to clarify Plato's position on these matters, we must concede that he is not wholly consistent nor clear in the solution he offers. Perhaps no philosophy can ever provide a satisfactory treatment of the problem. And it should be added that the suggestions offered below are highly speculative, exceeding any of Plato's explicit formulations. In order to demonstrate our point, we will expand our problem so as to include under it the question of the relation of the intelligible realm to the Good.

We are informed in the *Republic* (509b) that the Good is not being, and transcends being in dignity and power. Here Plato is speaking of the realm of essence, over which the Idea

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of the Good presides. How are we to interpret the statement that the Good is beyond being? Its meaning is obscure, and we can only make conjectures. Plato, we suggest, means that the realm of essence is imperfect, that to be is to fall short of perfection. Nothing that is, not even the completely real, is completely good. Being consists in this very incompleteness with respect to the norm of perfection. And by virtue of this fact, the Good is other than the organized plenitude of essence. The premise which underlies this inference is the proposition that the Good is the source of being. A cause cannot be identical with its effect. The sun, which is the cause of generation, is not itself generation; in like manner, the Good, which is the cause of the being and essence of things, is not itself an essence. The Good transcends being, because the former is uncaused, whereas the latter is derivative. The distance between the Good and being is the distance between cause and effect. Every creation is a fall. The realm of essence is an effluence from the Good, and is thereby a dilution of it. The character of imperfection in the realm of essence is exhibited in its discursive nature.

Now, in so far as being is an abstraction from the Good, it partakes of not-being. Not-being is a necessary ingredient in any effluence from the Good. The problem of evil in the temporal world, the aspects of frustration and of perishing in the world of opinion, are only particular cases of the more general problem of the necessary ingredient of not-being in being as such. Ultimate causality is reserved to the Good; being is derivative in the metaphysical situation and, in so far forth, is tinged with not-being. The difference between the visible and the intelligible worlds is only one of degree; both are derivative, and so both partake of not-being. The Good is the cause of what is less and so other than itself; thus it creates not-being.

We have been faced with the problem of reconciling the existence of confusion and transience in the visible world, and of discursiveness in the intelligible world, with the Good. We have shown that not-being issues from the Good from its very character as creative. Thus we have maintained the integrity of the ontological principle. Also we have shown that to be a

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creature is to partake of not-being; that is to say, that not-being is an essential ingredient of being. Thus we have not denied reality to confusion, or evil, or discursiveness; we have ascribed to them a not-being which is a factor of being. But the Good is also the source of order, measure, and plenitude. We must therefore rephrase the ontological principle to read that the Good is the source both of being *simpliciter* and of being as infected by not-being. We return to the primary fact of the relation of an effect to its cause. The creature embodies the creative factor inadequately. This fact means two things: (a) the first does partake of the second, (b) the participation is limited. The Good is partly immanent in being, and partly transcends it. Thus we have the paradox that the Good is present and the Good is forever beyond attainment. This paradox, if paradox it be, pervades all of Plato's thought, and is exhibited especially in his doctrine of the hierarchical nature of things, whereby the lower—for instance, the particular—suggests or intends the higher—for instance, the universal. The universal is present in the particular and is beyond it.

By virtue of its transcendent nature, the Good is other than being. Values are distinct from things; the Good is a principle of criticism for the realm of all being, existential and essential. In nature the Good is striven for but never to be attained. But, since it may be striven for, the Good is immanent in nature. The Good is the summit of all being, the idea which is beyond all other ideas; it is also the defining principle of all being. The immanence of the Good is mediated by beauty. Plato says that beauty is of all forms the one most clearly visible and the loveliest (*Phædrus* 250e). Beauty is the Good in its aspect as apprehensible, as pervasive, and as creative of the temporal world. In the field of nature, the immanence of the Good is exhibited in the *eros*, which is the striving for beauty. *Eros* is the lure of the Good, leading the soul to transcend its particularity; it is human nature in its incompleteness, moving toward self-completion.⁶

⁶The ideas presented in this chapter are not consistent with those suggested in the earlier ones. We have just been saying that, according to Plato, the Good comprehends all reality, whereas previously we had stated that, for Plato, the

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We all desire the Good, but often we fail to attain it, because of ignorance. We do evil because we mistake it for the Good. The innate love of the Good is not matched by a clear knowledge of it. A superficial reading of Plato might lead one to believe that for him, while the love of the Good is innate, knowledge of it is not. No one does evil voluntarily; that is to say, the desire for the Good is always present; but knowledge of it may be absent.

One need only reflect on this statement for a moment in order to realize that it is false to Plato's thought. Plato maintains that knowledge is innate; such knowledge is of the ideas and ultimately of the Good. But if we know the Good innately, how do we happen to make mistakes about it? Because we are in the body and are distracted by pleasures. Plato's account of evil in man is circular. I run after pleasure because I am ignorant of the real nature of the Good. And I am ignorant because the appetites and the pleasures have made me forget what I know. Now in fact, for Plato, evil is due to the intrusion of the receptacle. Man innately loves and knows the Good; but owing to his participation in the receptacle, he becomes unconscious both of the knowledge and of the love; his rational essence is submerged by his bodily nature, with its appetites and its senses.

Let us confine ourselves to the specific point that knowledge of the Good is innate. The prisoners in the cave live in darkness. Yet, surely, they have an idea of the Good, however dim. Else they could not even see the shadows. While in the cave, they reason from cause to effect, by a process of empirical induction (*Republic* 516d). They make predictions concerning the future; thus they have an idea of the Good, not in itself,

ultimate situation is complex, not reducible to any one factor. Also, in this chapter, we have represented Plato as deriving evil from the Good, whereas we had previously stated that evil issues from the receptacle. It would be perhaps futile to attempt to reconcile these two views. But it may be noted that the doctrine of the Good as all-comprehensive is to be found in the *Republic* (Book VI) alone of all Plato's writings; and we have therefore taken the position in this book that that doctrine does not represent Plato's general position.

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but as shadowed in the sequence from particular to particular. Then there are the few who break their chains and go out. Now the soul which leaves the cave, and ascends the steep hill from the top of which a vision of the sun of the Good may be obtained, knows where it is going. We are told, it is true, that it is accompanied by a friendly demon. But the latter serves less as a guide than as one who overcomes the inertia of the soul by sheer pressure. What we seek, we must in some sense possess already. It is not a question whether we know the Good or are ignorant of it. Our knowledge of the Good is innate. The question is whether our knowledge is conscious and clear or whether it is dormant and latent.

But many who are awakened rise no higher than the level of *doxa*. This is true of the ordinary man, and even of the extraordinary man in his ordinary moments. We do not know the Good with certainty; we guess at it. Now even when our conjecture is correct, it is only a conjecture; it is not grounded on a first principle. Moreover, *doxa* is apprehension by the symbolism of myths. *Doxa* is an *intuition* of the Good; as such it does not grasp its object by a concept. The relevance of ignorance in the origination of evil habits and actions can now be more fully perceived. Our idea of the Good lacks certainty and precision. When standards are vague, then our measurements by these standards are likely to be wrong.

Our empirical knowledge of values comes under the class of intuition or *μαντεία*—as when I recognize immediately the loveliness of a vase, or of a melody, the rightness of an action, the perfection of a dance or of a moral principle. I know that these are good, but I do not know why they are good.

From the intuition of the Good we may arrive at knowledge of it. It is important to notice that such knowledge is possible for man. The guardians may possess it, though the large mass of men may not. The released prisoner at last sees the sun itself, in its true nature and in its own setting (*Republic* 516a, also 511b, 517c). Such knowledge is independent of sensuous symbolism. Even more, it dispenses with concepts; it is above sense and above reason. Beauty is beyond definition (*λόγος*) and beyond knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*, *Symposium* 211a); the

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Good is other than truth and knowledge (*Republic* 508e, 509a). At the top of the ladder of knowledge we attain an idea of the Good which is not an idea, and we reach it abruptly, suddenly, in a flash, that is, without reasoning (*Symposium* 210e). The knowledge of the Good is supra-rational in that it is non-conceptual and non-inferential. To understand is to refer to a system of co-ordinates; the datum, whether a visible or an intelligible object, is rendered determinate by its location in the system. But the Good cannot be referred to any system of co-ordinates; hence it can neither be defined nor interpreted. The Good is the Sun which renders all things visible; it is the principle of intelligibility; it supplies the criteria and norms by which all rational beliefs are tested. But the criteria cannot be thus tested; they must declare themselves. The insight into the Good is beyond knowledge; the norms for truth are not truths. Thus Plato suggests that the Good is not a truth; truth is like the Good, but is not the Good. Yet the idea of the Good is the source of all knowledge; it generates all meanings, and validates all true beliefs. The Good, by virtue of its being the source of knowledge, must be beyond it, but also it must be knowledge potentially, since it generates it. We have here a further instance of the paradoxical nature of Plato's doctrine. The Good transcends knowledge, and is immanent in it. So we find Plato sometimes saying that the Good is not an essence, and yet sometimes speaking of the Good as a form, and as intelligible (*Republic* 517c, 534b).

Our point is that insight into the Good is contrasted not only with *doxa*, but also with reason, even with knowledge itself. Nevertheless, there is an interplay between reason and insight. We cannot attain the vision of the Good unless we go through the discipline of reason. From the observation of beauty in concrete things, we are led to beauty in the forms. Thence we are led to contemplate beauty itself, as though by an induction from material and formal beauty. There is a progression from reason to insight. Plato says that the idea of the Good is attained at the extreme limit of the intelligible, and by a process of definition (*Republic* 532b, 534b). But the realm of the in-

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telligible suggests rather than contains the Good. The vision of the Good is attained by a leap.

On the other hand, there is the descent from the ecstatic vision of the Good to discursive knowledge of the ideas. Discursive knowledge both precedes and succeeds insight. The momentary insight into the Good is "saved" and "remembered" in conceptual formulations; and it is displayed to others through definition and speech. In fact, whether a man's insight is genuine is proved by the fact that he is able to run the gauntlet of argument. In the *Philebus*, Plato is engaged in displaying the Good through discourse, λόγος. Discourse reveals only the effects of the Good, for instance, measure, and self-sufficiency. By means of such conceptions the insight into the Good can be effectively employed to validate or criticize our ordinary empirical judgments of value. In music beauty is conveyed sensuously; one can illumine this spontaneous and natural apprehension of beauty by an insight into perfection as such, which is rational and ultimately exceeds reason.

Knowledge of the Good is possible, but is it attainable by man as he is now? Man is weighted by the body, distracted by passion, and confused by sense; he can know the ideal only as foreshadowed in things. Can he know the Good in its pure state? So long as he remains in the body, he cannot; he has only intimations of it from another life. In this, he is condemned to remain in the cave; his happiness lies in recollection and in anticipation. But there are some privileged souls who are able to see the Good, though the vision comes rarely, and, when it comes, is fleeting. They achieve the vision in a state of what Plato calls madness, when they break their bonds with the ordinary world and its conventional properties, cease to be normal, cease even to be themselves, and are identified with the divine. It is a question whether they can reach this condition by their own effort. The knowledge of the Good is conferred on man by revelation. Man must strive and ascend the various steps in the ladder of knowledge; at a given point he ceases all effort and becomes passive, and then the revelation may, or may not, come. The vision of the Good entails the passivity of man.

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In the descent which must follow upon the ascent, man becomes active once more. He converts the insight into a system of concepts. But it is true that the formulation is a frustration of the vision.

CONCLUSION

Our treatment of the Good in Plato's philosophy has carried us into many diverse fields; the discussion has been certainly extended, if not too long, and it may be useful to make some concluding comments by way of bringing to the foreground the main and general considerations of this paper. Inasmuch as the light which Plato throws on his own views is so dim, we have been compelled to resort to hypotheses. The reader who is familiar with the text is warned to test for himself the extent to which the speculations have been in accordance with the general trend of Plato's thought, and the degree in which the analyses of what he actually states are correct.

Probably in no other philosophical scheme does the conception of the Good hold such a central position as in that of Plato. Plato is notable for the amplitude of his conception of it. It is not only the defining principle of ethics; it is the basic notion in ontology, in theory of knowledge, in the arts, and in theology. It is the most fundamental of the metaphysical factors; all the other metaphysical factors are subordinate to the Good. To a mind which is reluctant to conceive the ultimate ground of being in personal terms, Plato offers the religion of the Good. In this notion, the ideas of an ultimate standard of value, and of an ultimate source of being, are joined. Thus enthusiasm is an adequate expression of the religious attitude; it is a love for an absolute ideal which is also a power.

In the development of philosophic thought, Plato's conception of the Good originates two important currents of doctrine: the Ontological Argument, and the Great Chain of Being. Plato's mind is inclined to paradox habitually; and in his treatment of the Good this propensity receives full play. The Good is beyond truth; it is also the highest truth. It is an indefinable notion; yet it is "caught" by the notions of Truth, Beauty, and Measure. It is a being, and is other than being. It is present in

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all things; and it haunts all things as an ideal never to be attained.

In Plato, we find the first and the most powerful formulation of the doctrine of absolute values. The Good is the goal of all desire; but it is not a goal arbitrarily determined by desire. Values do not change with races, or with times, or with material conditions. The Good is a universal and a fixed norm which the individual finds, and to which he must submit. The soul has an aim beyond that of mere self-preservation, and beyond success; its purpose lies beyond itself, in the pursuit of an absolute ideal, by which alone its own life may be justified. Living is not a pastime, nor even a tragedy. The Good is absolute; thus it operates as a principle of limitation upon the soul. But the Good is also the beautiful; it operates upon the soul by virtue of its intrinsic beauty, to which the *eros* in the soul responds.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUL

PLATO'S doctrine of the soul may be divided into three parts. The soul is motion; it is the *eros*; it is a mixture.

(I.) Nature offers the spectacle of a perpetual stream of change and becoming. All natural objects change, or rather they *are* changes; nature is a movement. This characteristic is summed up in the conception of the soul as duration. (II.) For the atomists, too, motion is inherent in things. But the atomists explain motion by the void and the impact of atoms. For Plato, the only explanation of motion is by reference to the conception of value. Motion has a goal; the soul is the realization of the good; it is teleological activity. This is the soul as the *eros*. (III.) The soul is a mixture of the indivisible and the divisible; hence the soul is complex, with both a conceptual and a sensuous pole. The soul is the primary concrescence of the intelligible with the sensible, and the mediating principle for all particular concrescences. We will elaborate these three notions separately, and study their interconnection.

I

Plato's demonstration of the existence and nature of the soul is inductive, based as it is on the empirical fact of motion, construed in a very wide sense. Motion is not only spatial—that is, locomotion and rotation; it is also change, namely, alteration of quality, as when white changes into black. Then there is motion in the sense of growth and decay, of generation and of passing away. Here there is no change of place, nor change from quality to quality; there is merely emergence of quality or its submergence. This is motion as sheer temporal passage, and motion in this sense underlies all the other kinds. In sum, *kinesis* means what we ordinarily mean by motion; it means change; and it means becoming.

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The series of natural motions is not self-explanatory but points to a cause outside itself. The natural causes of motion are themselves caused; one body moves another body and is itself moved by another. Natural causes are mechanical in the sense that they are external to what is moved (ἐξωθεν, *Phædrus*, 245e); they are also determined, not spontaneous, for if one body moves another, it is determined to do so by the impulsion of another body. Finally, the cause of motion in the physical world is transmissive, not originative. A is moved by B, B by C, etc., etc.; at no point of this series is there an origination of motion. Thus, we must go outside the order of physical motions in order to find its origin. The atomists are content to rest with the physical order, explaining one motion by another, indefinitely; but an infinite regress states the problem and does not solve it (*Laws* 894e). If there are derived causes of motion, there must be a first—that is to say, a genuine—cause of motion. There must be an *arche*, a beginning, an unconditioned cause, which explains the series of conditioned motions. Without such an *arche* of motion somewhere, there would be no motion anywhere; and the whole framework of heaven and earth would come to a standstill and collapse (*Phædrus* 245e).

So far as the writer is aware, we have in the above the earliest formulation of the cosmological argument, so prominent in mediæval theology. We have been led, in our attempt to explain phenomena, to posit a first mover—(πρῶτον μεταβάλλον *Laws*, 894a). Now, this self-caused mover must itself be a motion, for motion can come only from motion. Thus, we posit a motion which has the power to move itself and to move other things. Also, to assure the existence of contingent and passing things, we must further assume that motion is of the very essence of the *arche*—that is to say, we must assume a necessary motion. The first mover is indestructible, and its motion continuous.

The *arche* has two functions: it moves itself and it moves other things. In its first character, it is self-motion. Physical things are passive; their motion is inertia; they move only in so far as they are moved. But a self-moving thing initiates its

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motion and directs it. Now, this is the soul, for "the very essence of the soul is self-motion" (*Phædrus* 245e). In this sense, soul and life are one and the same thing; for a living thing controls its motion from within itself, and initiates motion in its relation to the environment. The soul is the principle of life. In the *Politicus* (260d), Plato compares the king to his ministers. The ministers convey to the menials orders which they receive from the king, but the king issues his own orders. The king is self-commanding (αὐτοεπιτακτικός). The analogy between the king as self-commanding and the soul as self-moving is obvious. The soul is inherent spontaneity, generating motion in itself perpetually. Whereas bodies run down, whereas a cloak that is made is gradually worn away (*Phædo* 87), whereas a physical object gradually dissolves, the soul is self-restoring and self-reproducing; it does not die, for the soul perpetually renews itself from within.

The soul moves other things, too. It is self-imparting—an energy which is the fountain of all energy. The soul is creativity—"the most ancient and divine of all those things whose motion, when developed into becoming, provides an ever-flowing fount of being" (*Laws*, 966e). Now, that which causes motion both in itself and other things is a motion. The soul is not a *thing* which changes; it is *change as such*; the soul is activity and becoming. Thus the soul is a duration which is the source of all particularized becomings—"the cause of all things that are, have been, and will be" (*Laws* 896a). The soul is the principle of transition and is co-eval with time (*Laws* 721c, *Timæus* 34c).

The soul, then, stands for any self-activity, vital or rational. We find souls in all organic things, in plants no less than in animals. Plants lack the power of thought, but they are not without a soul. Their actions are not rationally controlled; nevertheless, they are controlled. A plant "repels the motions from without and uses its own"; in short, it is a vital creature, endowed with a degree of spontaneity which ensures self-maintenance, growth, and reproduction. Plato further holds that plants are capable of desire and of the feelings of pleasure and pain (*Timæus* 77a, b). Obviously, we have in the above an anticipation of Aristotle's conception of the vegetative soul.

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Moreover, the soul extends beyond living things into all natural motion. The soul is a natural force; and all things are full of souls. Plato is typically Greek in his animism. Thus, his conception of the soul is naturalistic, not moralistic. The soul is the cause of *any* change, good or bad; the cause of dissolution as well as composition, of decay as well as growth. The soul may produce order or disorder; it may declare truth or falsehood. Especially in *Laws*, Book X, Plato regards the soul as morally indifferent; it is the cause of natural motion. Thus, Plato has an objective view of the soul; he conceives it as a member of the world around us, the seat of activity in nature. The essence of the soul is doing, not cognizing. If the soul thinks, that is because to think is to act. The mental aspect of the soul is one of its modes of activity. The activity of knowing and the activity of creating are different steps in a continuous process, the first preparing the way for the second. There is envisagement of a plan, and execution of a plan; and both are activities.

But there are passages in Plato which might be interpreted as meaning that reason is not a soul; thus, he speaks of reason being implanted in a soul (*Laws* 897b) as though the two were distinct. Only a soul can receive reason, and reason cannot exist save in a soul (*Timæus* 46d). Shall we say that reason as the pilot of the soul does not move, but only directs the motion of the soul? The question is of some importance; on our answer to it depends whether reason shall be defined as a temporal fact and thought as a becoming, or not. We will say that reason is a soul and therefore partakes of the characteristic marks of a soul; and, in evidence, we will adduce passages from the dialogues. The traits of the soul are said to be art, opinion, mind (*Laws* 892b); the ordered movements of natural objects are stated to be indications of a soul. In the above, Plato regards reason and soul as equivalent. Then, there are frequent references to the *kinesis* and the periodic revolutions of reason (*Laws* 897c, 898b). Reason is a motion and a cause of motion. In what sense?—the reader might ask. The motion of mind is thinking. The mind is said to move throughout itself in declaring the truth about the world of forms and the realm of opinion

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(*Timæus* 37a). The activity of the mind consists in affirmation and denial. Even more significant is the process whereby the mind arrives at its conclusions. Mere affirmation is not cognition; unless there be the realization of the problem, there is no understanding of its solution. In thinking, the soul answers questions which it puts to itself. Thought is dialogue—the conversation of the soul with itself. And when one question has been answered, a new question arises. Thus, thought is a transition from problem to problem; it is also the transition from answer to answer. In the Platonic dialogues, we find the author passing from one theory to another; a variety of alternatives is considered before the final conclusion is reached. And the process of getting to the conclusion is essential to the comprehension of it. The search is part of the system.

Reason is a soul, since to think is to act, and to act spontaneously. Mind is a manifestation of life. The meaning of the statement that reason cannot exist without soul is that rationality presupposes the generic essence of self-motion. Reason is a rational soul; but the soul may or may not be rational. Like all things in nature, thought is a duration, a happening in time. And mind, of which thought is the function, is a temporal fact, a creature, though an immortal one. Being immortal, it is most like the forms; being immortal, it is not timeless, but a member of the historical order, “imperishable but not eternal” (*Laws* 904a). Reason is everlasting and thus lives its life in time.

II

We have said that the soul is the principle of activity, and that the principle is itself an activity. But the notion of activity does not by itself describe the soul. The soul is *patterned* activity; it is a process of realizing the good. The soul is teleological movement—the achievement of value. The soul is the principle of life operating in accordance with law. What gives character to the soul is that, unlike the receptacle, it is movement with a shape. The soul is *eros*. We will now proceed to a consideration of the *Symposium*, in which a full account is given of the *eros* as the factor of creativity.

Eros is the love of the good, in its aspect as beauty. Now, all

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love is of the good; we love the good, and we love nothing else. Personal friendship and affection are always conditioned by the fact that the person loved is an image of the ideal. We do not love particulars as such; we love the ideal which we find in them. All love is of impersonal causes. And in this love of the ideal there is nothing casual. Plato is no more of an empiricist as to love than he is as to knowledge. The knowledge of the forms is innate; so is the *eros* of beauty innate. The concept is prior to the percept and renders it significant; so does the ideal dimly present in the soul render love of the particular significant. Each person loves the good in a different manner; some love strength, others wisdom, others justice. Each one has his own god. We already love our god and go about seeking a person who is an image of our god. Love is symbolic, in the sense that we love a person because he is a symbol of our god. And in loving him, we aim at instructing him in order to make him a better image of the god. Thus teaching is a manifestation of friendship. The love of the good conditions the love of the person; and conversely, the love of the person awakes in us the dimly conscious love of the ideal. Thus, personal love is recollection; and the transports of love arise from the fact that the friend reminds us of our ideal.

The *eros* is not merely human friendship; it is the nature of all zestful activity in man—of money-making, of the search for truth, of patriotism. All action is motivated by the *eros*. The *eros*, then, is the drive of life itself. For the *eros* is not detached admiration for an ideal; it is a passion; nor is it crude instinct, for its object is perfection. Life is the indefatigable pursuit of perfection.

In its character as the impetus of life itself, the *eros* extends into all living things, animals and plants, as well as men. All movement in living things is an expression of the *eros*. Now, what we desire to achieve, we also desire to keep; the *eros* is the impetus to the preservation of values. Plato speaks of "saving" what is mortal (208a). At this point, the emphasis shifts from the *eros* of the ideal to the *eros* of the eternal. Or rather the two desires are joined in one; we have the desire for the endless possession of the good. Yet things in this world are subject to

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decay; all concrete achievement must perish. How, then, can we have enduring possession of achievement? By procreation, whether bodily or psychical. The soul saves itself from death by exteriorizing itself in some objective work. *Eros* leads to creation; for creation is the endeavor of life to persist beyond its own perishing. An inventor survives in his inventions; a statesman in his influence upon the community; a scientist in his discoveries. The love of fame is the love of immortality. Or the soul survives in living children. The instinct of procreation is a variation upon the instinct for self-maintenance; and the sexual impulse is ultimately the *eros* of immortality. It cannot be too strongly stressed that there is nothing *Platonic* about Platonic love; for the *eros* is nothing if not creative.

Creativity is perpetual; the child must die, and to obtain its own survival, it generates another child, and so on forever. To remain a bachelor is to commit an act of impiety; it means violating the demand for the perpetuation of values. The similarity of Plato to Freud is striking. Both agree that love is a fundamental impulse. Both alike construe love in terms other than its obvious expression. And the difference between the two is a regular difference. For Freud, love of the ideal is a sublimation of sex; for Plato, sex is a sublimation of the love of the ideal. But it is not true that Plato conceives love in idealistic terms alone: the *eros* has Plenty as its father, and Poverty as its mother. On the one hand, it is rational love; on the other, it is a primitive impulse, earthy, rough, and squalid, weaving intrigues, shrewd, endowed with the practical intellect of instinct (203d).

Plato states that there is transition within the same individual. In the mind nothing remains the same. Habits, feelings, experiences, beliefs, all pass. Memory is not the persistence of the old, but the substitution of something new for what has gone. The life of the mind is a perpetual perishing and a perpetual renewal, with a similarity of pattern; for, as Plato says, we have on the one hand a passing away and on the other, a birth of something like it (208b). Thus, the *eros* becomes generalized in the mind of Plato into the fact of transition; the *eros* is the aspect of duration; and time is the measured aspect of the *eros*.

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We find the *eros* not only in living things, but in inanimate things too. The *eros* is a stream of life running throughout the whole of nature; all nature is a becoming; all nature is a perpetual coming-to-be and a perpetual perishing, and thus an achievement of eternity in time. Plato's *eros* is not unlike Bergson's *élan vital*. There is, however, a vital difference. The *élan vital* has no fixed goal; it makes its goals and supersedes them; it is solely process. But the *eros* has a fixed goal which is the good; the stream of life is a process of realizing values; the universal process has a significance. We cannot see this significance because we enter, as it were, while the play is on, and leave long before it is over. But were it possible for man to grasp the whole, he would see the great variety of natural processes falling into a pattern. For modern thought, to explain means to relate as cause and effect; but for Plato to explain meant to relate as means and end; and even more, to establish proportions and harmonies between events. Nature, for Plato, has an esthetic significance; the *eros* is the lure of beauty as effective on things.

So far we have seen that the *eros* means (a) life, (b) more life. (c) Finally, it means better life. The *eros* is a factor of intensification in life. Plato depicts the *eros* as an ascent from the love of the body to that of the mind, from the love of the individual to that of the collectivity, from the love of the concrete to that of the abstract. There is inherent in the *eros* a generalizing tendency; the *eros* is an inductive process proceeding from particulars to universals. The culmination of the ascending movement is the vision of beauty, beyond conceptual formulation and beyond art.

Corresponding to the ascent, there is also the fall. In man, in society, in knowledge, we have the alternations of a rise and a fall. In the individual there is the tendency to settle into a rut, into custom and convention. Or instead of the lethargy of custom, there may be the inrush of unbridled passion, deflecting the movement of the soul toward the good. The Greeks were fascinated by the topic of the degeneration of man. Besides the dramatic tragedies there is the history of Thucydides in which is recounted the tragedy of Athens, its grandeur and its fall.

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The fall comes about through insolence and self-attribution of achievement. Not only human nature, but nature at large exhibits alternation. There is a cycle of cosmological epochs in which a period of reign of order is succeeded by an epoch in which the maximum of confusion and chance prevails (*Politicus* 269e-274d). Thus, besides the ascending *eros*, there is also the reverse *eros*, which expresses the downward pull of mechanism. There is the lure of the ideal; there is also the fascination of the receptacle.

III

From the idea of the soul as activity, we will now proceed to that of the soul as a mixture. The *eros* is a μεταξύ, a principle of betweenness. Plato says that desire is neither divine nor human; not divine, because desire implies a deprivation; the gods, who have everything, desire nothing. Not mortal, because total absence of the good would entail absence of desire for it. Neither the completely ignorant nor the completely wise desire the truth. Desire is a demon hovering between heaven and earth. Thus, the *eros* is an intermediary between the two realms, engaged in interpreting the divine to the human, conveying the commands of the ones, and the prayers of the others. The soul is the principle of interpretation in the universe. The metaphysical setting is one of the Limit *vis-a-vis* the Unlimited, of the Patterns and of the Receptacle. Though distinct, they are continually passing into each other. Now, activity consists in just this passage of things into forms, and conversely. We are thus able to make the transition from the notion of activity to that of mixture. The activity of the soul consists in the bringing of diverse elements together; the soul is the principle of relatedness. Becoming is the becoming of relatedness. The soul is the cause of the mixture. By imposing order upon the indefinite, the soul brings about concrete objects. Or it imposes order upon communities and converts them into states. Or it orders its own inner life, and transforms the jungle of conflicting desires into a state of temperance. Or instead of making things, the soul may know them. In knowledge, the soul in-

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roduces order into the manifold of sense, interpreting the sensations in terms of concepts.

The statement that the soul moves itself and moves other things defines a dual capacity for the soul. On the one hand, the soul constitutes an inner city, enjoying its own being for itself. This is the intrinsic essence of the soul, the soul as apart, as abstracted from other things into itself. On the other hand, the soul is in an interplay with the community and its total environment. There is the soul as maintaining itself, and the soul as causing other things. It is this latter aspect which will engage our attention now. What is the transaction by which the soul produces a mixture outside itself? The soul as creative of other things, as imparting motion, illustrates the principle of concern. As Plato says, "all soul has the care of all that is soul-less" (*Phædrus* 246b). In the *Politicus*, Plato gives an analysis of the functions of the soul, which is relevant to our problem. The soul may be engaged in the activity of judgment (*κριτική*), during which it is a pure spectator (260c, d). But in contrast with judgment, we have the activity of commanding for the sake of generation and of production (261b). Thus, command is the aspect of the soul as concern. For example, the calculator passes judgment about numbers and then leaves off; but the architect uses his knowledge of numbers in order to convey to the workmen their proper orders as to how to build a house. However, command is not action; the architect is not a workman (259e). Command is only the first step in production; it is not execution. Thus, we are told that commanding is the prerogative of the king, who does nothing.

Command is a branch of intellectual science, combining as it does wisdom with strength. Command is not unlike practical reason; it is reason as a drive to action; it is the application of judgment and presupposes it. Now, command comes under the general class of persuasion, and persuasion is through speech. In the act of judgment, the soul converses with itself; in persuasion, with others, and by the aid of speech. Speech is the first step in the self-exteriorization of the soul. Speech is flexible, adapting itself to the individual thoughts; yet even speech represents a fall, since no words are wholly adequate to thought.

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From judgment to command; finally from command to execution. This last is the stage of practice—*praxis*, or *ergon*. The soul now functions as a demiourgos, an artisan, a productive agent. *Techne*—art—is knowledge concerning production, and such knowledge cannot be conveyed in abstract formulæ, but “is inherent in practice itself” (258e). Speech is the first step in the self-communication of the soul; production is the second. In command and production taken together, the soul completely expresses its nature as creative of other things. The productive function is divided into two stages. First, there is the stage of creation, in which a concrete mixture is brought about. This is the function of converting what is not into what is. Then there is the stage of management or supervision of what now is.

We have described the transaction by which the soul creates a concrete object. But the more fundamental question is: how is it possible for the soul to act on the body, and in general, to act on the physical world? The answer, given summarily, is that the soul can act on the world because it is continuous with it. The soul can make a mixture because it is a similar mixture itself. The soul operates on the world by the mediation of its body. The body is the vehicle of the soul (*Timæus* 87d). Plato asks the question how the soul operates on the body and answers it by suggesting two alternatives: the soul acts on the body either from without or by inhering in it (*Laws* 899a). And though in this connection he does not choose between the two alternatives, elsewhere he inclines toward the second, namely, toward the conception of the inherence of the soul in the body. In the *Philebus* (33d, 34a), Plato speaks of affections and vibrations which belong to the soul and body *conjointly*. In the case of sense-impressions, feelings of pleasure and pain, and the lower desires, body and soul act as a unit. Man is a composite entity (κοινὸν ζῶον, *Timæus* 89d). We must make the reservation at this point that the union of soul with body is limited to certain psychical functions only, or rather to a certain level of soul, namely the mortal soul. The judging and commanding functions pertain to the soul independently of the body.

Yet granting that the soul operates on the body by virtue of

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its inherence in it, the question still remains as to how it is possible for the soul to act on the body at all, whether it is conjoined with it or not. The question is not raised by Plato; indeed it does not exist for him, as it later did for Descartes, because he does not conceive of soul and body as distinct substances with different attributes. The soul is homogeneous with the body. If the physical body is a mixture, so is the soul. We will consider the problem of the composition of the soul some paragraphs below; at this stage of our discussion it will be sufficient to state that the soul is composed of the indivisible (*i.e.*, the form) and of the divisible, which is identified as bodily. The soul is a mixture of the Limit with the Unlimited, as the body is. The difference between the two is one of degree, not of kind; the soul is a more integrated mixture than the body. It is possible for the soul to act on the mixture only because it is a mixture itself. And as the soul contains a bodily element, so do bodies contain an ideal element; they are wholes organized according to a pattern. Both souls and bodies are motions; the soul a self-determining motion, and the body an externally determined motion. And there is a continuous transition (*μετάβασις*) from the level of psychical to that of physical motion (*Laws* 894a).

In the early dialogues the metaphysical situation is analyzed primarily in terms of the ideas and of the world of opinion. In the later dialogues, the soul is made central. The soul is essential to the picture. The forms are distinct from things; the soul supplies the connecting link between them. The soul is a mediator, a universal activity of interpenetration, drawing the forms to things and actualities to the ideal. In order to be able to mediate between the two realms, the soul must partake of both in its structure. Thus we come to the view that the soul is a mixture. In the first place, in order to produce the blend of the Limit with the Unlimited, the soul must be able to conceive the forms. Thought, however minimal, is a prerequisite to the creative activity. The soul envisages the forms which it imposes on things. There must then be a relevance between soul and ideas. The ideas are innate. In the second place, inasmuch as creation is action upon the receptacle, the soul must

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have an affinity with the latter. The soul—all soul—has a bodily element. The soul is a concrescence of all the elements in the universe; it is a microcosm. Being a mixture, it is an actuality, the basic actuality which is the source of all actualities. The soul is not a form, though it has one; and it is not a body, though it has a bodily part. And since it is an actuality, the soul is a creature. It is the first and best of creatures; at once a creature and the lord of creation. The idea of the soul as an actuality is a richer, more inclusive concept than that either of the forms or of the receptacle. It is a nice question whether the soul is derivative from the Limit and the Unlimited, or whether the latter two are abstractions from the concrete fact which is the soul. Hence we find Plato at times speaking of the soul as a creature and at times as unborn (*Laws* 892c, *Phædrus* 245d). But his more persistent view is that the union of the Limit with the Unlimited is not an ultimate fact, to be accepted from the start, but is one requiring an explanation. God creates the primary mixture which is the soul, and the soul brings about the other mixtures. To sum up, the soul contributes to the metaphysical situation the character of a mediator, of a concrescence, and of a basic actuality.

It may be useful to recount the steps of the preceding argument. We said that psychical activity consists in bringing about the mixture of the Limit with the Unlimited. The next step was the inference that the soul itself is a mixture, causing mixtures. Thus, the soul is an actuality. Finally, we drew the conclusion that since the soul is an actuality, it must be a creature. We will now proceed to elaborate the conceptions of the soul both as a mixture and as a creature. The best account of the soul as a moving mover is to be found in the *Laws*, Book X; the account of the soul as a mixture is given in the *Timæus* (35 ff.). The soul is a blend of the indivisible with the divisible in respect of being, same, and other. What does this mean? To be real is to have being, sameness, and otherness; it is to exist, to be self-identical, and to be other than other things. Now, the soul, too, in so far as it is real, has being, is identical with itself, and is other than other entities. Thus, the statement that God created the soul as a blend of being, same, and other

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means that the soul has the constitutive features of the real, and is a definite entity. But there is a further point to consider. The soul is a blend of the indivisible with the divisible in respect of each of the three features—*i.e.*, being, same, and other. That is to say, it is a blend of indivisible *being* with divisible *being*, of the indivisible *same* with the divisible *same*, of the indivisible *other* with the divisible *other*; and finally, it is a blend of these three blends.

In explaining the above, we may reasonably assume that by the indivisible Plato refers to the realm of forms, and by the divisible to the realm of opinion and the bodily. The forms are indivisible and simple; they are just themselves, while particulars are complex, made up of parts, extended in space and in time. We may sum up by saying that the character of being real is divided both horizontally and vertically; horizontally into the features of being, same, and other, vertically into the indivisible and the divisible. The horizontal division applies to both members of the vertical division; that is to say, particulars, no less than forms, have being, sameness, and otherness. For example, a particular ox exists, preserves its self-identity throughout its various changes, and is other than other oxen, than other animals, than other things. So does a universal have being, is identical with itself, and is other than other forms. Now, let us return to the soul. The soul partakes both of the indivisible and the divisible, of rest and of motion; it is a blend of forms with particulars. This describes, shall we say, its material nature. Formally, on the other hand, it partakes of being, self-identity, and otherness, blending all three. Thus it has the marks of reality.¹

It follows that the soul belongs neither to the realm of forms as such, nor to that of particulars; it occupies a different locus, as the link between the two. Plato states that the soul makes true affirmations concerning both worlds (*Timæus* 37b, c). When it turns toward the world of particulars, the soul declares how, when, and where, a given thing has being, self-

¹In the above discussion, we have followed roughly the construction of the text suggested by Grube (*Plato's Thought*, page 142) and Cornford (*Plato's Cosmology*, pages 59-65).

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identity and otherness, and is related to the environment. When it turns toward the realm of forms, it declares, similarly, the facts of being, sameness and otherness concerning each form. We are justified in concluding that the ability of the soul to form judgments concerning both forms and things arises from its character as a mixture (*a*) of the indivisible with the divisible, and (*b*) of being, same, and other.

The conception of the soul as composed of reason, spirit, and desire is familiar to all students of Plato. But in the above account, Plato has been dealing with the immortal soul of the cosmos, and with the souls of the subordinate gods; in other words, he has been dealing with the nature of *reason* itself. Reason is a blend. The gods of heaven are described in the *Phædrus* (247) as driving a chariot with horses. Reason has a sensuous and a conceptual pole, and the two are inseparable. And more generally, the conception of a blend in which the indivisible controls the divisible seems to anticipate the idea of a self with an identity enduring throughout its various states and holding them together. Finally, this blend is a world-soul; there is, according to Plato, a cosmic consciousness which holds both forms and sensibles in its grasp, and which, being cosmic, embraces these two realms in their totality; in fact, the cosmic consciousness is these two realms in their relatedness. The cosmic soul is, so to speak, the point at which the Limit intersects the Unlimited and at which the forms become active in things.

While Plato describes the soul as composed of reason, spirit, and desire in the *Republic*, he declares it to be simple in the *Phædo*. To avoid the apparent contradiction, it has been suggested that in the *Phædo* Plato is referring to reason alone. But as we have seen, reason too is complex. We will not reach simplicity in the soul by any route which avoids complexity. The soul is a one in a many; it is a holding together of diverse parts in a simple unity; it is both simple and complex. "God mixed the three parts of the soul, and out of them made one" (*Timæus* 35b).

All souls, including reason, are mixtures, creatures, and in that sense, imitations of the forms. In the *Timæus*, Plato is careful to describe how God created the soul in accordance with the

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eternal pattern. The soul is a concrete actuality; it is part of nature and does not belong to the intelligible realm. It is a creature, not an underived entity like God or the Limit. It is the oldest of all creatures and the best, and the ruler of them all (*Laws* 899c, *Timæus* 34c). Thus, the soul occupies the highest rank in all the hierarchy of mixtures, and is nearest to and most like to the realm of forms. It is that first junction of ideal and sensible realms—the initial concrescence, which is the parent of all other concrescences. Thus, there is no difference between souls and bodies in respect of constituent elements. Nor is there a difference between the various parts of the soul in this respect. Reason is no less a mixture than spirit and desire; reason has a sensuous and an affective phase. It is an *eros* of the truth and the energy to pursue it as well as perceptiveness and retentiveness. Plato denies that one soul can be more or less of a soul than another (*Phædo* 93b); they all are self-moving and all are mixtures of the same constituents.

But within the general framework of the soul and body as mixtures and of the various parts of the soul as complexes, there are important distinctions. Souls are self-moving; bodies are not. Moreover, bodies are altogether too complex to form stable unities; "they are fastened together with numerous pegs, invisible for smallness" (*Timæus* 43a). There is, then, a difference in respect of type of organization, and the difference exists as between soul and soul, too. There are mixtures which are firm and those which are not. In the former, the indivisible predominates over the divisible; in the latter it does not, and the divisible, taking the upper hand, may dissolve the mixture. Reason is a compact mixture and indissoluble. But there are other souls, such as spirit and desire, in which the sensuous aspect is not completely integrated by the principle of identity, in which there is lurking disorder that may break the mixture into its elements. Like the lower souls and bodies, reason includes the receptacle as a component; but unlike them, reason is a blend in which the irregular powers of the receptacle have been tamed and ordered.

Within the framework of the essential cleavage of souls into immortal and mortal, into stable and unstable mixtures, into

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complete and incomplete concretions, there are other less fundamental classifications. In the *Timæus* (40a), Plato recounts four levels of soul: those of the stars; another, the winged kind which traverses the air; thirdly, the class which inhabits the waters; and fourthly, that which goes on foot on dry land. A second classification is that into reason, spirit, desire, and mere vital activity—ultimately reducing into the rational, the animal, and the plant souls. Compare this with the hierarchy in the *Sophist* (248e) which consists of motion, life, soul, and mind. In this last, probably, motion stands for the irregular motion in the receptacle, life for vital activity without cognition (*i.e.*, self-preservation and reproduction), soul for desire and spirit, and mind for the rational soul. In such classifications we should avoid certain possible confusions. That a soul is vegetative does not mean that it is found in plants only. Men, too, have the functions of self-maintenance and reproduction; men are plants and animals as well as men. And this brings us to our next point. There are compositions of the various levels of soul into unities. There are mixtures of mixtures, wholes of wholes. Man is a composite of soul and body; also his soul is a composite of reason, spirit, desire. But such composites are dissoluble; such mixtures are not stable.

There is one final and important distinction, however, to be noted between souls in general, and bodies in general (at least bodies in the realm of opinion). Both are creatures; but the soul is a creature which is also a creative factor. We have seen that Plato calls the soul the lord of creation; the soul is the source of motion in all the created world. On the other hand, bodies are moved, but do not initiate motion. The situation may therefore be summed up as follows. The sum total of being is divided into two groups: first, the group of the creative factors, second, the group of the creatures. Again, the group of the creatures is subdivided into two classes, higher and lower; the higher consists of creatures which are also creative, namely the souls; the lower of entities which are merely creatures. Thus, we get three grades of being: (*a*) creative factors which are not creatures, (*b*) entities which are both creative factors and creatures, and (*c*) creatures which are not creative factors; these last are

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the bodies in the world of opinion. If we may describe universals as creatures, then we can say that the world of creatures—formal, psychical, and bodily, exhausts the realm of discourse. Beyond this world, at either end, stand the creative factors, which are ineffable; there is the good which is beyond conceptual knowledge, and the receptacle which is known as in a dream.

It has often been assumed that, for Plato, motion and form are conceptions directly opposed to each other. This is because motion has been identified with flux; to move is to *change* and so not to *be*. But movement may be orderly; this is the motion of reason which proceeds according to a pattern, namely the circle, the fairest of all shapes. Thus, though to move is not to be, motion conceived as a complete stretch may exemplify a form. Regular motion is motion according to a formula; it has a shape; it is a mixture of the unlimited with the limit. Thus, time, which is a motion, is an image of eternity. And the motion of reason is the closest imitation of the realm of forms that is possible. The students of Plato have sometimes mistakenly opposed motion to form because they have ignored the fact of soul, and especially of the rational soul. The rational soul is the principle of measured motion. "And when the Father that engendered the cosmos perceived it in motion and alive, a thing of joy to the eternal gods, he rejoiced" (*Timæus* 37c). Now, God would not take unqualified joy at the coming into being of something which, by its nature, was unintelligible.

To the student of Plato, the conception of the soul presents itself as the most important of all the ideas in his philosophy. It is true, the soul is not ultimate; it is not one of the primary creative factors. But just because it is derived, it is a more complex fact than the ultimate factors, which are simple. The soul is the most concrete of all creatures; in the soul, all the various strands of the universe intersect, and meet, and disperse. The soul is the togetherness of all things, of the Limit with the Unlimited, the mental with the physical, forms with flux. The soul is the channel through which God transmits his activity into the receptacle, and through which the receptacle is ordered according to the ideal pattern. In the soul there is the movement away

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from things toward the good, and the movement toward the world of opinion.

The conception of the soul is that of activity as the basic fact of experience. Now, the most obvious fact of experience is becoming. Yet because so obvious, it is unnoticed. Common sense is primarily struck by the variety of things in their variety of qualities. Thus, common sense regards becoming as adjectival, and speaks of matter in motion. But such a construction of experience leaves an unsolved difficulty; there is the co-existence of two unrelated facts, of matter and of motion. Why should matter move? So, enlightened common sense, in its materialistic form, tries to explain change away. Change is redistribution; decay is the separation, and growth the composition of atoms. But thrown out from the door, change re-enters from the window. Redistribution itself is change. Moreover, transition remains; in becoming, the future becomes real. Passage cannot be redistribution, for the future is genuinely new. The matter of the next moment is new matter. Passage is creation.

Plato therefore starts with the concept of motion as genuinely real; not as adjectival and not as reducible to other terms of experience. We have the fact of change throughout the world of experience; nature is history. The essence of the empirical world is transition, temporality. Plato says that motion is self-generating. But this is no more than a restatement of the proposition that motion is an ultimate fact, not reducible to anything else in experience. There is a tendency to motion. Also, Plato says that motion is everlasting. This, too, is a tautology, since time is the measure of motion.

Now movement is not simply movement; it is movement in a direction. In fact, movement is unintelligible except in a direction. Thus motion has a form; becoming is the becoming of something, namely, of the good; the world of experience is a field for the realization of values. This is evident in human nature which is purposive living; less evident, but equally real in animal and plant life, both of which are efforts at achievement and maintenance. Further, the whole universe of experience is a teleological process. But there is also movement in the reverse direction; as there is growth, there is also decay; there is not

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only becoming, but also passing away. But the tendency to die is counteracted by the tendency to live; what is lost is restored. The movement of nature is cyclical.

There are particular centers of motion, and there is a universal motion, of which the former are phases. And the universal motion is conscious, apprehending the end for which it strives. The conscious *eros* is primary, lapsing into unconsciousness in its particularized phases.

This motion in a direction, as a real and independent fact, is the soul. By the term soul, Plato is enabled to bring together all the facts and phases of motion. Now the world of experience is not self-contained; it must be explained in terms other than those of experience. Thus, from the soul we proceed to the ultimate creative factors. God is the efficient cause of the soul. The soul is the primary fact of experience, the explanation of which requires the transempirical factors of the eternal God, the eternal pattern, and the eternal receptacle. The temporal is a creature of the timeless. The soul, then, shares the derivativeness characteristic of all empirical things. The soul, because partaking of the divisible, is not really real. At this point, however, we are confronted with the fundamental ambiguity in Plato's thought. On the one hand, we have the doctrine that the really real is the completely intelligible; on the other, the doctrine that it is the completely intelligible along with the less intelligible. The second doctrine issues from the principle of plenitude according to which perfection consists of the most perfect together with all other degrees of perfection. Plato says in the *Sophist* (249b) that motion is completely real; that motion and moving things are realities. The primary metaphysical situation must be, then, held to consist not of the creative factors alone, but of the creative factors along with the creatures—of the timeless with the temporal. The real is a complex being with a pole of rest, on the one hand, and a pole of motion on the other. The forms are entertained by mind; and mind moves according to a pattern. We can say that the whole is self-activity according to a fixed rule, or, alternately, that it consists of the pattern energized by the soul. The soul must have a fixed character and identity in order to exist at all; thus motion without rest would

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be nothing at all. And conversely, what is merely at rest is a mere potentiality. The upshot of our argument is that the soul is completely real, in the sense that it is a component of what is completely real.²

²It may be convenient to bring together the conception of the soul as creative, with the other notions of creativity presented in the earlier chapters. We have said, for instance, that the receptacle is motion, and also that the good is power; finally, in the present chapter, we have described the soul as the principle of change. The puzzled reader will be justified in asking whether motion has one source or many. Now, the soul, since it is a creature, derives all its properties (including motion) from the more ultimate creative factors, namely from the receptacle and from the good. The receptacle is the factor of irregular, undirected motion; the good is power in the sense that it is the final cause of motion; thus, the good supplies motion with a goal. The soul is the blend of the two; it is measurable motion. The ambiguity may be therefore clarified as follows. Motion as a concrete fact within experience must be identified with the soul. But motion as a fact to be explained must be referred to the receptacle and to the good.

CHAPTER V

GOD

IN approaching the topic of the Platonic God, the reader is baffled by the very considerable vagueness of the discussions in the dialogues. The atmosphere is that of myth and allegory, when the actual form of the discussion is not. Not only is it difficult to understand what Plato means by God; it is difficult to ascertain whether he takes the concept of God seriously—whether he really believes in the existence of God. The question is whether the term God may not be an allegorical rendering of the idea of the Good. Undoubtedly Plato is religious; undoubtedly Plato believes in the reality of the realm of forms. Shall we say that his religion is the emotional grasping of the realm of forms, and that the term God is a symbolic rendering of that emotional response? In short, may not his theology be poetry simply; and is not the student of Plato justified in concluding that the objectively real is nothing less and nothing more than the realm of the ideas?

Or even if we grant a place to the conception of God in Plato's ontology, we are still hard put to explain what he intends to convey by the term. The language of Plato is that of popular Greek religion; it is fluid and indefinite. He speaks of God, of gods, of demons, of souls; he even refers to the cosmos on its material as well as on its psychical side, as a god (*Timæus* 34b, 40d). The word God is employed by Plato to refer both to the moved and to the mover indiscriminately. Also, the account is inconsistent. Whereas in the *Laws* we are told that there is an evil god in addition to the good god—an evil god who is the cause of the evil in the world—in the *Politicus* we are expressly warned against ascribing the evil in the world to the operation of an independent, evil god.

And to the extent that the theological terms could be assigned definite meanings, it might still be true that what Plato means

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by God is very different from what we mean by that term. I am now referring to the Christian tradition. The danger is that those of us who have been brought up in the latter may find ourselves using the word God in a very confused way, should we assimilate Plato's usage with our own. Perhaps the word God, in *any* context, is vague; perhaps the God of the Christian tradition is not one, but many different gods. But in so far as the Christian God is a supernatural being, personal, good, one, it may be argued that he is a being different from Plato's God. Plato's theology is tinged with polytheism; he speaks of gods no less than of God, and the references to demons are frequent in his writings. Furthermore, his gods seem to be nothing more than natural forces; for instance, to every star there is assigned a ruling god, whose function is to move it. Thus, his gods would seem to be elements of nature, the principles of motion in things, as is true of the gods in all animistic, pantheistic religions. And in so far as the gods are natural forces, they are not only several in number; they are morally indifferent; some are good and some are evil; their essence is to originate motion, and not to be either good or bad.

Such are some of the questions with which the student of the Platonic God is assailed from the outset. The position of the writer, stated dogmatically in advance of the more elaborate exposition, is as follows. Plato believes in the reality of God; that is to say, God is a part, not merely of his religion, but also of his metaphysics. Rather should we say that Plato's religion is a constitutive element in his metaphysics. Plato, we have said, is religious; and religious insight is a form of knowledge—not poetry. The object of religious experience is not merely subjective; it is a factor in the ontological situation. Furthermore, the conception of God is reached by the rational as well as by the religious route. Plato is faced with the task of explaining the phenomenal world; he observes that nature proceeds according to a pattern, and so he posits the realm of forms. But for a complete explanation of nature, the realm of forms is not sufficient, though it is necessary. We must assume a principle of activity which brings about the embodiment of the realm of forms in nature. God is the active cause of nature, while the patterns are the formal

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cause. Thus, God is one of the creative factors, along with the idea of the good and the receptacle.

As for the content of Plato's theology, we shall say that although Plato starts with Greek animism and polytheism and naturalism, he makes significant departures from these. The contribution of Plato to Greek religion is his criticism of it. His relation to popular Greek religion might be compared to that of the Jewish prophets to popular Jewish religion. But the analogy fails because Plato, while doing justice to religious values, proceeds to rationalize religious insight and make it a component part of a philosophy. Plato finds the many gods of mythology and proceeds to organize them under one supreme God who creates the subordinate gods and demons. He takes the non-moral Olympian gods and replaces them with a God whose nature is to be good. Nevertheless, there are evil things in the universe, perhaps evil gods; but none of these is co-ordinate with the supreme God; they all belong to the realm of creation and give rise to the familiar problem of natural evil existing in a world created by a morally perfect God. And though the created gods are natural forces, the Supreme God is not; he is the creator of all natural forces and transcends them.

Nor is it true that to refer both to the Platonic and the Christian God by the same name is to use the term in two meanings. After all, the Christian tradition is partly the creature of Platonism. Plato's God is endowed with moral perfection. He is not explicitly conceived as a person, it is true; nevertheless, he is a God of loving care for the world, and a God who takes sides in the moral conflict. Perhaps what will help most toward a just appraisal of Plato's contribution to the idea of God is the understanding of the fact that his reflections are not worked-out conclusions, but trends—away from popular Greek thought to something new. The vagueness is not the consequence of an absence of reflection; it comes from his having achieved a novel insight, which, not being adequately grasped, is unclear. The idea of God in Plato's mind is not made but in the making, moving, as it does, away from Greek polytheism toward the doctrine of a benign and spiritual God. God is an artificer and a demiurge; he is also a shepherd and a father.

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There is an increasing emphasis upon the idea of God as Plato proceeds from the earlier to the later dialogues. This is not to say that the idea of God does not appear in the former; on the contrary, the references to God are plentiful. Nevertheless, the preponderance of metaphysical weight is in favor of the realm of ideas. But in the *Politicus*, the *Philebus*, the *Timæus*, and the *Laws*, God is treated as a metaphysical factor with a distinctive contribution to the whole situation. Again, this is not to say that in the later dialogues the doctrine of ideas is abandoned. It is true that the theory of a separate realm of forms is criticized in the *Parmenides*; but so is the idea of a separate God criticized in the same connection (135d, e). Moreover, the moral of the criticism in the *Parmenides* is that a restatement—not an abandonment—of the doctrine of ideas is called for. But, more clearly than in the earlier dialogues, Plato makes it appear in his later works that the realm of forms is only one of the causes of the world of generation, and that, by itself, it is unable to account for the existence of concrete things.

The demonstration of the existence of God rests on the fact that the natural state of affairs requires an explanation in terms other than itself. (a) There is order in the world: the rhythm of the seasons, the revolutions of the stars, the cycle of generation and decay, and the like, which cannot be explained by chance, as the atomists claim; these facts presuppose the operation of intelligence. This is the familiar argument from design, conceived by Plato in a rather naïve fashion. The world exhibits a teleological process, a ceaseless tendency to realize the good. Now, of course, there is an objective realm of patterns, and an objective principle of the good. But these do not by themselves account for their exemplification in nature. It is necessary to posit a mind which, by grasping the structure of abstract order, impresses it upon things. This, at any rate, is the doctrine of the later dialogues, and especially of the *Timæus*. In the *Republic*, we are told that the good is the cause of all things; such a statement seems to imply that the good is not only a principle of value but also a power, an efficient as well as a final cause. In the *Timæus*, however, the efficient is differentiated from the final cause, God from the principle of the best. It is assumed

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that a creative force is required which will energize the pattern, just as an artificer is required to produce an actual copy of a model. And among the earlier dialogues, the *Phædo*, in which the doctrine of ideas is so prominent, affirms the need of Mind as an explanatory cause.

(*b*) The first argument proceeds from the character of the world as orderly, the second from the very actuality of the world as requiring a supernatural cause. The world is a becoming, and "it is impossible for anything to attain becoming without a cause" (*Timæus* 28a). In other words, becoming is the passage from not-being to being; this passage cannot be the work of the event itself, since it is not there to bring itself about. Therefore becoming is due to a cause which is not itself a becoming. The requirement of a cause applies not only to individual instances of becoming, but to the entire cosmos conceived as a process of becoming. Nature is a passage from not-being to being, and requires a cause. The argument applies not only to bodies but to souls as well. The soul, reason itself, are members of the temporal order no less than bodies are, and point to a cause beyond themselves.

To sum up the above, nature is created, and God is the efficient cause of creation. He is the cause both of the happening of the world and of its order; he is a maker and a designer; he is a creative intelligence (*διανοίας φηούσης*, *Sophist* 265c). We may say of him either that he is an intelligence which is creative, or a creator who is intelligent; in short, he combines the function of power with that of rationality; he is a purposive cause. And as the creator of the temporal world, he is timeless and ungenerated.

(*c*) Plato says that it is a task enough to find God; and, having found him, it is impossible to declare him to everybody (*Timæus* 28c). There is the finding, and there is the declaring; the first is insight, the second is conceptual elaboration and rational argument. The proofs we have been citing are rational arguments; they are declarations of an insight already possessed. This is knowledge as descent. It is true that reasoning may also be the process of ascending up to first principles; argument is sometimes the validation of a hypothesis by its conformity to

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empirical data. But such reasoning yields results that are only probable; and Plato is certain of the reality of God. We are therefore led to the conclusion that, in his proofs of God, Plato is setting forth an insight, had independently of the proofs. On recurring occasions he refers in the dialogues to divine intervention. The evidence for God rests on a personal religious experience; this is the final proof. Yet because it is personal, it is private. Plato hints at it, but does not discuss it. His dialogues are public "declarations"; and there the emphasis is on the rational proofs.

We may analyze Plato's views of God into two parts; the divine nature, and the divine activity. The second follows from the first; yet, for pedagogical reasons, we will begin with the second. Then, having discussed the divine activity in creating and ruling the world, we will proceed to the exposition of the divine nature as revealed in that activity. What is the motive of creation? This question has been a thorn in the side of many religious philosophies. They start with the conception that God is complete and therefore perfect; now if God possesses everything, why should he create a world at all? On the one hand, we have the statement that everything is completely realized; on the other, that the world is added, a statement which implies that there is something unrealized. If God is complete, he does not require a world; but since he does make a world, he must require one, and therefore is not complete. Thus, the problem is how to reconcile completeness with the creative function in God. Spinoza had to solve the same problem, as it was generated by his own premises; and in the end, he solved it by denying or, at any rate, minimizing the reality of the modes. In the history of thought it has proved easier to proceed from the modes to substance than to lead back from substance to the modes.

By a bold stroke, Plato derives creativity from the completeness which would seem to exclude it. God is creative because he is a complete being, and he could not be creative unless he were complete. Usually, action arises from lack, and is a process of fulfilling a need. I make a tool because I use it to provide what I lack. But there is another type of productive action which arises from abundance, not from deficiency. God, being perfect,

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is envious of nothing; and he desires that everything should be as much like him as possible. This is the love which passes into creative activity; this love issues from strength, not from weakness. The lower *eros* is an appetite; it is a mixture of being with not-being; ultimately, it is selfish. I love the tool for the benefit I derive from it. In the *Timæus*, Plato considers the divine *eros*, though not by that name, which has no admixture of not-being. Such love respects the objects to which it is addressed. Only a complete being can love truly, without self-reference, for, being complete, it seeks nothing from the object it loves; only a complete being can transcend itself and enter into a genuine relation with other things.

The explanation of God's creative activity as arising from his completeness is paralleled by the doctrine of the good as plenitude, whereby the good is conceived as the most perfect together with all the degrees of imperfection. God is "this-worldly"; the world of opinion is not in opposition to his nature, since it is the outflow of his perfection. It is important to note that here Plato is not abandoning the doctrine of the *Phædo* and of the other early dialogues; he is only drawing different conclusions from that doctrine. From the proposition that God and the realm of ideas are really real, in the earlier dialogues Plato was inclined to draw the conclusion that there is an opposition between the intelligible world and that of opinion. In the *Timæus*, from the same premise he draws the conclusion that the two worlds are harmonious. The world of opinion is a revelation of the divine perfection; it is not a thwarting of the really real. God's completeness is not diminished by the fact that he imparts himself to the world, for "he abides in his own proper state" (*Timæus* 42e). "And when the Father that engendered it (the cosmos), perceived it in motion and alive, he rejoiced" (*Timæus* 37c). God perceives in the world an image of his own perfection. Correspondingly, the *eros* is a stream flowing from either direction: (a) from the creature to the creator, from the mortal to the immortal; (b) from the creator to the creature, from the perfect to the imperfect.

Ordinarily, in speaking of creation we mean total creation: the bringing about of something when there was nothing at all.

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But God's creativity, according to Plato, is not *ex nihilo*; it is like the productive activity of an artisan or a sculptor, working over their materials respectively. In creating the world, God is operating upon something which he has not created, namely, the timeless receptacle; creation is transformation. And the transformation consists in the introduction of order into chaos; it is the directing of the powers and motions of the receptacle so that they will work for the best.

Thus, the whole world is a product of two causes, reason and necessity; and a complete account of creation must include reference to the operation of the "errant" cause (48a). The latter is a passive cause, the former an active cause. God is responsible for the world only up to a point; he is limited by the potentialities of the receptacle; and the world is as good as possible under the circumstances. Thus, God is not omnipotent. God is the author only of the good in the world, not of the evil; and there is much more evil than good in the world. The evil is the result of the passive cause. God is limited, even frustrated, by the resistance of the receptacle. We are told that the gods wage an undying warfare against evil (*Laws* 906a); thus, evil is a *fact for* God, which he finds; it is a power because it resists him; and it is everlasting, since the battle is endless. God is faced by the enduring resistance of an independent factor; and in creation, he has to make the best of it.

Neither does God create the pattern by which he transforms the material. The pattern is timeless. Hence Plato describes creation as a process of mixing; there is the pattern, and there is the receptacle; there is the Finite, and there is the Infinite. God's activity consists in mixing the two together; the only novel fact in creation is the *presence* of the pattern in the receptacle. God is the efficient cause of creation, and only that; he is not its material cause and not its formal cause. Plato's God is finite in the sense that he does not constitute the totality of things. God is a being constituted by not-being. There are factors "other" than God; namely, the receptacle and the ideal pattern, both of them uncreated and timeless. And correspondingly, God's power is limited; he is only one among a group of causes.

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The conclusion of the above may be summed up negatively as follows: (a) God is not an absolute creator; (b) God is not infinite. We have said that creation consists in the act of bringing together pre-existing factors such as the Finite and the Infinite. The notion of creation must be diluted further still. God creates time in the same act whereby he creates the world; time is, in fact, the aspect of measured motion, and therefore an abstraction from the cosmos. There is no time before creation. How then can we speak of creation at a time? And since time and the cosmos are aspects of one and the same fact, the cosmos is everlasting. Therefore, it would seem that the world was not created at all.

To this difficult problem we have to grope for our own answer, since Plato does not consider the problem. It might be argued that before time and the world were created, there was undifferentiated flux which is the latent time in the receptacle. Yet this does not enable us to speak of creation at a time, just because, being undifferentiated, such time has no before and after; it is not time as an ordered series. Actual time arises from the implanting of measure upon the flux. Thus we cannot say that the world has a beginning *in* time; there was no moment "before" creation. Nevertheless, it does not follow that there is no creation in any sense, and that the world is co-ordinate with God (though such an interpretation is not wholly incompatible with Plato's statements). The world depends on God; he is the creator of the world in the sense that the world is in a timeless dependence on God. God is the cause, and the world is the effect; that is to say, the world is an everlasting revelation of God. God is the principle necessary to account for the relatedness of the ideal pattern to the receptacle.

There is the divine providence as well as the divine creation. God is the continuing cause of creation. In fact, the two are the same if we are right in our statement that the world is an everlasting revelation of God. Thus, the cosmos endures because God wills that it should (*Timæus* 41a). God cares for the least equally as for the greatest of his creatures; he lavishes attention on the minutest details of the cosmos. Plato compares the gods to commanders of armies, to physicians, or to farmers (*Laws* 906a).

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Providence is a manifestation in the divine nature of the metaphysical principle of concern (πρόνοια, ἐπιμέλεια). The philosopher must serve as a king; and in general, the superior in the scale of being has the care of what is inferior. In his discussion of the virtues, Plato asserts that temperance is a duty both for the inferior and the superior, both for the ruler and the ruled. Thus, temperance is the principle which integrates a graded community into a whole (*Republic* 431e, 432a). The question arises whether we can regard temperance as a virtue for the gods as well as for man. Plato states that the difference between the divine king and the human king is greater than the difference between the latter and his subjects (*Politicus* 275a, b); yet, he adds, in another connection, that we are justified in using the small as an example by the help of which to enlighten ourselves concerning the nature of the great (*Politicus* 285d). We would not therefore be going too far in holding temperance to be a virtue for the gods, and in speaking of a divine concern for the creation.

We cannot be too careful not to be misled by the familiar associations of words. Divine providence, in the Christian tradition, is concern of a person for a person. But according to Plato, we are possessions of the gods, and they are bound to take good care of us, just as a man manages his property well, because he does not want to lose it. And yet it would be wrong to reduce the divine providence to self-interest. God's love is genuine and without envy; it is disinterested. Plato's doctrine of the divine concern is not crystallized; it hovers between the idea of prudential love and that of disinterested love; and on the whole, Plato's mind is moving in the direction of the latter. We can, at any rate, establish that Plato's God is different from that of Aristotle. Far from being indifferent to the world, Plato's God observes the world, is aware of it in its details as well as in its general character, cherishes it, works on it. In various passages, Plato hints at divine intervention, as for example when he is considering the chances of the salvation of the world from its present degradation (*Republic* 499c; *Parmenides* 134e).

According to Plato, the perfect ruler does not govern by law, because laws are general, making no allowances for individual

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variations; he judges every individual case on its merits. He rules by reason and not by law. Now Plato also maintains that God rules by reason; and if we use the principles of human government as an analogy for the divine, we may say that divine providence is the relation of God to the individual as an individual, and a government of nature, not according to general formulæ, but with regard to the peculiarities of the individual event.

The providential character of God must be qualified by the divine indifference. There is the divine immanence and also the divine transcendence, the relational as against the intrinsic essence of God. In the myth of the *Politicus*, there is the curious story of God as sojourning in the world and ruling it, and then as absenting himself from it and abandoning its care. God is represented as an owner who on occasions acts as an absentee landlord. When God is absent, the world is left to its own resources and gradually deteriorates. Thus, the duality of God's nature is paralleled by a duality in the state of the world. Nature passes through the alternate phases of operation according to general laws, and of individual spontaneity and variety.

Obviously, we are here dealing with allegories, and it would be rash to make dogmatic assertions. But the idea of a rhythm of cosmological epochs is not foreign to the pre-Socratic philosophers, and there is no reason to think that Plato did not believe in it. It would seem then that nature does not operate continuously according to general laws. There is a cosmological epoch characterized by the personal immanent rule of God. This is succeeded by an age of divine abstention during which nature lapses into mechanism and routine. So, when the statesman goes away, he leaves written instructions with his subjects; these instructions, being written, are rigid, and cannot take account of the changes in circumstances. Then the statesman returns and overrides the written rules. There is divine interposition on critical occasions. Thus, the cycle is finally completed by the restoration of divine providence and the beginning of an epoch in which nature recovers her spontaneity and variety.

Plato's employment of the conception of persuasion is of the utmost significance in the analysis of the relation of God to

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creation. Creation is an operation by God upon the receptacle. This operation is not an act of brute force but of persuasion. The receptacle is won over to the divine purpose; chaos submits to the lure of the ideal. Nature as an orderly process is a result of the power exercised by the intelligible pattern upon necessity—a power which issues solely from its perfection. God does not override the receptacle, nor does he set about destroying its powers; he converts them to his purposes and uses them. Thus, there is the co-operation of necessity with reason in creation. Similarly, divine rule is mediated by persuasion. God acts like the philosopher-king, not like a tyrant. His is government by the consent of the ruled. Necessity is *voluntarily* persuaded by reason. God further restrains himself in his control of the destinies of the soul. He appoints for it its general pattern; but the form of its individual character depends on the soul's own choice (*Laws* 904c). Plato's conception of God is strongly in contrast with the Oriental conception patterned after the omnipotent despot. For Plato, God is not omnipotent; and he does not coerce the world; God is a moral force.

With reference to the conduct of human affairs by men, Plato is jealously insistent on two points. First, he objects to democratic equality and affirms the need of a hierarchical organization of society. Second, he objects to exploitation of the ruled by the rulers and holds that the rulers should respect and serve the ruled. The analogy from the human ruler to God would not be too far-fetched. God is benevolent, and he respects the creature.

The analogy with the conduct of human affairs may be developed further. The concept of persuasion runs throughout Plato's reflections, not merely on cosmology, but also on education, politics, and medical attention as well. The wise legislator does not contemplate imposing laws on the public by a fiat; he introduces them with a preamble in which he explains the reasons necessitating the laws, and thus convinces the public of their justice. The wise teacher relies on persuasion (*Republic* 548b). As for the relation of doctor to patient, we will quote Plato's own words: "You are also aware that, as the sick men in the cities comprise both slaves and free men, the slaves are

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usually doctored by slaves, who either run round the town or wait in their surgeries; and not one of these doctors either gives or receives any account of the several ailments of the various domestics, but prescribes for each what he deems right from experience, just as though he had exact knowledge, and with the assurance of an autocrat; then up he jumps and off he rushes to another sick domestic, and thus he relieves his master in his attendance on the sick. But the free-born doctor is mainly engaged in visiting and treating the ailments of free men, and he does so by investigating them from the commencement and according to the course of nature; he talks with the patient himself and with his friends, and thus both learns himself from the sufferers and imparts instruction to them, so far as possible; and he gives no prescription until he has gained the patient's consent, and only then, while securing the patient's continued docility by *persuasion*, does he complete the task of restoring him to health" (*Laws* 720c, d). Thus, the doctor secures the patient's docility by persuasion; and thus does necessity submit voluntarily to the divine behest.

God's bearing toward the cosmos is like that of an understanding parent who reasons with the child, explaining why a certain rule should be obeyed. God governs by a moral appeal, and by reason; his government is free. Yet it would be perhaps wrong to interpret Plato as excluding the use of coercion. The point is not clear. While discussing the form of government suitable to man, Plato makes the point that whether a polity is based on consent is not as important as whether it is based on science. The essential is to get the right thing done; if by persuasion all the better; if not, then anyhow (*Politicus* 293a). Scientific method in government is the prime consideration. Thus, we should say that for Plato, force is at the behest of reason, or that reason is backed by force. The ideal is the union of reason with power.

We will now consider the nature of the world created by God. The cosmos is divisible in several different respects. (a) There is the whole and there are the parts. The world is an organic system in which the parts are subordinated to the whole. Every part contributes to the perfection of the whole, and to

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its preservation (*Laws* 903b, 905b). (b) The world contains souls and bodies; the souls are active, the bodies passive. (c) The world consists of immortal and mortal creatures; this division not being the same as that into souls and bodies. There are souls which are mortal—for example, the spirited and appetitive souls; and there are bodies which are immortal, as, for instance, the stars (*Timæus* 38c, 40b). There are souls which are earthly and bodies which are celestial. The immortal creatures—whether psychical or bodily—are as perfect an imitation of the ideal pattern as possible, considering the fact that they include the principle of the divisible in their composition.

Creation is determined by the impulse of self-reproduction. God wishes that everything should be like him as far as possible. The creature is an image (μίμημα) of the creator; the creature reflects the perfection of the creator, though in a diluted degree. As the creator is self-sufficient and complete, so is the creature. As the creator is a cause, so is the creature; God creates gods. The creator transmits his creative power to the creature, which in turn reproduces itself. Thus, we have both a creature and a creator in the second degree: an image of an image. As the cosmos is a whole, so are its parts wholes. The principle of self-representation yields a series of creatures in a descending order, in which the members function as causes and rulers for those next lower to them in grade. This series has a limit; there is a last creature. Whether the series consists of an infinite number of members is not clear; probably not, inasmuch as, for Plato, infinity is synonymous with indefiniteness, and the series is a copy of the intelligible pattern. The generation of the cosmos in all its detail is a process of self-mirroring in which the creator mirrors himself in the creature, the creature in another creature, and so forth, until we reach the last member of the series.

With the creature having been invested with creative power, the distinction between what is and what is not a god becomes blurred. The creature, too, is a god, since it is a creator. Thus we have both God and gods (θεός, θεοί); Plato speaks of the Supreme God (μέγιστος δαίμων) and of the gods who share the rule with him (*Politicus* 272e). Thus, there are many gods. And as the gods are children of God, so are there lesser

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divinities which are children of the gods (*Timæus* 40d, e). Thus, there are God, gods, and demons.

The gods form a hierarchy, from the best God to the least god; the series corresponds to the gradation of perfection in the good. Each god has his appropriate status, with the lower subordinated to the higher (*Phædrus* 247a). In the *Epistles* (323d), Plato speaks of the Lord and Father of the Ruler and the Cause; the latter must be an intermediary creator immediately derived from the supreme creator. It is quite possible he is referring to the world-soul; the world-soul is a created god and must be distinguished from the demiurge. Further, Plato uses two words for the Supreme God: *theos* and *demiourgos*. Probably the first refers to God as enjoying his own perfection, and the latter to God in his relation to the world. The hierarchy of gods descends to spirits which might be termed evil, if it is to include all grades. For Plato is apt to call the mortal soul evil, though it is demanded by the scheme of perfection.

The Supreme God participates in the creation of the best part of the cosmos only—namely, its immortal part (*Timæus* 41c), and turns over the task of creating mortal things to the lesser gods. The hierarchy of the gods corresponds to the hierarchy of the creatures. Moreover, God supervises the whole revolution of the cosmos, whereas the gods are apportioned particular regions within the whole, over which regions they have independent authority (*Politicus* 271d). In sum, God has control over the whole and over the best, the gods over the parts and over the less good.

The difference between the notions of god and of creature, minimal in some respects, is very important in others. God is fundamentally contrasted with the gods. He is a creator who is uncreated; he is an absolutely original cause. The gods are created creators. God is timeless, the gods are temporal; God is eternal, the gods are everlasting. The gods are mixtures of the indivisible with the divisible; they are impure and partake of the refractory element. God is simple and pure.

The Platonic teaching of a multiplicity of gods is puzzling, not to say forbidding to the casual reader. It would seem that

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Plato has simply incorporated Greek mythology and its naïve identification of natural forces with divinities into his general doctrine. Or perhaps he is employing familiar, popular terminology for the value of its emotional association, without taking its content seriously. The present writer holds that the matter is not so simple. As always, Plato takes his start from tradition, from common sense, and from immediacy; but whatever he takes over, he transforms. Plato rationalized Greek polytheism into the metaphysical doctrine of the One and the Many. The conception of the inferior gods with their specified regions of authority establishes the fact that the divine rule is particularized. So, in the just city, there are specific skills and functions by which the plan of the whole is executed. In the universe, there is the general ruling energy, and there are the specific ruling energies; there is attention to detail as well as to the whole, and the attention is a particular attention. The gods are intermediaries between the Supreme God and the world; as in every relationship, here too, for Plato, there is a link (μεταξύ) between the terms in a relation. In knowledge, we should never descend immediately from the one to the many (*Philebus* 16c, ff.), but go step by step, from genus to species, to subspecies, and so on till we reach the indivisible species. This is a principle not only of thought but of being as well. So we proceed from God to the world not immediately but via the intermediary gods and demons. The hierarchy of the gods is a particular application of the general principle of hierarchy which pervades all things—e.g., the forms, the *eros*, the virtues, political institutions, knowledge. Thus, though Plato's polytheism may have been suggested to him by popular religion, it is a deduction from his general standpoint, according to which the One is diversified into a Many, arranged in a graded order. In order to be intelligible, an entity must be a structure, analyzable into elements in a relationship. The divine principle is a complex organic region of divine agencies in mutual interplay. The plurality does not abolish the unity; it only renders it intelligible, since a bare One is nothing. The plurality is organized according to the principle of degrees of perfection and power, such that the totality of subordinate gods

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executes the command of the Supreme God. In fact, they *are*, probably, the Supreme God in his aspect as a diversity of energies. Thus, it would be wrong to construe the doctrine of the intermediate gods as implying that the Supreme God is completely transcendent, indifferent to and unconcerned with the world. The heralds transmit the orders of the king; so do the gods carry out the general plan of God. God works with the gods in the world, as the commander of an army works with his staff. On the other hand, it is true that the Supreme God does not immediately operate in the world. God is not transcendent in a sense which would mean that he is without concern for the world; God *is* transcendent in the sense that this concern is rendered effective in respect of particular details by the use of intermediaries.

We are now prepared to discuss God's nature, of which we have received intimations from our study of his works. Souls and all mortal things are incomplete, forever striving. God is complete and there is no becoming in him. Hence God is outside time. God is in the best state in every respect; he is without deficiency with regard to beauty and excellence. Whereas other beings might realize completely a nature of limited perfection, God realizes completely a complete perfection.¹ Lacking nothing, he is independent and self-sufficient. Without any admixture from the nature of the "other," he is simple and "pure"; that is to say, he has a definite nature, being just what he is. Purity, self-sufficiency, completeness, timelessness—these are the traits of the really real. God is absolutely real (*Republic* 380d-381d).

God both enjoys his being and imparts it; his own completeness leads him to communicate himself to lesser things. Thus, perfection leads to power; the intrinsic nature of God demands that he concern himself with other things. Now, God's perfection is moral. In God there is no envy and no injustice; he is as righteous as can be (*Theætetus* 176c), and he contains all virtue (*Laws*, 900d, 902c). There is absolute exclusion of evil from

¹Cf. *Laws* 901b-e, 902e, 903b, in which it is argued that God is all-wise, all-good, and cares for the whole.

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God. This is the fundamental determination of God, which is also his fundamental limitation—that he is good. Being good, he cannot be held responsible for the evil in the world; he is not the cause of everything.

What is, then, the cause of evil in the world? There are various suggestions in Plato, covering every usual solution to the problem. (a) Evil is unreal; that is to say, things are unreal to the extent that they are evil. (b) The character of evil is only an appearance in things. All things are really good; the appearance of evil arises from our failure to perceive the whole scheme of things (*Laws* 903c). (c) Evil is due to the operation of the errant cause, that is, the receptacle. This is the solution of the *Timæus*. (d) In the *Politicus*, evil is explained by the absence of God from the world, whereby the world takes charge of its destiny (274a). With God absent, the world is given over to fate and innate desire (272e), to the bodily element, of which it partakes (273b), to its primeval condition of disorder (273c). Thus, according to the *Politicus*, evil is an innate tendency in the cosmos. (e) In the *Theætetus*, we are told “that it is impossible that evils should be done away with, for there must always be something opposed to the good” (176a). We are further told that “two patterns are set up in the world, the divine, which is most blessed, and the godless, which is most wretched” (176e). Here we have the suggestion that there is a form of evil which is set against the form of the good. (f) In the *Philebus*, the hint is thrown out of an independent cause of separation, in addition to God, who is the cause of the mixture (23d); and (g) in the *Laws*, this hint is elaborated into the doctrine of two separate gods, the one the cause of the good, and the other, the cause of the evil in the world.

Our concern is not specifically with the problem of evil, but with the question whether the explanation of evil necessitates the hypothesis of an evil principle set over against God. In short, is Plato a theological dualist? The answers just recounted to the problem of evil can be regrouped under common headings. First, there are the theories which, in one way or another, deny

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the reality of evil.² We will ignore these theories at this juncture. On the other hand, the doctrines of the *Timæus* and the *Politicus* reduce to one and the same. According to the latter, the world lapses into evil in the absence of God, because the world is infected with desire, with the bodily element, with the element of disorder. This is necessity, the errant cause of the *Timæus*. The world contains evil, because the world partakes of the receptacle. The solutions of the *Theætetus*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws* come together under another common heading, in the sense that they agree in referring evil to an independent principle acting according to an evil pattern. Thus, we have essentially two solutions: evil consists in confusion and results from a neutral cause; or evil is a form and actual evil results from an evil cause. We are thus left with two theories which, in their literal expression, are mutually incompatible; yet each of these receives emphatic support from Plato. "Is it one soul or several that controls all things?" he asks in the *Laws* (896e); and adds: "I will answer for you—several. Anyhow, let us assume at least two, the beneficent soul and that which is capable of effecting results of the opposite kind." And later on (897d), he calls the latter the evil soul. But the assertion in the *Politicus* is no less emphatic that "we must not say that two divinities opposed to one another turn the universe. . . . The only alternative is that the universe is guided at one time by an extrinsic divine cause, and at another time it is left to itself and then moves by its own motion" (270a).

Now, of course, it is nothing unusual for Plato to present mutually opposing views in different dialogues or even in one and the same dialogue; yet the doctrine of two absolute principles, one good, one bad, is so out of harmony with the general trend of his thought, that the student should exhaust every possibility of interpreting the doctrine in other terms, before he accepts the statements in the *Laws* at their face value. We will contend that the evil cause is not co-ordinate with God; that, in fact, it is not essentially evil; in short, that it is one of the subordinate gods created by the Supreme God according to the

²See pp. 67 ff.

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scheme of perfection. In *Timæus* 29a, Plato speaks of God as the best of all causes; thus, there are other causes, less good, perhaps evil. He also inquires whether God created the world according to an eternal or to a created pattern (28a, b). Here the alternative to an ideal pattern is a pattern that has been created. The hypothesis suggests itself that the causes which do not come under the category of the best are created causes. Also, the godless pattern of the *Theætetus* need not be coördinate with the eternal pattern; it may be precisely the created pattern mentioned in the *Timæus*. Thus we need assume neither a primordial principle of evil nor a primordial pattern of evil. The created pattern is the resulting form of created things; it is empirical as against ideal form. We know that, according to Plato, the existing objects do not reproduce exactly their intended natures. They strive for the ideal, but inevitably fall short of it. The actual form of the oligarchical man represents a thwarting of his ideal nature; and the form of the tyrannical soul is a godless pattern.

And so with the godless, evil cause. God creates subordinate causes, such as the mortal souls. Now, the mortal souls are liable to dissolution; they include a principle of confusion; they may be overpowered by pleasure or fear, and thus, forgetting their real end, may lapse into sin (*ἀμαρτία*). Yet their creation is part of the divine plan to realize plenitude. The mortal souls represent a lower degree of perfection. The tyrant is not created by God to be a tyrant; yet he is so created that he can lapse into the pattern of a tyrant. The essential point is that complexes which include the "divisible element" are part of the scheme of creation; thus, liability to evil is entailed in the ideal pattern, which includes the least as well as the most perfect.

Following the analogy of the mortal souls, we may say that the created gods, too, who are mixtures of the divisible with the indivisible, are, in the lower reaches of the scale, liable to upset their own equilibrium, to be dominated by the divisible, in short, to be overcome by passion; they may become frenzied and cause irregular motions. The evil god of the *Laws*, we suggest, is like the tyrant—a ruler who is also a slave; he is a divine soul, who, like many human souls, has been led astray by un-

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natural desire into disorderly activity. If this hypothesis be correct, we do not need to deny the existence of an evil cause. It is real, but it is not co-ordinate with the Supreme God, having been created by him. The evil cause is not primordial, nor is there an eternal form of evil.

In the above analysis, the explanation adopted as valid for all the dialogues is the one indicated in the *Timæus*. The cause of evil is the receptacle, which is a principle of confusion, wedded neither to good nor to evil. So we return to the account in the *Politicus*, according to which evil is not due to an independent cause, but to the inherent disorder in the world, arising from the fact that God chose to employ the powers in the receptacle in the creation of the world.

If we sum up the above, we may say that God has a moral nature; also he is an intelligence, since he contemplates the forms (*Phædrus*, 247d). Both his goodness and his intelligence are self-communicative. God not only envisages and loves the good; he utilizes the envisagement in order to create a world. Thus, God is goodness and intelligence in action; he is teleological activity.

Goodness, intelligence, activity—these are all traits of mind. Moreover, God is a father and loving to his children, gentle, and using persuasion instead of compulsion. Also he rules by reason, not by law; he takes account of individual differences. Such a relation is that of person to person. It is not suggested that Plato conceived God in terms of personality. For example, there is no trace of the idea of freedom of choice in Plato's account of God. But we do suggest that Plato's account of God contains the germs of the idea of a divine personality, germs which came to maturity in Christian thought—also germs which were suppressed by Christian thought. The idea of a loving father was emphasized in later developments; but the conception of a God who uses persuasion instead of coercion towards his creatures was often overlooked by later thinkers, in their zeal to emphasize the omnipotence of God at all costs.⁸ In Christianity, the idea of God was developed so as to include the trait of personality; but in the process, it lost the trait of power

⁸See A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, pp. 213 ff.

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through persuasion. God became omnipotent and all-creative, and, as such, responsible somehow for evil. Thus the radical distinction between good and evil was blurred.

A further aspect indicative of God's personality is his finitude. God is finite; he is limited by the receptacle and by his own creatures; also the mortal souls deviate from the divine plan through the disintegrating operation of the receptacle. God is not omnipotent; he "is not the cause of all things" (*Republic* 380c). Plato limits the power of God in order to preserve his goodness; God's activity is both enhanced and thwarted by the receptacle. In this fashion, Plato also establishes the definiteness of God. God is contrasted with the world. Spinoza's substance is an absolute which absorbs the modes and is absorbed by them. Plato's position is different; he departs from the Parmenidean doctrine according to which the universe is an undifferentiated unity. For Plato, the metaphysical situation is complex, analyzable into component elements; the world has its own self-identity and so has God. Thus, God is an intelligible being.

It may be objected that a God who is finite is not God, that is to say, he has no title to religious adoration. But religion takes various forms and so does perfection. There is the perfection of infinite affirmation, which Spinoza claims for substance; this is the perfection of all-comprehensiveness. Correspondingly, there is the religion of mysticism which is directed toward an all-encompassing divine being. But there is also moral perfection, the perfection of a self-sufficient being which is completely realized, without any internal lack, with no internal obstruction. This is intensive perfection. Correspondingly, there is a rational form of religion concerned primarily with the preservation of moral values and the absolute distinction of good from bad.

Moreover, a finite definite being may sustain relationships because it allows the existence of other things. Plato's God does not absorb the world; therefore a genuine communion between God and the world is possible. In short, the creation of the world follows from God's goodness; and the possibility of a divine communion with the world follows from God's finitude. In Plato's philosophy we have neither the Epicurean doctrine of the divine aloofness nor the pantheistic doctrine which assimi-

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lates the world to God. The world and God are distinct (cf. *Politicus* 270a, with its reference to an *extrinsic* divine cause); therefore the two can be together. Perhaps the best way in which to describe the relation of God to the world is to say that he is "with" the world, or present in it. God is a friend to man and an enemy to evil. Since God is finite, the conflict with evil is real. And since the receptacle is unchanging and timeless, the conflict with evil is everlasting. God takes sides in a battle of which the outcome is not a foreordained victory for his side.

Thus, God is a completely good intelligence, working in the world with man and against evil. Also God takes account of his creatures in their individual capacity. Here are ideas which, as we said above, contain hints of the conception of personality. But now we must turn to another set of considerations which, on the surface at least, are out of harmony with what we have just said. They are considerations which indicate a nature in God wholly transcending the world and its traits. God is not a soul. The soul is change and the principle of change, but "self-sameness and perpetual changelessness belong to the divinest things of all" (*Politicus* 269d). The world-soul is everlasting but God is timeless.⁴ The soul is a creature, not an original principle; even in its highest form—reason—it is part of the created world. The soul is a mixture, whereas God is pure. The soul includes an admixture of the divisible element; it is the principle of identity manifesting itself in time and in sense. In God there is no trace of anything but the highest perfection. It is true that Plato sometimes speaks of gods and souls interchangeably, especially in *Laws* X; but presumably there he is referring to the created gods, whereas we are now concerned with the Supreme God.

It would therefore seem that God transcends reason, and soul, and activity, and is a being from whom reason, soul, and activity emanate. They are his creatures and cannot be part of him. Thus, the very same considerations which led us to conceive of God as an intelligence concerned with the world and acting in it, lead us to the opposite conclusion of an absolutely transcendent God. This last is, in fact, the construction which

⁴In the *Timæus*, the demiurge and the world-soul are distinct.

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the Neo-Platonic school has placed on the Platonic doctrine of God. The writer cannot accept this construction as adequate. Against the view that God is neither mind nor soul, we must set the statement that "motion, life, soul, and mind are present in the completely real" (*Sophist* 248e); and we have already seen that God is completely real. There are several references to divine reason which cannot be easily dismissed as references to the subordinate gods. We are told that mind is the greatest of causes (*Timæus* 76d); that creation is a consequence of the *logos* and *dianoia* of God (38c). Creation is necessarily an act of intelligence, since the Supreme God in creating the cosmos *envisages* the eternal pattern (29a), and such envisagement is a cognitive act. Thus, cognition is presupposed in the act whereby the world-soul was created. God is a mind creating mind. We have said a few paragraphs above, that God cannot be a mind because he creates mind. But this argument can also be reversed: since God can create mind, he must be a mind. Moreover, God's intelligence is turned in two directions; it contemplates the forms by themselves, and it gazes at the created sensible world (*Laws* 901d).

Besides envisagement, creation involves an activity of joining the "indivisible" with the "divisible"; this is the operation of will (*βούλησις*, *Laws* 967a). This act results in the creation of the soul which is the principle of all activity. Thus, divine activity is creative of psychical, temporal activity. God, then, is both thought and action, reason and will; he is both philosopher and king (*Phædrus* 252e). Plato speaks of the *dianoia* of *boulesis*, that is to say, the intelligence of the will arriving at the realization of the good (*Laws* 967a). Thus, God may be described as reason under the authority of the good will, or as will executing the plans conceived by reason.

Should not, however, the functions of reason and *boule* in God be conceived as radically other than psychical? Psychical activities are durations; now time is a creature of God, who is timeless. Are we therefore driven to the conception of a timeless intelligence in God engaged in timeless acts? But the idea of a timeless activity is not easy to formulate without contradiction. Probably we should seek a solution in another direction.

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There are in God two phases, one transcendent, one immanent. In respect of his intrinsic nature, God is simple, at rest, timeless; in respect of his relational nature, God is a motion and a soul. In respect of his enjoyment of his own perfection, God transcends mind, *boule*, psyche; in respect of his relevance to creation, God is motion and activity. Now, should the reader object that this solution, no less than the preceding one, contains a contradiction, it may be said in reply that this contradiction is pervasive in Plato's thought. The contrast between the intrinsic and the relational phases of the really real arises from the dual nature of the real—on the one hand, as something for itself, and, on the other, as power.

Another difficult question is that concerning the relation of God to the forms; and no answer can be made which is not tinged with doubt. God is not a form, since he uses the forms in creating a world. Nor are the forms to be assimilated to God; God finds the forms and gazes at them. There is mutual objectivity as between God and the forms; the efficient and formal causes are distinct from each other. There is the well-known passage in the *Republic* which proclaims the good as the source of being and truth; here the good is said to be all-comprehensive and probably inclusive of God. But such a passage must be set against other passages which imply that God, too, is all-comprehensive. We have the statement that God is the demiurge of the Limit and the Unlimited (*Philebus* 27b), and the statement that God is the measure of all things (*Laws* 716c): here God seems to absorb the function of the forms. None of these passages should be taken literally; Plato is apt occasionally to erect one or another of the metaphysical factors into an absolute. When he is dealing with a particular creative factor he is inclined to ignore the others.

Perhaps one's position in this matter is determined by one's general position concerning Plato. To the writer it seems that Plato's whole bent is anti-monistic; Plato's mind is sensitive to the complexity of the cosmos as disclosing a plurality of phases. The world is a manifold which cannot be reduced to any one category. In the ultimate resort there remain the factor of activity and that of pattern. These are coördinate; we can main-

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tain neither that God is an image of the forms, nor that the forms are ideas in the mind of God. This is the sense in which they are mutually independent. But though irreducible each to the other, they may both be regarded as abstractions from one ultimate complex fact of patterned activity.

We should guard ourselves with the reflection that, with respect to the divine nature, rational accounts are bound to be inadequate. The intellect is analytical and concepts abrupt; one meaning excludes another. The nature of God evades exact conceptual formulation. Thus even the phrase itself, the nature of God, is apt to be misleading. Religion grasps its objects concretely, symbolically, through myth. Thus the content of religion is to be found in its lore, in the detailed stories concerning saints and devils, and in the grand cosmological symbols. Theology is the conceptual elaboration of myth; and such elaboration is necessary but always incomplete. Plato is religious rather than theological. His apprehension of God is direct and imaginative, and the medium by which he conveys that apprehension is myth. Now myth is not synonymous with fancy; myth is the apprehension of fact by means of a concrete presentation rather than by an abstract idea. To ask whether Plato believed the myths as true is perhaps unfair, even irrelevant; it is to expect that the religious attitude may be reduced to the terms of the intellectual attitude. Myth is not doctrine; and if myth is only the image of truth, this is no less true of doctrine. Myth is the matrix for analysis, not an analytical statement. It is the potency of diverse and sometimes contradictory concepts. In this chapter we have attempted to elicit a doctrine out of Plato's myth, and naturally we have found that God embraces a variety of traits not always consistent with one another. The myth is richer than the doctrine; thus, inevitably our account falls short of the experience which it purports to disclose. However, symbolic knowledge is unsatisfactory unless somehow used as a ground for doctrine; a myth is insight, and also it is a nest of problems.

In formulating his own view of God, Plato joins issue with both the religious and the anti-religious camps. Against the doctrine of the latter that the world is the product of material forces

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acting by chance, he maintains that mind is a ruler over all things. His warfare against the religious camp is even more intense. Plato will have none of the capriciousness with which the Homeric stories endow the gods. God is a rational being who works according to a plan. God is not arbitrary; the perfect king who dispenses with laws nevertheless rules by reason. Plato strongly condemns the immoralities ascribed to the gods in popular lore; in God there is no evil, no lying, no licentiousness, no pettiness. Plato lifts the anthropomorphic God to a level above human vices and limitations, and the God who is a personification of natural forces to a supernatural level. While proclaiming the transcendence of God over nature, Plato nevertheless endows God with a concern for the world and with traits which contain the germs of a personality. Plato effects this transformation of popular religion while remaining within the framework of Greek mentality, with its values of formal definiteness, moderation, and freedom.

In the complexity of the Platonic doctrine, with its fusion of the ideas of transcendence and of immanence, of finitude, of moral perfection, and of rationality, the ensuing religious schools found a rich storehouse from which to replenish themselves. The conception of a righteous God joined the very similar Hebrew tradition; the ideas of immanence and transcendence have proved fruitful seeds either separately or jointly for later religious growths; and not only have all the intimations of personality been made explicit in the Christian doctrine, but the conception of personality itself has been enriched by the conception of the freedom of choice. Other phases of the Platonic doctrine have been neglected, notably the idea of a finite God using persuasion in his dealings with his creatures and battling against evil. That, nevertheless, these phases represent enduring insights is suggested by the fact that in recent times the doctrine of a finite God has been resurrected and is operative in religious as well as in philosophical thought.

PART II
REALITY

CHAPTER VI

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IT MAY be not inaccurately maintained that Plato's metaphysics is one persistent inquiry into the really real. Things are not what they appear to be; the mind is faced with the contrast between appearance and reality. Plato's endeavor is to uncover the reality of things concealed by their appearance; his quest is sternly ontological. In order to guide himself in this inquiry, Plato undertakes to construct a standard of what is real, by which to measure the claims of whatever presents itself as real. And so his philosophy is critical in its outcome; it refuses to accept common sense at its face value, but judges, rejects and modifies it.

We must remember that Plato is performing an explorer's task; the concept of reality had not yet been successfully isolated (though the Pythagoreans and Parmenides had advanced the work considerably); the words to express it had not yet been invented. Therefore, we find Plato struggling with a variety of approaches, and trying a variety of formulations. It is difficult to know how far the complexity in formulation represents a complexity in doctrine, and how far it is simply a restatement of one and the same idea in a diversity of formulations. Perhaps both. Also, Plato had to make his terms as he went along; the technical vocabulary was inadequate or non-existent; consequently, he resorted to colloquial expressions in order to convey highly abstract conceptions. Though the really real is the topic of most of the dialogues, it receives outstanding treatment in the *Phædo* and the *Sophist*, and it is to these dialogues that our discussion will refer most often.

In the chapters comprising Part II we will consider two topics: (*a*) what it is to be real. This is the problem of the standard of the really real. (*b*) What are the entities that conform to this standard. In taking up the first of these topics, we

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will make the point that being is indefinable; but we will proceed to show that, although being is indefinable, it has certain essential traits which may serve as its criteria. As we will see, these traits are conveniently summed up in the following three notions: selfhood, otherness, and relatedness. After dwelling on these criteria in some detail, we will proceed to the second topic and seek out the entities that conform to the standard set up. This will lead us to an inquiry into the nature of forms and things.

Plato seeks to find out the standard of the completely real, the entirely real, the really real, the integrally real (*Republic* 477a, 478d, 479d; *Philebus* 59d). These are all equivalent expressions for him, and to grasp their meaning, we must remind ourselves of Plato's doctrine that the world of opinion lies midway between the real and the unreal. The concrete world is a mixture of being and not-being; it is neither purely real, nor purely unreal. Now, in speaking of that which is completely or really real, Plato is excluding the type of reality met with in the world of opinion; he is calling attention to what has no admixture of not-being. In the same way, the entirely unreal has no admixture of being. By the various adverbial qualifications of the adjective "real," Plato seeks to abstract altogether the condition of reality from that of unreality, and obtain it in a pure state, so to speak.

In discussing this abstract standard of reality, we must eliminate ambiguity in the usage of words. The words reality or being may mean either that which is, or the character which pertains to that which is, in respect of the fact that it is. In order to keep our terms clear we will take the liberty of borrowing from Mr. Cornford his term "realness" to convey this character.¹ That realness is a character or predicate Plato seems to assume; thus, he speaks of attributing (*προσάπτειν*) being to things (*Sophist* 251d), and says that being, more than any of the universal characters, belongs to all things (*Theætetus* 186a). A large part of the *Sophist* is devoted by Plato to the demonstration of the proposition that realness is indefinable.

¹See Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 248.

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His method is negative; he shows that those philosophers who have undertaken to define realness have failed to do so. We will give a summary of his argument in the ensuing paragraphs.

First—Plato says—there is the *exact* school of philosophers, divided into the pluralists and the monists. The pluralists talk of war among the elements and then of friendship among them, resulting in marriage and children which are brought up. Among the pluralists there is the *strenuous* school of philosophers who insist that enmity and friendship occur simultaneously all the time; but the *gentler* school holds that combination and separation occur at successive epochs, such that sometimes the all is one and friendly, and at other times it is at variance with itself by reason of some internal strife. There is however another principle of division among the pluralists. There are those who hold that the elements which combine into units and are derived from it are infinite, and there is another school who maintain that there is a finite number of elements that combine and separate.

Of this last school there are more especially the dualists, who say that the world consists of the hot and the cold, the wet and the dry, which mingle and separate. Addressing himself to these dualists, Plato asks: "Come now all you who say that hot and cold or any two such principles are the all, what is this that you attribute to both of them when you say that both and each are? What are we to understand by this 'being' of yours?" Plato poses the following alternatives to the dualists. (*a*) Either being is other than each of the two principles; and then the all is three and not two any longer; (*b*) or being is identical with one of the two principles, say the hot, and then the cold has no being, in which case the world is reduced to a unity; (*c*) or finally, being is identical with the two of them together, in which case the two are one; namely, the hot and the cold form a unity together. Thus a dualistic doctrine is either driven to the view that being is over and above the two principles—a category in which they participate; in which case, being has remained indefinable; or it is reduced to some form of monism.

Consider now the monistic school. (*a*) The monists maintain that being is one; but if so there are two things, being and unity. You have two names, each of which has a definite and distinct

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meaning. "It is ridiculous to maintain that two names exist, when you assert that there is nothing but unity." (*b*) Then there is the specific point that being is named. Now to admit the existence of a name for being is to contradict the monistic position. For either the name is other than the object—and then there would be two things, the name and the object; or the name is identical with the object, in which case we have two alternatives: the name names nothing, or if it does name something, it is the name of itself and hence the name of a name, and of nothing else.

The point of Plato's argument may be explained as follows. The monist qualifies being (as one) and utters it in speech (gives it a name). In so far as the monist enters into description and discourse, he ceases being a monist, for he has articulated being. Thus being breaks up into many. The consistent monist is condemned to be a mystic—not to speak and not to think—in short, he is forced to abandon monism as a *doctrine*.

Plato confronts the monist with another dilemma. Is being a whole or not? Suppose we say that being is a whole; since the whole is a unity of parts, in asserting that being is a whole, we are attributing unity to being, in which case—since the attribute is other than that of which it is attributed—we would have both being and unity, and would contradict our monism. Here we have the same problem as before, namely that to qualify being is to add to it. But if, taking the other alternative, we deny that being is a whole (while affirming that the whole exists) it turns out that being is deprived of something that is, and so we contradict ourselves. Moreover, the all becomes more than the one, since being and the whole have, each, their own nature.

But the consistent monist may deny that wholeness as a unity of parts exists. Should he do so, however, Plato points out that he would be denying the existence of the world of generation and of definite quantity. (*a*) Whatever is generated always comes into being as a whole. Unless we admit the existence of wholeness, we fail to include becoming among the members of the realm of being. (*b*) Also, without wholeness there cannot be definite quantity; for quantity is a totality. Plato's objections in this connection do not in any way constitute an internal refu-

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tation of monism; what they do achieve is to prove that the monist is compelled to ignore important contributions of experience. That Plato should criticize Parmenides on the ground that monism fails to do justice to the world of becoming is worthy of particular notice; his attitude here confirms what we have noted earlier (p. 97), that, according to Plato, the world of motion is real.²

Plato's discussion of the tenets of the monistic school is highly formalistic and seems to lose itself in a sea of words. But it must be remembered that the monists too defended their standpoint by formal arguments, and Plato is meeting them on their own ground. And the essential point that Plato is trying to make is once more this: that the monist is reduced to silence and to the abandonment of thought. Monism simply is not a theory of being; thus, being has been explained no more by the monists than by the dualists. To sum up, the dualists are wrong, because when you reduce the real to two things, you are driven to the question, what is the genus which includes the two, and is therefore prior to either; and the monists are wrong, because as soon as they speak, they articulate being, divide it and multiply it, and thus contradict themselves. Plato's conclusion is that the problem of being is as perplexing as that of not-being; and his great master Parmenides has made himself ridiculous by his contention that whereas not-being is unthinkable, being is something we have a clear idea about. We have convicted ourselves of ignorance; formerly we thought we knew what being is, but now we are perplexed.

Plato next moves on to the consideration of another pair of schools of philosophy, the materialistic and the idealistic (friends of ideas); these philosophers are less exact than the others but they raise a more important issue, and the battle between them is a battle of giants. The materialists who define everything as body are a savage lot, dragging everything from heaven to earth, grasping rocks and trees with their hands; but the idealists are more restrained. In engaging the materialists in a contro-

²Cf. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 220 ff., and A. Diès, *Le Sophiste*, pp. 348 ff. I have been indebted to both of these works for the preceding analysis.

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versy, we will first try to tame these savages, or at least pretend that they have been tamed; and then we will put the following considerations before them. The materialist (probably representing the school of the atomists) reduces everything to the visible. But, then, he includes the soul among existing things, construing it perhaps as an atom or a collection of atoms; and souls may be good or not good, just or unjust, etc. But a soul can be just only by the presence of justice in it, and justice is not something visible. Thus the premises of the materialist lead to the inference that something incorporeal exists; the materialist must say that being is both corporeal and incorporeal, and he is in the same position as the dualist who reduces being to the hot and the cold. Since being consists of two classes *which are*, being must be other than both.

To put the same result in other words, a materialist cannot be merely a materialist. The materialist reduces the world to a collection of concrete particles; but the particles have properties, and properties are not particles. The materialist, however, may deny that atoms have properties; he may reduce the world to particles without color, taste, odor and the like. Plato does not consider this alternative. But the answer seems plain that (*a*) by such a denial the materialist would be abandoning his professedly empirical position; and (*b*) what is more important, his position in any case would force him to ascribe *some* qualities to his particles, namely, diversity, corporeality, and being. In its final analysis, materialism cannot be a truly metaphysical doctrine; it is a theory concerning the character of things that partake of being; it is not a theory of being itself.

The friends of the ideas (who are a "peaceful folk") reduce everything to the unseen; they deny reality to the corporeal, which they identify with the world of generation. The issue here is somewhat shifted; it becomes the problem of whether realness should be defined as rest or as motion. The ideas are at rest, always unchanging and the same, whereas corporeal things partake of generation. Now, we have seen that the materialist must admit the reality of forms which are static; but it is also true that the idealistic school must admit the reality of motion. After all, the friends of the ideas must admit that

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the ideas are capable of being known; for it is indeed monstrous to exclude mind and knowledge from the completely real. Now, knowing is an activity, and if knowing exists, motion exists. This argument is valid against the position not only of the friends of the forms (who, after a fashion, are pluralists) but of the monists as well. Both schools must grant the existence of something other than rest, namely, life, motion, soul.

The existence of knowledge is crucial in the demonstration that both motion and rest are real. Knowledge arises in a mind. Now, we have seen that mind is active; therefore the completely real is not immovable (*ἀκίνητον*). Yet there could be no mind if all being were reducible to motion. Mind has a certain sameness of quality and relationship; it has an unchanging nature; it is what it is. Also, knowledge is what it is. Thus, mind partakes of rest as well. The materialists who would reduce everything to flux would deny rest, and with it mind and knowledge as well. But to any one who denies the existence of knowledge, we would point out emphatically that he thereby convicts himself of inconsistency; while doing away with knowledge, he is maintaining his position with the aid of dogmatic assertions.

In short, both idealism and materialism fall before the undeniable fact of the knowing mind; the idealist leaves out the aspect of motion in knowledge, and the materialist makes no place for its aspect of rest. We are therefore driven to the view that being is both rest and motion; and we are back where we started. Motion and rest both partake of being, and therefore being is distinct from them. "Inasmuch as you consider both rest and motion as comprised under being, you conceive of being as a third element, over and above the other two." Thus, being is not reducible to the world of generation, nor to the realm of forms.

Those commentators who have construed the above statement to mean that Plato has abandoned the theory of the forms have missed the point of his argument. Plato is not denying the reality of the forms. He is, in fact, saying that the forms have being; and since, he argues, being is an attribute of the forms, it is something other than they. The forms are exemplifications of

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being—in fact, its completest exemplifications; but they are not being itself. Now since the notion of being is prior to that of the forms, Plato's philosophy cannot be summed up in the theory of the forms. The realm of forms occupies a subordinate position in the metaphysical situation, and is a derivative of being, same, other, etc. In studying the forms we are concerning ourselves with the real but not with the ultimate. Being is beyond any one of its exemplifications; therefore any doctrine which defines being in terms of any specific being, be it process or form, is inadequate. On the one hand, there are doctrines concerning the nature of things that have being; on the other, there is the doctrine concerning being itself; and the former must not be confused with the latter. Materialism and idealism belong to the first group; and so do monism and pluralism. Being is outside their purview; and if they go beyond their limits and claim to define being, they are false.

Plato treats the subject of power simultaneously with that of motion and rest. In fact, power, in the end, reduces to motion; nevertheless, it will be found preferable to treat power as a separate topic. Plato offers the definition of realness as power, as a means of reconciling materialism with idealism on a more basic ground. "Being is the presence of the power to act or be acted upon." Otherwise expressed, realness is the power of causal interaction—and more generally perhaps—of interrelation. Now, the materialists admit the presence of interaction among generated things; and the idealists must admit it, although they would not. For ideas are knowable by a mind, and therefore capable of being acted upon. Thus, the presence of power is the common denominator in the realness of ideas and things respectively. Yet no sooner does Plato set up the definition of realness as power, than he overthrows it. Immediately after his discussion of power he says: "My dear fellow, don't you see that we are now densely ignorant about it (being), but think that we are saying something worth while?" (249e). And then he moves on to further proposed definitions of being. Realness cannot be summed up in power alone, if power be taken to mean causal interaction; realness entails fixity as well. If now, correcting ourselves, we go on to define realness in terms

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of both power and fixity, we are plunged into all the difficulties of dualism; we are in the same predicament as those who define being as hot and cold (249e). Hot and cold, power and fixity, processes and states, forms and things—all these fail as defining elements of realness, for they themselves are. Being cannot be defined in terms of the entities which it constitutes.

To recapitulate, the order of investigation is as follows. Plato begins with the "exact" school, who conceive the issue in formal terms: monism *vs.* pluralism. The monist says too much, the pluralist too little; the monist differentiates being, and the pluralist leaves it out. Then Plato considers the inexact school, who formulate the issue in more concrete terms, and divide into the two antithetical camps of materialists *vs.* idealists. Plato's objection to the inexact doctrines is that they are incomplete; also that, by the very fact that they are definite, they do not attain being as such. Beneath the issue of materialism *vs.* idealism lie deeper questions: whether realness is to be construed in terms of motion or rest, of relatedness or its absence. Plato answers all these questions in the negative; the proposals they involve commit the fallacy of defining being through its exemplifications.

Thus, the search into the nature of realness ends in the blank answer that being is indefinable. What Parmenides held of not-being might well be applied by us to Plato's being: being is being and nothing may be said of it. And this view coincides with a large body of philosophical tradition; when we affirm of something that it is, or exists, or is real, what we ascribe to it is not further analyzable. However, it is not quite clear that Plato adheres to this view. It is true, indeed, that Plato goes through the definitions which other thinkers had proposed of realness and finds them wanting, but this is not the same as affirming that being is incapable of *any* definition. Perhaps he is trying his old trick on his readers of reducing them to bewilderment; in fact, he so much as hints that he is doing precisely that (249e). Perhaps, then, we should limit ourselves to the simple statement that Plato has left being undefined in the *Sophist*.

But we are unable to accept this view. Granting that he does

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not explicitly assert that being is indefinable, the whole trend of the discussion points to that conclusion. In his extremely abstract and rigorous discussion in the *Sophist* (254d, ff.) he makes the point repeatedly that realness is not the same as identity, otherness, or any other of the greatest kinds; his aim presumably being to demonstrate that each of the categorial notions is distinct from each other, having its own irreducible nature. The ultimate notions are atomic, so to speak, and constitute a plurality: e.g., being, unity, diversity, and so forth. This does not mean that they are unrelated, for nothing exists in isolation. The ultimate natures are mutually interrelated, excluding or including each other; but in order to be capable of entering into relations, they must possess their own intrinsic being.

There is, however, the further consideration that Plato in the *Republic* (Book VI) suggests the reduction of realness to goodness. The good is the source of being; being is an exemplification of goodness; being is worth. In the *Sophist*, he ignores the problem of the relevance of the good to being, altogether. The question as to whether the good defines being or not is one of the large, unsolved—or rather, ambiguously solved—problems in Plato's philosophy. It is the question whether the good is one of the greatest kinds and co-ordinate with them, or whether it includes them, as a class includes its members.³

To repeat, the upshot of the inquiry in the *Sophist* is that realness is indefinable. Is metaphysics, then, to be restricted to affirming the tautology that being is being, and is all fruitfulness to be denied to descriptive or analytical investigation? Not necessarily. Though realness be indefinable, it is open to the philosopher still to ask: what is the nature of the things which partake of realness, what groupings do they form, are they temporal or timeless, particulars or universals—and such similar questions. In short, the philosopher must solve the problem of what the entities are which conform to the standard of the really real. And, before embarking on this inquiry, he may also study the nature of the necessary and sufficient conditions

³For example, in the *Theaetetus* (186a) the good is cited as co-ordinate with being.

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of being, such that if any entity partakes of these conditions, it has realness, and conversely. These conditions do not define being, but they characterize it; we have therefore called them *traits of realness*. In seeking to identify these traits, it will not be sufficient for our purpose to study Plato's explicit statements (as, for instance, in the *Timæus* and the *Sophist*); we must also attend to what he conveys by implication in other passages. In describing the manner of the soul's composition (*Timæus* 35a) Plato refers to the indivisible, the divisible, being, same, and other. In the *Sophist* (255b, ff.) he includes under the list of the highest kinds, being, same, other, rest, motion. Elsewhere, in the same dialogue, he refers to unity and wholeness. The list in the *Theætetus* (185) comprises being, not-being, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and otherness, unity and plurality, beauty and ugliness, good and bad. These various groupings are not consistent with one another, and it is clear that Plato had not constructed a systematic account of the traits of realness. We will proceed to construct one for ourselves, on the basis not only of these lists but of his general metaphysical doctrine. Our list will, in a sense, be arbitrary; it will try to sum up and classify, in convenient fashion, Plato's characterizations—loose or rigid—of realness. We will say that the traits of realness are three: selfhood, not-being (or otherness), relatedness; in short, that to be, an entity must be its own self; it must be other than other entities; and it must be related to the entities from which it is distinguished.

CHAPTER VII

SELFHOOD

THINGS which are really real (*a*) are described by Plato as things in themselves, by themselves, for themselves, in relation to themselves. These qualifications point to the categorical requirement of selfhood, which is contrasted with the trait of being in another, or in relation to another. (*b*) A second requirement is that of sameness—being identical with self, and other than other things. (*c*) The really real is like itself, or uniform with itself. This is identity of nature. (*d*) The really real is simple and pure, unmixed and uncomposed. This is the requirement that everything should be specific and unambiguous—just itself and nothing else; white is white and not black. (*e*) The really real exists always and does not become; it is unchanging, unmoving, untrembling. The point is not that the real endures forever but that it is timeless. (*f*) Finally, the really real is completely knowable; it is intelligible and invisible; the knowledge of it is clear and firm.¹

We may sum up the above formal requisites of being as those of selfhood, self-identity, self-similarity, purity, rest, and intelligibility. We will assume that Plato is using different words to denote not so much different traits as different shades of meaning in one fundamental trait, namely, selfhood. By virtue of this trait, the real is completely independent and self-contained; in a word, it is absolute.

To be absolute is to be real unconditionally. Whatever a thing is, it is *simply*, and not by reference to anything else. Here Plato is rejecting relativity, reference to a perspective, or to a context. Realness is in-itselfness, or intrinsic being; but empirical objects have their being in other things. This is meant not merely in the obvious, causal sense, but also in a formal

¹*Phaedo* 67a, 78e, 79d, 80b; *Symposium* 211a; *Republic* 477a, 479e, 484b, 485b; *Timæus* 29a, 35a; *Phaedrus* 250c; *Cratylus* 440a.

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sense. To be really is not to be *for* anything or *from* any point of view. Protagoras had maintained the relativity of all things. Values, qualities, things are inseparably bound up with a context; they have no being as such. Vary the context and you vary the things. Similarly, all truths are relative to a situation, to a percipient, to a place, to a time; even the assertion of the relativity of truth is relative; thus, there is no valid assertion.

We might sum up the doctrine of Protagoras in the statement that being is referentiality, or being through another; as contrasted with Plato's doctrine of absoluteness, or in-itselfness. The thesis of relativity involves two propositions, one narrow in scope, and the other general. The first one maintains that all entities are relative to a percipient subject ("man is the measure of all things"); the second generalizes this statement into the proposition that all things are relative to each other. Plato denies both of these propositions. To be is to be relative to no context at all, whether it be the context of knowledge, or that of the general metaphysical situation. For example, absolute beauty is the same here as there; now as then; from the point of view of this mind as well as of that. Thus, absolute beauty is independent of the cognitive and of the spatio-temporal contexts (*Symposium* 211a).

The real is real solely in and for itself. Supposing I say: this is thus and so from my point of view; you then naturally ask, but is it really so? In asserting that S is P, I am asserting this to be a fact, independently of the fact that I assert it. Affirmation is an act of self-transcendence, whereby the mind states a proposition to be true in itself and apart from the context of affirmation. Assertion is the recognition of an absolute reality. Should affirmation be of a truth as relative to the act of affirming, then the question is posed whether the assertion of this relativity is itself relative. If the answer be no, then the second assertion is absolute; if yes, then the first is absolute. Cognition posits a world which is real for itself.

Take generalized relativity. Supposing I say, this surface looks white when juxtaposed with black; you then ask, but is it white as such? Or I affirm, this rule is a code of conduct for such and such a city at such and such an epoch; you then ask, but

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is the rule right? What you are doing in these instances is to exclude reference to a context. Absoluteness is irrespectiveness. The doctrine of metaphysical relativity would mean that A is real from the standpoint of B, which, in turn, is real from the standpoint of C, and so on *ad infinitum*. In such a metaphysical situation, of nothing may it be said that it is. Thus, without absoluteness there is no being.

In Plato's notion of selfhood we have an anticipation of the notion of substance, as for example it is presented by Spinoza, who defines it as that which is in itself and is conceived through itself (*Ethics*, First Part, Def. III). By the notion of substance we mean existence *simpliciter*, we mean independence and individuality. Plato's contribution, especially in the *Phædo*, is the conception of the real as that which is definite, precise, and discriminable; as that which enjoys a being of its own.

Plato's ethics and ontology are interdependent. His ethical doctrine is neither an arbitrary nor a separate intuition; it has significance only within the wider framework of his metaphysics. The criterion of the morally good is the same as the criterion of realness. The good man is self-contained and independent of circumstances. Thus virtue is independence and individuality, just as the standard of reality is selfhood. Plato's definition of the really real as the self-adequate is at the root of the notable ethical ideal of self-sufficiency as held by Aristotle, by the Stoics, and later by Christianity in the special form of the ideal of the monastic life.

To render the trait of selfhood clearer, let us turn to situations in which it is absent, partly or wholly. One of these is the world of opinion. A concrete object exists "for" something else; thus, it exists "for" a given percipient. It has no independent nature; it is what it appears to be. "If a man says anything 'is,' he must say it is to or of or in relation to something" (*Theætetus* 160b). The world of opinion lacks objectivity. It follows that all impressions are valid alike; there are no errors in sensation; moreover, the delusions of the maniac and the images of a dream are as valid as the impressions in the waking life of a sane person. The distinction between appearance and reality, and between truth and error, falls to the ground. From the manifold

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of sense, nothing is excluded. And if we generalize relativity to the senses into relativity to belief, then an opinion is true in so far as I hold it, and all opinions, whether consistent or contradictory, are true. Every thinking mind is infallible. The distinction between the ignorant and the wise, the very notion of the expert, lose their significance; since there is no belief which is better than another. We have a democracy of minds and also a democratic equality among impressions. Criticism is ruled out.

In such a world there are no common objects. Each impression is unique to its perceiving subject; each percipient has a different world. The common world disintegrates into a multiplicity of private worlds. Since there are no independent standards, there is no room for persuasion except in the guise of sheer personal influence. What enters my world is valid for me alone. There is no argument, not even discourse. The mind is enclosed within its own world. Each person is self-sufficient in respect of knowledge; each mind is alone; each cognitive subject defines its own criteria (*Theaetetus* 169d, 161d, 178b).

But the private world is itself broken up into a plurality of disconnected, incommensurable worlds. To Socrates sick, the object has a different appearance from what it has to Socrates healthy. And the one appearance cannot be used as a standard for the other. There is a different world for each state of the percipient. We are reduced to the solipsism of the present moment.

There is no common self joining its various perceptions, or its various temporal stretches. At each moment the self is new and different. "The perception of another thing makes the percipient different" (*Theaetetus* 160a). Memory is not the recovery of the past but the presentation of a new image; thus, there is no cohesion between the present and the past history of the self. In short, there is neither a single object common to many minds nor a single self common to a variety of perceptions—only a series of appearances to a series of selves. We have the paradoxical result that relativity entails absolute pluralism.

Now, in a world of relativity, things overflow their boundaries and pass into one another. Thus, they are in a flux and never

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the same. Plato compares the realm of opinion to a sea of boundless diversity (*Politicus* 273d). There is perpetual novelty, a sheer multiplicity of quality. Each object has a unique character; there is no repetition, and no recognition. We can speak neither of "this," nor of "thus"; a world of flux is nothing, and nothing may be said of it.²

Change is a character of the world of opinion. Now change seems to be a simple empirical notion, but for Plato it is a *formal* notion reducible to relativity. To change is to become something else; transformation from black to white is the merging of forms in the object, whereby the nature of the object is both black and white. Thus change is the union of opposites or of others; it is lack of purity. Or take coming-to-be and passing away. An entity in passage is and is not. Thus, change is indeterminateness ("if knowledge changed it would not be knowledge," *Cratylus* 440b); and the changing thing cannot be identified since it is in something else—in another state, or in not-being. Thus change is absence of self-identity; a moving thing is not "something" (τ). Consequently the world of change is not one concerning which exact and precise statements could be made.

Perhaps one might urge that a precise, though contradictory formulation of change is possible, to the effect that "this is both black and white." Plato, however, insists that we can assert of the thing neither that it is both black and white, nor that it is not (*Republic* 479b). Change is sheer indetermination.

Or take change, not as change of nature, but as sheer happening. Given a world in passage, we cannot say "this is white," but only "this is whitening." The quality is not *there* to be described; it is coming to be or passing away. Changing things have no natures, no "suchness." Hence, in the world of opinion, there are no truths, and there are no facts. "How, then, can that which is never in the same state be anything?" (*Cratylus* 439e).

But perhaps we can achieve a definite description of a motion by breaking it up into a series of rests. Thus, a changing thing

²For the statements in the immediately preceding paragraphs, we have relied on *Theaetetus* 142-187.

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would at first have one property, and later another; it would disintegrate into a multiplicity of things each of which has a definite self-identical property. Plato points out in the *Cratylus* (439d) that such an analysis is impossible; change is not a succession of states; there are no states, since the object is changing at the very instant. Change is the negation of a "state," of rest, of being *simpliciter*, of identity, of in-itselfness.

Let us now turn to relativity as exhibited in human nature and conduct. We will begin with appetite. Plato compares the appetitive part of man to a many-headed monster. Appetites are various and cannot be brought together under one class-concept. Like the world of flux, the appetitive part lacks a definite character. A particular appetite arises from an emptiness, the removal of which is accompanied by satisfaction. Thus, by drinking water, I quench my thirst. Now, the consciousness of an appetite is neither exclusively pleasant nor painful; it is both. There is the pain of the present emptiness and the pleasure at the anticipated repletion. In the realm of the really real, there is the separateness of the diverse and opposite forms; but in the realm of opinion, there is fusion. Joy and sorrow go together. Thus, Plato describes envy as a state of mind in which I am both pained and pleased at the misfortunes of my friends. Desire lacks purity.

Appetites, moreover, are infected with relativity: The pleasure which attends the quenching of thirst is not an intrinsic quality; it exists by contrast with the pain which it supersedes. The satisfaction of an appetite consists in release from pain. And in superseding the pain, the pleasure supersedes itself, yielding its place to a new pain. Thus, the life of appetite exhibits the transitivity of events in time. "By the act of drinking, both the pain and the pleasure are brought to an end." And the new pain, brought about by the memory of the now vanished pleasure, gives rise to a new craving. Thus, the process of quenching an appetite is endless, because at no step is the satisfaction genuine. Plato compares it to the process of pouring water into a leaky pot. The leak is the aspect of not-being in appetite.

The life of appetite is one of continued flux. An appetite

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has no internal principle of measure; rather, it expands indefinitely, and inevitably leads to excess. Ambition is unbounded; the more the craving for power is satisfied, the more it demands new worlds to conquer. Appetites are insatiable; for example, the love of money when it takes the form of avarice. And once more, the insatiable character of appetite arises from the fact that appetite has no real end; appetite is only a craving for escape. Hence appetite exhibits the character of the unlimited.

Thus, the appetitive part in man exhibits impurity with consequent indefiniteness of nature, relativity, flux, illusoriness. Further, the life of appetite is one of internal disruption. The natural man is in a condition of perpetual—though undeclared—warfare, both with his fellow-men and with himself (*Laws* 626a, d). The natural man, both in his external and internal relations, is in the condition of the jungle, because appetites are essentially competitive. A community of men who are brought together solely through their appetites cannot be a society; an appetite posits itself as an absolute; it does not recognize the claims of other interests; it uses them only as tools to its own satisfaction. Thus, by its very nature, an appetite is selfish—self-absorbed—whereas the life of reason is inclusive, taking into account the interests of the whole. Selfishness is to conduct what solipsism is to knowledge. In a world of relativity, in which an object is what it appears to be to the percipient, each individual has his own private world, and percipients never meet on common ground. So, too, when life is governed by appetite, individuals are separated from each other and are in a state of war, because their ends are private.

Consider human action under a democratic regime. The democratic man is the exact opposite of both the oligarchical and the tyrannical man. Where they are exclusive, he is all-inclusive. He is unable to say no to any appetite; all desires are valid and must be gratified. Hence, the democratic man has no determinate nature; he indulges the good equally with the bad desires. He is the fusion of all types—at once a philosopher, an athlete, a libertine. Thus, he lacks simplicity. He is everything and therefore nothing. The democratic man has no inde-

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pendent being; he is susceptible to the varying influences of the environment and to the suggestions of his friends; he has being only in relation to his context. Thus, he is all things to all men and to all circumstances. He is a manifold. So Plato compares the democratic state to a general store in which all kinds of goods are sold, for the democratic state abounds in a variety of customs and fads; it is tolerant of any behavior, no matter how eccentric. Every desire is valid, every individual must express himself. There is no criticism, there is no self-discipline. The parallelism between the democratic standpoint and relativistic empiricism is obvious. For the one, every appetite must be gratified; for the other every perception must be recognized. Both are totalitarian; and both are anarchical because they deny objective standards.

A democratic society is egalitarian; all desires and all individuals are on the same footing. The old cater to the young; teachers to their pupils; the ignorant are treated with the same respect as the wise. So, in a world of relativity, where a thing is as it appears to be, all data and all beliefs are equally true, and criticism is excluded. The expert is no wiser than the layman.

Or take esthetic experience. Plato's critique of poetry in the *Ion* is founded primarily on his conviction that the trait of selfhood is absent from the poetical frame of mind. The poet is possessed by the Muse; to be inspired is to think through another, not for oneself. The poet is in an ecstasy, which literally means that he is outside himself; his being is referential. In his turn, the poet possesses the rhapsode. The function of the rhapsode is a special instance of that of the interpreter in the arts. The virtuoso embodies in himself and expresses the inspiration of the composer; he is a receptacle, and a transmitter. So, too, the actor re-enacts by his performance the character of another person, as conceived by the playwright. But the actor is not merely the professional worker on the stage; he is the man who dramatizes his own life; always living the life of some hero whom he admires, always playing a rôle, even though his audience be only himself. Such a man is extremely suggestible and liable to enthusiasms. He has no character which is truly

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his own; he has an apparent, not a real nature. And he is constantly changing his heroes; now, he is playing the rôle of the abjectly humble person, but later, by a reaction, he takes on the pose of the strong man. The man with the dramatic temperament finds his being in another. Correlative to the type of the susceptible man is that of the person who exerts a spell, fascinates, projects his personality into others, turns them into disciples or slaves. This is the orator who, by the use of persuasion, has the effect of making the audience lose its reason and its self-control. We have here an active cause and a passive one; the first is persuasion, the spell of the Muse, the creation of "atmosphere"; the second is suggestibility, and—in the case of the fine arts—sensibility.

The rhapsode, in his turn, magnetizes the public and carries it away. Thus, we have a hierarchy consisting of the Muse, the poet, the rhapsode, and the public, all merged together by emotion. In so far as Plato is adverse to emotion, it is because emotion is the condition of existing in another. I am moved by some person or by some thing. The current of emotion destroys individual boundaries and fuses all persons into an inchoate unity; that is to say, it deprives them of their individuality, for the time being. Over and above the vertical fusion of Muse, poet, rhapsode, and audience, there is a horizontal fusion. The group of persons under the spell of the orator merge among themselves; persuasion transforms a collection of distinct selves into an undifferentiated mass; the community becomes a mob.

Loss of selfhood occurs also in respect of the poet's relation to his subject-matter. The poet is not in himself but in the scenes he depicts; Homer's rhapsode is at Ilium. He feels the occurrences which he is describing in the sense that he identifies himself with them; the sufferings of the heroes of the epic are his own sufferings. Poetic sensibility is fusion with nature; and correspondingly, it is loss of the self-contained inner life; it is a deprivation of the "inner city."

We intend to give a reasonably thorough account of Plato's views concerning the world of opinion, human nature, and art in later chapters. In this section, we have only skimmed the surface of his views, because our interest has been primarily

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in ontology. But, fragmentary though our remarks have been, we hope they have been sufficient to show that his judgments of man, his reflections on ethics and politics, and his critique of the fine arts, are all conditioned by his ontology. The importance of Plato's metaphysical doctrine lies to a great extent in the light which it throws on his views concerning concrete, moral, political, and esthetic experience. We do not mean that Plato's method is to lay down certain premises of an abstract character in advance and then proceed to draw conclusions on matters of fact. It would be rather more true to say that his general principles are an induction from his particular insights.

CHAPTER VIII

OTHERNESS

THE correlative of selfhood is otherness. All real things are just themselves and not others; thus, A is identical with itself and other than other things. Diversity is not a category additional to identity; identity entails diversity, and conversely. Identity and diversity are two aspects of the same fact; something is in itself by virtue of its differentiation from other things; and it is distinct from them only as it is identical with itself.

Now, diversity and not-being are the same notions. Thus, not-being is the second categorial trait of realness. But in this matter we must make a distinction between an earlier and a later Plato. In *Republic* 476 ff., Plato altogether rules out not-being from the sphere of the really real; he conceives of it as the opposite of the real, and thus displays himself as still under the influence of Parmenides. He describes the world of opinion as being less real than the intelligible world by reason of its participation in not-being. In the *Sophist*, however, and others of the later dialogues, not-being is granted a co-ordinate rank with being. The real is constituted through not-being; not-being is a category of the intelligible world. It is through the character of not-being that the forms are differentiated from each other, and that discourse is possible. It is through the principle of not-being that division and classification are rendered possible. Thus, in the *Theaetetus* (185c), being and not-being are referred to as classes which are discovered by the power of reason alone. In sum, according to the earlier Plato not-being is characteristic of the world of opinion; according to the later Plato, it is a defining factor of the world of realities.¹

The discussion of not-being in the *Sophist* is perhaps the outstanding exposition of the subject in philosophical literature.

¹See, however, pp. 165 ff.

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It begins with an extremely forceful statement of the position which Plato himself condemns. This is the doctrine of Parmenides, that not-being refers to nothing in fact, and to nothing in thought; it is a meaningless jumble of words. Not-being is nothing; hence we can predicate nothing of it; not-being cannot function as a logical subject in a proposition. There is absolutely no truth concerning not-being. Nor can not-being be named, for what is named must be something. Thus, not-being is not an object, and is not part of any fact. It is outside the sphere of the real. And for similar reasons, it is outside the sphere of knowledge. We can neither perceive nor think an absence. Whatever we think of must be something; to think of nothing is not to think. Also, to utter nothing is not to speak at all. Not-being is unthinkable and unutterable. The whole system of Parmenides is based on what to him is the self-evident proposition that not-being cannot be. Nothing is nothing and nothing can be said of it.²

The argument is perfectly cogent; moreover, its conclusions appeal to our native sense. What is more important still, it expresses what must be part of all sound philosophy. But it conveys its truth in an intolerant and cumbrous fashion; it makes unnecessary and invalid exclusions. So Plato attacks the argument; its plausibility is specious, obvious; what it asserts seems true, but the implications of what it asserts are unacceptable. And his mode of attack is thus to reduce it to absurdity by drawing out the implications of the argument. He shows in effect that, in rejecting not-being, we reject being as well, and truth.

1. We have said that, for Parmenides, not-being is inexpressible and unthinkable. Now, we do refer to not-being in the very act of refuting it. To be consistent, we should say that Parmenides, in refuting not-being, has been talking nonsense; therefore, he has not refuted it. Also, in affirming that not-

²Compare with the following passage from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*: " 'And I haven't seen the two messengers, either. They've both gone to town. Just look along the road and tell me if you can see either of them.' 'I see nobody on the road,' said Alice. 'I only wish I'd had such eyes,' the King replied in a fretful tone. 'To be able to see nobody—and at that distance, too. Why, it's as much as I can do to see real people, by this light.' "

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being is unthinkable, we have been applying the copula to not-being; we have been affirming not-being as being. Here we have a dialectical refutation of the argument of Parmenides; to deny not-being is to affirm it. Were it absolutely unthinkable, not-being would not be even an object of denial. Thus, not-being does enter into discourse; and in some sense, not-being is.

2. The denial of not-being would entail the denial of the possibility of error. Error is the affirmation of what is not; more specifically, it is the declaration that what is not, is, or that what is, is not. Thus not-being is part of the content of error. Parmenides holds that not-being is unthinkable; yet in error, not-being is an object of thought. The doctrine of Parmenides leads to the denial of the existence of error; yet error is a fact.

At this point, Plato is combating not only Parmenides, but the sophists as well. The sophists maintain that truth is relative to the affirming act, and that consequently all beliefs are true. Now, discourse depends on the opposition of truth to error; abolish this opposition and you abolish discourse itself. Unless we are to side with the sophists, we must affirm the reality of this opposition, and the being of not-being. The above point may be generalized as follows: every assertion affirms at once its own truth and the falsehood of its contradictory; thus, the possibility of valid assertion entails the possibility of error, and so the validity of not-being.

3. Nor do we solve our problem by maintaining that error is a delusion. Delusion is itself a fact. We have the ontological contrast between reality and appearance; there is objective appearance, with its own peculiar type of reality. What appears to be, is not, and yet does appear, and so is.

Thus, Plato's defense of not-being rests both on experience and on ontological considerations. More fundamentally, it rests on ethical considerations, that is to say, on considerations of value. The distinction between good and evil is fundamental to ethics. Now, evil is primarily an *intellectual* sin; it is error. If not-being and therefore error are meaningless conceptions, so are ethical conceptions meaningless. The moral conflict is a struggle against error; the good life consists in the escape from

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shams, pseudo-values, delusions; the evil life is the fall back into the cave with its shadows. Unless appearance is in some sense real, the moral conflict is unreal. Plato is combating the sophist; hence the sophist is real. Philosophy itself is a moral effort; it is the purgation of the soul from ignorance and error. The soul is apt to wander aimlessly between appearance and reality; philosophy sets the soul upon the path to reality and keeps it there. To deny the being of appearance and error would thus be to deny the value of the philosophic task.

4. Beings are diverse from each other. Correspondingly, knowledge is division; without contrast there is no meaning. If all forms participated in each other, *e.g.*, if white were black, and round were square, and good were bad, discourse would be rendered impossible. To think is to contrast form with form.

To deny not-being is to deny all contrast and diversification. And in effect, Parmenides was driven by his rejection of not-being to the denial of parts (and therefore of the whole) and of motion. And this is a *reductio ad absurdum* of his philosophy, since not only experience but reason as well recognize diversity and relatedness.

We must therefore restore not-being into our metaphysics, if we are to account for error, for appearance, for being itself. The problem is how to redefine the notion of not-being so as to avoid the pitfalls which Parmenides had pointed out. So long as we construe not-being as a privation of being, any proposition to the effect that not-being is, is self-contradictory. We must therefore avoid interpreting not-being as sheer vacuity, or absence, or non-existence; there are no such things as negative facts, or negative qualities, such as not-white, or not-beautiful. Not-being is *other* than being; it is not opposed to it; or, to speak more accurately, not-being is simply another being. Thus, not-white does not refer to a new type of color over and above the presented colors; it is nothing more than the description of some actual quality other than white—say, of black.

Or, to supply an example of our own, if we affirm that Socrates is not in Thebes, we are not asserting a negative fact, namely, the absence of Socrates from Thebes. There is no such

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thing as an absence. We are asserting a positive fact—the presence of Socrates in Athens, which is incompatible with the proposition that Socrates is in Thebes.

In short, not-A is equivalent to “other than A.” Otherness is a relation whose terms fall within being; what is other than something, is something too. And in this way Plato is able to refute Parmenides’s dictum that not-being is unthinkable and unutterable. Not-A is a group of *beings*—the *alla* (others). Given anything, there is the class of *alla* with which it is contrasted. Not-A, then, is as real as A.

Now, it is indifferent what entity we select as itself and what as its others. Every entity is the other of some other entity. Thus every being is also a not-being. And so Plato comes to the conclusion that “after a fashion, not-being is, and in a sense, being is not.”

Not-being, then, is relative to being. But have we not solved the problem by reducing not-being to being, and thus granting in substance the contention of Parmenides? So to state the matter would be to ignore the other half of the solution, which is that being is relative to not-being. We do not find being as complete, and then note its contrast with the other things. Being is constituted by this contrast.³ The real is a matrix with a positive and a negative pole; and the two poles entail each other. Not-white means black; but black means not-white. The absence of Socrates from Thebes consists in his presence in Athens; but his presence in Athens is constituted by his absence from Thebes. The relation of otherness is real, equally with the terms which it relates. Thus, it is not a question of reducing not-being to being; it is one rather of reducing both being and not-being to a more ultimate and complex situation which is both positive and negative.

The category of being is just itself, and is other than the categories of same, motion, rest. Hence being is not. Similarly with beings, that is, with instances of being. Each entity is a unified self, contrasted with an infinity of other entities. “Thus,

³We use the word “being” *in this chapter* to mean what we called selfhood earlier. We have decided to keep Plato’s word (being) in order to enable the reader to study this chapter without having recourse to the others.

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we see that being is not, as many times as there are the others. As a matter of fact, being is not they, but is its *own self*; and the others in their turn, unlimited as they are in number, are not." (*Sophist* 257a).

Plato concludes that not-being is a definite class about which definite propositions are true. Not-being is not synonymous with vagueness; it has a nature and is identical with itself. As a definite genus, it is subdivided into species; for example, not-being is divided into not-white, not-beautiful, not-just, etc. Each one of the species, too, is definite; thus, not-white is the class of all the entities which are other than white. Consequently, not-being is a member of the intelligible world. Plato ascribes to not-being membership in the group of the greatest kinds, that is, the categories. Hence it is a form which pervades all the forms; it is a categoreal requirement of realness.

The result of our discussion may be summed up in two propositions. First, not-being is nothing as such; the not-being of A is the being of another entity, B. Second, being is nothing as such; an entity has being by virtue of its otherness from another entity. The latter proposition is the more important for our purpose; it expresses the principle that not-being is a categoreal requirement of the really real. We will proceed to elucidate the meaning of the second proposition. The doctrine that being is constituted through not-being may be divided into two parts: (a) the principle of the internal differentiation of being; (b) the principle of the external differentiation of being.

A. The principle of internal differentiation takes us back to the Pythagoreans and to Anaximander. According to the latter, the primordial reality is the *apeiron* out of which the world emerges by the principle of division, and to which it returns. The conception of the *apeiron* is revived by Plato in the *Philebus*. The *apeiron* is the state of affairs in which all things are together, where the lion lies with the lamb; it is the primeval welter of forms, in which white is black and true is false. So long as entities are fused together in the matrix of the *apeiron*, there is nothing real; there are only possibilities. Creation consists in the segmentation of the undifferentiated totality. The

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apeiron is like a continuous line; not-being is the principle of the cut, whereby the line is articulated into parts, which are the distinct entities. Thus, not-being is the principle by which the demiourgos brings the real world about. God created the world by issuing the fiat: let not-being be.

In sum, not-being is the principle of analysis. The being of not-being means that the really real is atomized. There is the contrast of individuals with individuals, the contrast among the forms, the irreducible complexity of the metaphysical situation. The consequence for ontology of the assertion that not-being is a valid conception, is the denial of all monism. Thus Plato departs from the position of Parmenides. The universe cannot be construed in terms of any one category, or as one undifferentiated substance, mystically intuited. Being is internally articulated; true, unity is a fact, but it is the unity of a many. There is a plurality of metaphysical factors, such as God, the receptacle, and the limit, held together in the unity of the good.

The manifold of sense is an exhibition of the *apeiron* in the sphere of knowledge. The boundaries between sense-objects are blurred; there is a continuous range, but even this cannot be discerned as such, unless it be self-complete, with a beginning and an end; that is, unless it be bounded. Definite affirmations about the world of opinion are impossible; an object of sense is both large and small, both circular and linear (*Republic* 479b, c). The mind, in knowledge, operates upon the manifold of sense so as to make the cut effective. It discriminates "this" from "that," and one form from another. The object of rational knowledge is the mixture of the limit with the unlimited; that is to say, it issues from the imposition of the category of not-being upon the manifold of sense, and ultimately upon the undifferentiated totality. Knowledge consists in clear and distinct ideas, that is, in ideas which are contrasted with their opposites (*Laws* 816e). The being of not-being makes significant assertion possible. The otherness prevailing in the intelligible world enables the mind to predicate one form of another, to affirm, for instance, that man is rational. More generally, it is by virtue of not-being that relationship is pos-

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sible. A relation must have distinct terms, and the distinctness of the terms is their otherness to each other.

What does Plato mean by otherness exactly? He is emphatic that otherness is not opposition, and thus leads the reader to suppose that otherness is not formal incompatibility. Yet a close study of the examples he mentions in support of his contention suggests a different conclusion. Plato says that the not-great need not be the small; it may be something of middle size. In this case it is clear that by opposites Plato means extremes, contrasting both with the mean; and he is saying in effect that not-A may be the mean between A and B. Whatever the esthetic or the moral significance of the contrast between mean and extremes, logically it is of no importance. The mean is incompatible with the extremes, just as the extremes are incompatible with each other. Thus, if an object be of middle size, it is neither large nor small. Otherness, then, is incompatibility, and as such, is the defining notion of the operation of division (*διαίρεσις, διακριτική*). The art of division, for Plato, is of surpassing importance for the proper understanding of things. The field in which division operates is the realm of forms. To divide is to distribute a genus into its species. The doctrine of the universality of not-being is the affirmation that all forms (save the indivisibles, *Phædrus* 277b, *Sophist* 229d) are divisible into forms of narrower range. This is the principle of the differentiation of the one. Conversely, the doctrine of the communion of forms maintains that the many are held together in the unity of which they are the divisions. Thus, on the one hand, we have the fact that animal is divided into dog, cat, horse, etc.; and on the other, that dogs, cats, horses are animals.

The species into which a genus is divided sustain to each other the relation of otherness or incompatibility. To be a cat is not to be a dog. The law of contradiction is formulated in terms of the incompatibility among species which come under the same genus. "The same thing will never do or suffer opposites in the same respect in relation to the same thing and at the same time" (*Republic* 436b; see also 437a, c).

Now, division is not verbal or arbitrary, but real. Plato distinguishes division according to kinds (*κατ' εἶδη*) from divi-

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sion according to words ($\kappa\alpha\tau'$ ὄνομα). Dialectic deals with the former; the latter is only eristical (*Republic* 454a). We must divide things by classes only where the natural joints are, "not trying to break any part after the manner of a bad carver." (*Phædrus* 265e). There are natural cleavages in the realm of being. And for this reason, no division of a genus merely into A and not-A is adequate. Where there are natural articulations, not-A is merely a word covering a number of species; such a division is only verbal. People are unscientific when they divide the human race into Hellenes and all the rest (*i.e.*, "barbarians"); the proper division would be to cite all the other races specifically. Thus, division should be exhaustive; the world of forms is determinate, and the number of forms is limited; and division should be the operation of differentiating the genus into its several species. We must make cuts in thought wherever there are cuts in fact.

Not-being is contrast; in the intelligible realm, each form is other than every other, and is therefore precise and definite. We have here the principle of specificity in being and in knowledge. The sophist claims to know everything and to be able to teach everything. He is a universal artist. The sophist exhibits in his person the resurgence of the *apeiron*; he is a many-sided character. A democratic state is a sophist in macrocosm. The citizens engage in every task indiscriminately; everybody knows everything. This is their doctrine of equality. The ignorant do the work of the wise, and the wise cater to the prejudices of the ignorant. The poet falls into the same category as the democratic man and the sophist. Homer lays a claim to universal knowledge; he talks freely of military science, of the ways of the gods, of how a chariot is constructed. He seems equally at home in every subject. He knows more than anybody has a right to know. The painter, too, arrogates to himself a universal art; he makes beds, and men, and animals; he is a general craftsman.

Now knowledge is specific, and art (*techné*) is specific. Science is split up into subdivisions; a given science studies a field whose limits are defined by a genus. There is no general science. So crafts are specialties; in knowledge and in art, the

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qualified people are experts, whose expertness is constituted both by the fact that they do know something and that they do not know something else. There is no general practitioner; if a man claims to be one, he is a charlatan. What is the place of philosophy in this scheme? Is there any place? Philosophy is not specialized knowledge; is it, then, universal knowledge? But knowledge of everything is only pleasant and trivial conversation; it is impressionism and not knowledge. Philosophy is neither specialized nor encyclopædic knowledge. The genuine philosopher studies the common principles underlying all the various disciplines and arts; he is intent on the unity of the diverse parts of knowledge. The philosopher supplies the *bond*. Philosophy is not another specialized knowledge; it is another *kind* of knowledge; it is wisdom; it is knowledge which has become reflective of itself. Now, wisdom is not a substitute for science. The unity does not abrogate the diversity; and the knowledge of the unity is not the knowledge of the diversity. The philosopher cannot overrule the specialist in the latter's own field. The philosopher is king; he is not a soldier nor a tradesman. His function is to integrate the differentiated abilities of the citizens; and he is successful to the extent that he respects specialized abilities. But the respect must be mutual. Specialized knowledge employs methods and argues from principles which must be tested by the philosopher.

B. We now proceed to the topic of external differentiation, and one which has far-reaching consequences for Plato's ontology and for his ethics. Everything exists by limitation; given something, there is always something else which it is not. Its own being depends upon the fact that it is bounded; thus, in a sense, to be is not to be. There is a "beyond" to whatever is being considered; there is something beyond even everything; or, to speak more accurately, there exists nothing which is everything.⁴ The principle of external differentiation means, on the one hand, that a given thing is limited, and, on the other, that it has a definite environment which limits it. Every entity has its others (ἄλλα), and therefore every entity is one among a many, while at the same time it is the unity of a many.

⁴See, however, p. 64.

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Our discussion may be divided into three steps: the limitedness (*a*) of simple entities, (*b*) of complex entities, (*c*) of being. (*a*) An entity excludes the maximum of being, compatible with the maintenance of its own self-identity; as such, it is indivisible and simple. At this level, not-being contributes to the constitution of the ultimate units out of which the world is composed; it brings about distinct terms—"this" and "that" and everything else which may be named. (*b*) But these units do not exist in isolation; they enter into complexes; taken by themselves, they are abstractions. The real world consists of groups of simples, organized into wholes. (These are the unities which we have referred to above as being divided into parts.) Thus a man is a complex of qualities; he is good, he is sitting, he is tall (*Sophist* 251b). A real thing is a concrescence of many simples into a unity. But as there is inclusion, so there must be exclusion. Thus, we find operating in the realm of complexes, the same principle, cited earlier, that the real is a matrix with both a positive and a negative pole. The concrescence is bounded. The complex is what it is by virtue of what it leaves out as much as by what it takes in.

We may illustrate this truth from a study of the realms of discourse, of the really real and of the good life. Take discourse. Predication is both positive and negative at once. There is no characterization without denial; otherwise the law of contradiction would lose its meaning. To affirm a proposition is to deny its contradictory; to predicate A of something is to deny not-A of it. An all-inclusive affirmation would include its opposite, and would be no affirmation at all.

In the sphere of ontology the boundedness of complexes means that an entity is "a plurality of beings and an infinity of not-beings." To be is to stand out and to stand against. A chair is a chair in so far as it is not a table, not a lamp, not a book, and so on *ad infinitum*. Individuality is achieved through contrast. There must be inclusion; otherwise there would be nothing. There must even be a plenitude of inclusion, relatively speaking, to insure the presence of contrast within the real. And there must be harmony among the members of the complex; otherwise it would not be a whole, but a mere aggregate.

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Thus, there is the maximum of inclusion compatible with definiteness; and conversely, there is the maximum of exclusion compatible with being. The included elements are finite in number; the excluded ones are infinite.

It follows from the above that an entity consists as much in what it excludes as in what it includes. In some sense, then, we must recognize absence as a fact, provided that we do not construe it as self-sufficient, but as an aspect of a more complex fact, of which presence is the other aspect. "That A is not in the room" is an aspect of the objective fact of which "that A is in the fields" is another aspect. We are now able to answer the question as to how knowledge of not-being is possible. Parmenides had said that not-being cannot be an object of thought. He is right in the sense that the mind cannot perceive sheer absence. But neither can the mind perceive or think selfhood, pure and simple. The boundaries of an entity are part of that entity; to perceive anything at all is to perceive its boundedness, namely, *that* it excludes and *what* it excludes. And in this sense, perception and thought of an absence are possible. An entity is a being marooned, so to speak, in an area of not-being; to cognize it is to cognize the whole situation of being with not-being.

Let us consider internal and external differentiation in their togetherness. There is both a manyness and a beyondness. The complex entity entails not-being in a double sense; internally, it is the ordered unity of a finite number of simples; externally, it confronts an infinity of others, which it excludes. Multiplicity, then, and quantity, as derived from not-being, are categorical requirements of the really real. It has been assumed that, for Plato, multiplicity is a characteristic of the world of sense, and that to rise to the world of knowledge is to abandon the many things. This is an error—an error, however, for which Plato's confused language is partly responsible. The forms are diverse from each other and are many. To be limited is to entail a realm of other things; to be articulated is to consist of a many. We must make a distinction. There is the indefinite manyness of the mob of particulars; this is multiplicity as a characteristic of the world of opinion, and is unintelligible because it does

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not express a difference in kind. There is also multiplicity as a characteristic of the intelligible world; this is a definite multiplicity, such as that of the number of species into which a genus is divided.

A similar distinction must be made with respect to otherness, a word which Plato uses in two different senses. The world of opinion is vitiated by otherness in the sense that an object is its own other, and is therefore self-contradictory. The world of the really real is pervaded by otherness, in the sense that a form is *not* its other.

In the sphere of ethics, the principle of being through exclusion is summed up in the maxim of justice. In the works of Plato, justice is assigned the crown among the virtues; and justice is nothing else but the rule of limitation in conduct. Justice in the state is the condition in which every individual performs a distinct task and does not meddle with other tasks; justice within the individual is the rule that every part of the soul should confine itself to its own function. Meddlesomeness, which is the cardinal sin, is failure to conform to the precept of self-limitation. Strength of character connotes rigorous exclusion of irrelevancies; it consists in choosing a definite path and in refusing to be tempted into by-paths. A person who busies himself with everything achieves nothing; and one who, like the democratic man, is kind-hearted to the degree that he tolerates all impulses and all types of persons, loses his own soul in the process of embracing the universe. In contrast with the democratic man, who lacks the strength to stem the violent inrush of the variegated environment, we have the tyrannical man, who is strong but aggressive, and spreads himself over the others. He is consumed by insatiable desire, by unbounded ambition, and by greed; he lacks the inner check and goes outside bounds, into the lives of his subjects, which he destroys, at the same time that he destroys himself. Whether it be the receptivity of weakness, or the predatoriness of brute strength, the result is the same, namely, loss of self-being, and destructiveness. The principle of limitation is a rule even for the gods, each one of whom is assigned a definite and separate sphere of influence, and a specific function.

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Excess is failure to recognize boundedness; *hubris*, the greatest of sins, is the act whereby man ignores his limitations as a man; the golden mean in conduct or in art is the principle of limitation. Greek art of the classical period may be regarded as an illustration of the Platonic doctrine of being through exclusion. A Greek temple, or play, or statue, has a definite outline; it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The Greek artist achieved simplicity by rigid exclusion of irrelevancies. He sought completeness through limitation; thus, what he produced is characterized by dignity and restraint.

Whatever is excluded is not excluded because it is evil. Indeed it has value; exclusion is the cost which must be paid for definiteness. Also, what is excluded here is included somewhere else. I perform this function, not that; but that is because some one else is performing the other function. In short, exclusion is particular, not general. All possibilities are realized, but not within the same complex. The principle of limitation results in the realization of the plenitude of possibilities in diverse centers; thus, the world exhibits contrast and an ordered wealth of detail. The philosopher-king is intent on the public good, but nevertheless he is confined to his own specific function, which is to issue commands, not to execute them (*Politicus* 305d). Thus, the king requires ministers and heralds; God operates through subsidiary gods. The principle of limitation necessitates the existence of a plurality of creative and controlling agencies, each one restricted to a definite sphere of activity and each one assigned to a definite rank.

Consider now the situation of a limited individual, surrounded by an environment of other limited individuals, and of limited complexes of all kinds. We have noted the fact that what is excluded has value. Hence the individual must be concerned with what is not himself. Thus exclusion is not a principle of indifference. The soul regulates the body and all inanimate things; God cares for the world; the philosopher-king works for the public welfare. Such concern must be distinguished from inclusion. What is included enters into one's own nature; concern is a relation to what is outside one's nature. Thus, there are two principles in the world: on the one hand, that of limita-

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tion, which divides the world into self-identical entities; on the other, the principle of general concern, whereby the several entities are in communion with each other and with the whole.

(c) Finally, not-being enters into the constitution of being (*i.e.*, selfhood) as such. In various passages of the *Sophist*, Plato is concerned with the relations among the ultimate categories, such as being, other, same, rest, motion, wholeness, unity. These categories are not merely ways of thought; they are the highest kinds; they have an ontological status. In discussing the category of being, Plato is investigating the objective essence of being. He points out that the "other" has a universal pervasiveness in the sense that it pervades not only the ordinary forms, but the categories as well. The same is other than rest; rest is other than motion; in short, every category, being itself included, is other than the others. Being, then, is a specific character; it is something in itself, contrasted with other ultimate characters. Being is other than self-identity or than rest. Being is not an all-comprehensive category; it posits its own others. Nevertheless, its others are beings too. Plato intimates that no contradiction arises at this point; the sense in which the same is said to be other than being is different from the one in which it is said to be a being. Thus, being as such is constituted by limitation; to be is to possess a definite character not to be confused with other characters.

We will now examine to what extent Plato's doctrine of not-being solves the problems set forth by the sophists. These problems were two: the existence of false opinion, and the existence of images.

(a) The sophists had denied the existence of falsehood. False opinion is opinion about nothing and therefore is not an opinion at all. If I am thinking, I am thinking of something, and my judgment is true. Now, Plato believes that the moral struggle against evil (which is error) is genuine, and that the distinction between truth and falsehood is real. His answer to the sophists is that not-being is not a privation of being but another being. When I state a negative proposition, namely, that salt is not black, I am not stating a sheer absence but a fact—that salt is

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white. At first glance, it appears that Plato's solution does not touch the issue; the doctrine of not-being as otherness is a doctrine of true as well as false propositions. In asserting that salt is not black, I am stating the truth about salt, though my statement is negative, and refers to not-being. Thus, a negative fact consisting of a mutual relation of otherness between a thing and a predicate (or between two forms) may *confirm* a statement as well as *prove it false*. Otherness as constituting not-being is irrelevant to the distinction between truth and falsehood.

That there is a relevance, however, between Plato's doctrine of not-being and the existence of error may be shown by a more indirect approach to the problem. Plato demonstrates that a false proposition has an object, and is not about nothing. The subject of the false proposition is real; also its predicate is real. A proposition is false because it relates the terms otherwise than they are related in the factual complex.⁵ In a false proposition, terms mingle together which, in the fact, exclude each other; or conversely. Thus the theory of not-being as otherness is relevant to the comparison of the proposition with the fact. The relatedness of the terms in the false proposition is *otherwise* than it is in the fact.

(b) Assuming that a proposition is an image, we may say that in the above we have explained how a proposition can be an incorrect image and still be an image of something. However, we have not explained how an image can be at all. This question concerns exact as well as inexact images, true as well as false propositions. An image both is and is not. It is not, because it is not a real thing; and it is, since it is an image. We are faced with a contradiction, which Plato's doctrine solves by the interpretation of not-being as another being. Thus, images are beings other than their archetypes. But if we grant this doctrine, broader problems arise within the framework of Plato's own philosophy. Image is another word for appearance, and the distinction between reality and appearance disappears. All entities are reduced to an equal plane, and the Platonic doctrine of degrees of reality must be abandoned. If, as Plato says, not-

⁵See below, pp. 268 ff.

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being is "as fully endowed with being as anything else" (*Sophist* 258b) particulars are equally real with universals, and images with particulars. Passages may be cited in support of this interpretation. The student of dialectic is unmoved by considerations of sentimentality; he investigates both gods and men, justice and injustice with equal impartiality. "He honors all classes and does not think one more ridiculous than another." The study of louse-catching has no less dignity than the study of generalship (*Sophist* 227b). Furthermore, we are told that motion, no less than rest, partakes of being; and Parmenides is criticized on the ground that his doctrine allows no reality to the world of becoming (245d). There is no scale of beings and no scale of cognitive attitudes; evil is not ignorance but the pretense of knowledge; error, not the having of a sensation or an image, but the taking of the latter for something else.

On this interpretation, everything partakes of realness in an identical sense; the world of opinion is as real as that of the forms. Shall we, then, say that Plato, in the later dialogues, has reversed his position, as presented in the earlier dialogues? Yet the distinction of the two realms is maintained in the later dialogues, too (viz., *Timæus* 51d, e). His conception of degrees of realness is an integral part of his philosophy. Thus, his definition of not-being solves the problem of false propositions, but not that of the existence of images, taken as prototypes of all that is deprived of full reality.⁶

What Plato has achieved by his definition of not-being is to account for error and to show how the real is differentiated internally, and limited externally. But his definition of not-being is irrelevant to a large—and perhaps the more important—part of his problem. It does not touch the question of the existence of sophistry and the sophists, the existence of images in art, the distinction of reality and appearance, the conception of grades of reality, and the reality of the moral struggle against shams and pretenses. In all of these, not-being presents itself as sheer privation of being, and the objections of Parmenides remain unanswered.

⁶See Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 321-323.

CHAPTER IX
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SO FAR, we have found realness to partake of two essential traits, selfhood and difference, by virtue of which it becomes diversified into distinct and definite individuals. But if we stopped with these two traits, we would have on our hands a sheer plurality of things, whereas, in fact, the world exhibits relationships, and thought is synthesis. Entities exhibit the power of combination (*κοινωνία*, blending) whereby they are integrated into groupings. Remove the capacity to combine, and you remove the capacity to differentiate as well; unless there were mingling, there would be no pluralized world either. For a differentiated world is one in which an entity is apart or exists for itself; and, to be such, an entity must combine with apartness and selfhood (*Sophist* 252c). Moreover, a world of diverse entities *exists*; but if entities were wholly separate, they would not partake even of being; in short, a world of utter separation would not even be. Thus, not only the data of experience and the existence of discourse, but the very fact of diversification lead us to the inference that entities combine. But combination exists only within limits; universal combination no less than universal separation would abolish the worlds of experience and of discourse. In a world in which everything mingled with everything else, there would be no significant statements. To say that A has a predicate, say motion (*viz.*, A moves) is to exclude its opposite, namely, that A is at rest; and yet in a situation where everything mingled with everything else, motion would be rest and conversely, and our assertion that A is moving would be without significance. And further, there would be no real world by which our statements might be tested. A world of universal mingling would be one without distinction and would relapse into the *apeiron*. Just as we must presuppose some measure of blending among entities so we must

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affirm the existence of some measure of exclusion. Thus, we will say that a given entity combines with some and does not with others; there is acceptance of some and rejection of others; the fitting together and the failure to do so. (But to this rule the "greatest kinds" are an exception, as we shall see shortly.)

In sum, every entity either mingles with or rejects every other entity. We will therefore say that every entity sustains a *relatedness*, positive or negative, with every other entity. (Plato's own term for this general relatedness—as distinguished from mingling or exclusion specifically—is weaving, *συμπλοκή*, *Sophist* 259e). We will discuss, in order, the relatedness (*a*) of form with form, and (*b*) of particular with form. (*a*) We will divide the forms into three groups: the *infirmæ* species; the group of genera and divisible species; the greatest forms, which we will call the categories. Take the *infirmæ* species. Plato speaks of the *ἄτομον* (229d); *i.e.*, the atom, or the indivisible. As we divide a genus, proceeding in the downward direction, after a finite number of steps, we reach forms which cannot be further divided. The indivisibles mingle with the genera in the upward direction, but with nothing in the downward one; and this is what Plato may be having in mind in his somewhat obscure reference to "forms which are entirely apart" (253e). And again when Plato speaks of forms which mingle (1) with all forms, (2) with many forms, (3) with few forms, we may reasonably assume that the last group refers to the *infirmæ* species and the second to divisible genera and species.

Consider now the middle group—those that "mingle with many forms"—consisting of the familiar genera and species, such as justice, man, ox, figure, color. That members of this group combine with one another means that one class is included in another, or that the other includes it. Thus the proposition that man mingles with animal means that man is included within the class animal, and that animal includes man. In Plato's assertion that forms mingle with or reject each other, we find the doctrine that there are eternal and necessary truths, whether positive or negative, as, for example, that man is animal, and that man is not a dog. These truths express facts; there are essential relations among forms about which universal judgments

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may be made. The world is one of ordered relationships. Furthermore—if we may borrow from the modern philosophical vocabulary—the eternal truths are not analytic, but synthetic. The entities which mingle together are mutually distinct, pervaded as they are by otherness; in fact, they could not mingle, unless they were diverse from each other. The species is embraced by a form from *without* (253d); and we are told that each term in the mingling relation is identical with itself and other than the rest (254d). Hence mingling is not fusion or identification; mingling is not the opposite of otherness. Neither must exclusion be identified with otherness; entities which are severally distinct may mingle together or exclude each other, as the case may be. Plato has no explicit logic; but his ideas, if developed, would lead to a logic of synthesis. “For any class to be alone, solitary, and unalloyed is not altogether possible” (*Philebus* 63b). Entities are self-existent but not separate; one form entails another. Plato’s world does not consist of substances occupied solely with their own modes; his is a world of entities in relation. Correspondingly, his world is not one in which knowledge of one entity would yield no knowledge of anything but itself. “For as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is no reason why we should not, by remembering but one single thing—an act which men call learning—discover everything else” (*Meno* 81d). Forms are distinct from each other, and forms entail each other, by way of inclusion or exclusion; thus knowledge is synthesis.

Consider, now, the greatest kinds. Let us bear in mind the distinction between relatedness and its sub-class, mingling. The forms in the middle group are related to, but they do not mingle with, every other form—that is to say, they do not have a positive relation with every other form. The greatest kinds, however, do mingle with every form; they combine without any limitation. Examples of such kinds are “same,” “other,” “being,” “not-being.” Thus, being partakes of everything; also everything partakes of self-identity and of otherness. Consequently, whereas the middle and lowest groups comprise specific universals—forms of limited universality—the greatest kinds have a universal application. The greatest kinds mingle not only with

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other forms (and with particulars); they also mingle among themselves. Being has sameness; otherness has being. They mingle with each other, without thereby losing their self-identity. Sameness mingles with being, and is also other than being; being partakes of the other, but is other than the other and therefore is just itself (*Sophist* 259b).

Now, Plato's own designation of the greatest kinds suggests that the only difference between them and the other forms is in respect of degree of universality; yet a deeper study of his doctrine leads to the conclusion that the difference cannot be wholly comprised in those terms. He uses the analogy of a syllable and its component letters. Every syllable has consonants and vowels, the first corresponding to the smaller kinds, the second to the greatest. Now, vowels differ from consonants not only as letters but in that they have the specific function of serving as a bond ($\delta\epsilon\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$) for all the other letters, "so that without one of the vowels the other letters cannot be joined one to another" (253a). So do the greatest kinds function as bonds in the mingling of the forms among themselves; also, they function as principles of exclusion among the forms. We have seen that a given form sustains a positive relatedness with some forms and a negative one with others; the greatest kinds are the principles of all relatedness—positive or negative—and of all interweaving among the forms. Plato calls the greatest kinds the causes ($\alpha\iota\tau\iota\alpha$) of separation (and presumably of mingling, too) among the forms. Thus, the specific difference of the greatest from the other kinds consists not only in the fact that they mingle with everything but also in that they are the conditions of mingling and separating. In their capacity as causes for the operations of the forms, they enjoy, logically and ontologically, a prior status to the latter. We have therefore seen fit to call them categories, though this word is not met with in that connection in Plato's writings. By calling them categories we do not mean to identify them with Aristotle's list; nor do we mean that they are subjective forms of understanding in Kant's sense. The categories express the nature of things, not of mind alone; and they are categories in the sense that they determine the relatedness of all forms and of all things.

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What forms constitute the class of the categories? Plato does not offer any definite list. In the *Sophist* he enumerates five forms which might be considered as categories: these are being, same, other, motion, and rest. Of these only the first three may be called categories; as for motion and rest, on the one hand they do not mingle with each other, and on the other they do not, each of them, mingle with every form, so far as we can gather from Plato's writings. In the *Theætetus* (185b ff.) Plato refers to what he calls the common notions (κοινά) which seem to play in the region of the knowledge of particulars the same rôle that the greatest kinds do in the realm of forms; but the two lists do not coincide. The list of the *koina* comprises sameness and difference, unity and plurality, likeness and unlikeness, being and not-being, worth and truth. The reader might wonder what the connection is between the lists of the *Sophist* and the *Theætetus*, on the one hand, and that of the four classes in the *Philebus*, on the other—consisting of the Limit, the Unlimited, the Mixed Class, and the Cause. Though Plato offers no light on this point, it is obvious that the principle of ordering in the first two lists is different from that in the other. The list in the *Philebus* comprises the various classes of *being* only; and if categories they be, they are material or metaphysical categories, in contrast with the first two lists which comprise formal or logical categories. The general conclusion must be that Plato, while having arrived in his mind at the notion of categoreal qualification, did not sufficiently formulate the notion so as to be prepared to provide a definite list of categories, or even to have a clear idea of the meaning of the notion.

(b) We will now discuss relatedness as it applies to particulars in their relevance to forms. Modern logicians have remarked on the difference between a statement such as "Socrates is mortal" and one such as "all men are mortal." There is no evidence that Plato was aware of any such difference. Whether he is speaking of the participation of form with form, or of particular with form, Plato uses the same words μετέχειν and κοινωνία. When a particular partakes of a form, we say that it has such and such a predicate; when a particular fails to partake of a form, we have a negative statement to the effect that a given particular rejects

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a given form. Thus "Theætetus sits" exemplifies the participation of Theætetus in sitting; and "Theætetus is not flying," the rejection by Theætetus of flying. Forms are "present" in or "absent" from things. Any particular has a positive relatedness to some forms and a negative relatedness to others. Moreover, particulars mingle with the categories. Plato shows (*Theætetus* 185c ff.) how in knowledge the soul applies the common notions to percepts; and inasmuch as the soul imitates the real, we may take Plato's account of knowledge as true of its objects as well. Thus, a particular color mingles with being, in the sense that a given color exists; it mingles, further, with not-being, with number (this color is one), with worth (this color is beautiful) and with likeness (this color is like that).

We may now sum up the entire doctrine of relatedness in its application both to the realm of forms alone, and to that of forms with things. We will use the word entity to refer to forms or to particulars indifferently. Every entity enters into a relationship with the totality of the forms, accepting some and rejecting the rest, except for the categories which accept all the forms. The relationship of entities with forms constitutes *complexes* (συμπλοκή); thus we have the complex "Socrates is a man," or "white is not black," or "justice is a virtue." Everything that is real enters into some complex or other; and the complexes, in their totality, exhaust the real. The terms in a complex are held together or separated by the categories. Thus, a complex consists (a) of terms, which may be forms alone, or forms and things, (b) related together positively or negatively, (c) through the intermediation of the categories operating as causes of the relatedness. Now, given any entity, the sum of the truths about it is comprised in the statement of all the forms with which it has a positive and a negative relatedness. Thus, man is rational, animal, a biped, featherless, etc.; he is not a dog, not a plant, not a star, etc. Consequently, particular complexes such as "man is an animal" are parts of the total complex concerning man. The total complex is relevant to the operation of definition. In defining a species, we indicate what it excludes and what it includes; on the one hand, we separate the species from all its others, and, on the other, we associate it with all that is

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akin to it (*Politicus* 258c, 303e). Thus, to define a species is to divide its total complex into two parts, the first comprising all the forms which the species rejects, the second all those which it accepts.

CHAPTER X

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HAVING ascertained what the criteria of realness are, we may now proceed to apply them. Amongst all entities, forms or universals conform most adequately to these criteria, and are therefore judged to be really real. What are forms? How do we know that they exist at all? Plato proposes the conception of the ideas as a *hypothesis* to explain certain facts of human experience—facts which we will conveniently classify under three headings: (*a*) production, (*b*) knowledge, (*c*) nature.

(*a*) The arts and crafts are a going concern of our lives. Our productive activity—whether we make utensils, houses, ships, or states—is governed by method; it is scientific activity and therefore entitled to be called *techne*. Plato takes methodical, productive action as a fact—a part of normal experience—and asks himself what that fact presupposes. *Techne*, we said, involves method, and method is procedure according to norms. A cobbler, making a shoe, proceeds by reference to an implicitly recognized pattern of a shoe. Thus, the arts and crafts involve a recognition of absolute standards. A doctrine of merely relative standards, of relative excess and deficiency, would “destroy the arts and their works one and all, and do away also with statesmanship . . . and with weaving” (*Politicus* 284a). Without the conception of absolute size, of the absolute mean, of measure and objective rightness, the arts would not exist. Just as we were compelled to admit the validity of not-being in order to account for the existence of false opinion, “so now we must force this second conclusion, that the greater and the less are to be measured in relation, not only to one another, but also to the establishment of the mean. . . . For, if this is not admitted, neither the statesman nor any other man who has knowledge of practical affairs can be said without any doubt to exist” (284b).

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In the preceding argument, Plato has been engaged in disclosing the implications of practice, which he conceives as a form of insight. Whatever is a necessary assumption of practice must be granted as true. Now, the artisan has to assume the existence of absolute standards because he could not carry on his activity as an artisan otherwise. The conception of absolute standards—*i.e.*, forms—is part of the fabric of ordinary human life. The next argument is based on the implications of theoretical activity.

(*b*) There is knowledge as distinguished from true opinion. The one is acquired by teaching, the other through persuasion; the one is accompanied by true reasoning, the other is irrational; the one is exact, clear, and certain; the other is inexact, confused, and only probable; the one is immovable, the other, being only an approximation to the truth, is perpetually replaced by other approximations (*Timæus* 51d, *Philebus* 59c). Plato takes knowledge as a fact, somewhat as Kant did; in the *Sophist* (260a) he says that discourse is a reality. He then asks himself how such knowledge is possible. So Kant started with the premise that mathematics and physics are fields of knowledge; and then asked himself what this implies. But whereas Kant had recourse to a theory of the powers of the mind, Plato resorts to an ontological hypothesis, maintaining that unless we posit a realm of forms, the distinction between knowledge and opinion will not stand, and all thought will be reduced to opinion. Kant concluded that if the world consisted of Hume's flux of impressions, knowledge would be impossible; and Plato argues that if the world were a Heraclitean flux, science could not exist.

In short, the existence of exact, certain, universal knowledge implies the existence of a certain kind of world. What kind? Not the world of experience. The latter is not capable of yielding systematic knowledge. The qualities of empirical data are confused; for instance, this table is brown but not quite; it is blackish brown with an admixture of red. Furthermore, empirical qualities are not susceptible of exact measurement; they are more or less; this room is more or less warm; I feel more or less happy. The empirical world evades numerical determination; its qualities lack purity. Thus, it fails to provide objects for exact and distinct ideas. And yet, since clear and definite knowledge

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exists, there must be a real world, beyond that of experience, which renders such knowledge possible. This world consists of the forms, each of which is pure, definite, and precisely what it is. Hence our ideas can be precise and exact and distinct. And as forms are in communion with each other, universal and necessary knowledge is possible. Forms are what they are independently of the thinking mind; therefore, they are identical for all minds, and intersubjective knowledge is possible.

(c) The theory of ideas is also a hypothesis to account for the facts of nature. There is order in nature, yet this order is not provided for by the constitution of nature itself; there must, then, be a supernatural realm which imposes its character upon the realm of nature. For example, we find that empirical processes exclude each other, *without being essential opposites*. Snow excludes fire, in the sense that water puts out the fire; yet there is nothing in the snow as snow and in the fire as fire which explains such an exclusion. In other words, there is no reason why empirical phenomena, *qua* phenomena, should exhibit any sort of regularity.¹ And yet they do exhibit order. Plato's answer is that the mutual and regular exclusion of snow and fire arises from the fact that snow partakes of the cold, and fire of the hot; and that further, cold and hot in the abstract are mutual opposites. In short, natural phenomena display a regularity of relationship which can be accounted for solely by their participation in the realm of forms. Kant, on the other hand, derived order in experience from the relation of experience to the transcendental unity of apperception.

The theory of ideas, then, is not *a priori*; its validity rests upon its power to explain the phenomena. And, for Plato, it appears to possess just that degree of certainty which a hypothesis is capable of having. He speaks of the theory of ideas as the strongest and safest principle to assume (*Phædo* 100a, d); and he is confident that it will never be overthrown. But we must be clear as to what we are talking about. Plato draws his examples of forms from a wide field. Some of his examples are: justice, beauty, health, strength, size, ox, white, equality, odd, two. Thus, forms are both normative and descriptive (though, in

¹*Phædo*, 103-5; here Plato would agree with Hume and Kant.

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the final resort, there is no meaning in this distinction). Again, forms are ethical or physical. On the whole, in the early dialogues, Plato conceives the forms intensionally. His words for them are *idea*, shape, kind, or essence (*ιδέα*, *μορφή*, *εἶδος*, *οὐσία*). In the later dialogues, he introduces an extensional point of view; he refers to the forms as unities, genera, classes (*ἐννάδες*, *μονάδες*, *γένη*). Thus, forms are both characteristics and classes.

(a) Given any object, we may distinguish within it a that and a what. You say: there is something under a tree. I ask: what is it? and you answer, it is a man. In short, there is something which is a man—a that with a what. Or take the statement: Theætetus is sitting; in this statement a passive condition is attributed to Theætetus. There are, then, things and their qualities. The quality is a universal, the thing a particular. (b) Furthermore, a universal is a principle of unity in a many. Imagine Adam in the garden of Eden assigning names to the various animals as they march past him. Each animal is an individual, and each animal is assigned a proper name. But over and above naming there is classification. One animal is similar to one group of animals, another to another, and so on. Similarity is due to possession of a common characteristic; thus, some animals are lions, some tigers, some cats, some dogs. The character is a principle of class-unity. Each particular is just itself, and when it passes, is succeeded by another particular; things flow and we cannot step into the same river twice. And yet we do somehow step into the same river twice; we are able to compare and recognize; and this is in virtue of the presence in things of common characteristics. On the one hand, there is the set: Tom, Dick, Harry; on the other, there is humanity in which they participate, so that we say that Tom, Dick, and Harry are men.

Whether as characters or as classes, universals are descriptive of particulars. They render the actual world intelligible; without the presence of universals in things, the world would be mere matter of fact, to be noted but not cognizable. But a universal is also a principle by virtue of which the actual world is criticized and evaluated; thus, a universal is *prescriptive* of particulars. There is the contrast of what is with what should

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be. Universals are norms or ideals. Take a universal like roundness and contrast it with rubber tires, rings, and wheels which are all round. Now, roundness is a standard by which we test the tires, the rings, and the wheels, finding that the latter are more or less round. Or again, take whiteness which seems to be a simple descriptive concept. Yet actually, when I ask, is the salt (or the sugar, or the piece of paper) white, I am testing the perceived quality by a standard one. And so I measure a particular by a universal, ascertaining it to be a relatively adequate or inadequate embodiment of the ideal. For Plato, not only moral characteristics, like justice and temperance, or esthetic characteristics, like beauty, but *all* universal characteristics are ideals, or values. Any universal illustrates a perfection of a certain type.

In brief, the pair of universal and particular may be contrasted either as essence and instance, or as ideal and actuality. Plato maintains that universals are real independently of their embodiment in particulars; that, in fact, they are more real than particulars, and that particulars derive such realness as they possess from their participation in universals. The acceptance, even the understanding, of Plato's doctrine, involves a violent conflict with common sense. For the latter, the concrete object is real and prior; for Plato, on the contrary, what is real is not Tom, Dick, or Harry, but humanity in general. Tom, Dick, and Harry might die, all men might cease to be, and yet man would remain.

Again, common sense assumes that the particular is first in the order of knowledge. We perceive snow, paper, cotton, and thence construct an idea of whiteness. For Plato, the reverse is true. We start with the idea of whiteness, and interpret our sense-experience in terms of our idea. The universal comes first both in thought and in being. The contribution of experience is only by way of reminding us of what we already know, and to stir the latent knowledge in us. Sensation has a psychological, not a cognitive, function. We know the forms already, and experience, by furnishing us with incomplete embodiments of them, recalls the forms to our minds.

The reasons for which Plato assigns an independent and prior

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status to universals are two: universals are eternal, and universals are norms. Forms are unchanging; this object may change its quality, this man's hair which was black has by now grown gray, but blackness does not change. Concrete objects are, so to speak, on the move, coming to birth and perishing, and continually changing while they endure ("like leaky pots or . . . like people afflicted with catarrh, flowing and running," *Cratylus* 440d). We cannot step into the river of generation even once; thus, we cannot even note and name sensible objects for they are moving away from us while being noted. Universals are eternal, that is to say, timeless; one cannot speak of them as existing now or later; their realness is not temporal. A mathematical truth—for example, that the sum of two and two is four—is timeless. Being timeless, universals are always the same; man is man, and whiteness is whiteness. Being in time, particulars remain the same neither with themselves nor in their relations to other things.

Moreover, universals are *abstract*. Take blueness. Blueness as conceived is one thing, and blueness as perceived is another; the perceived blueness varies with each perception, but the conceived blueness remains the same. The perceived quality is not only unique, it is also impure; the blue of the water is mixed with other colors. Moreover, the embodied quality falls short of the quality as conceived. The ideal line is completely straight; the actual line never. Thus, universals may be called abstractions, if the word abstraction be used neutrally, without derogation as to realness. It follows that the contrast of universal with particular is one within the class of characteristics as well; it is the contrast between ideal and actual characteristics. There is redness in general, and the particular redness of this red rose; absolute beauty and the loveliness of the seen color (*Phædo* 100d); abstract equality, and the observed equality of these two pieces of wood: the ideal bed, and the bed made by the carpenter. The latter, too, is a pattern in that it may serve as an archetype for the painter. There are the timeless patterns and the created patterns (*Timæus* 29a).

Universals are really real; particulars, though resembling the real, are not real; they are dim adumbrations (ἀμυδρόν,

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Republic 597a) of the forms. But the concrete world is not wholly unreal; it lies between complete being and complete not-being, partaking of each. It would seem that there is an objective contradiction in nature; the concrete world both is and is not.

Common sense, we have said, believes in the prior reality of things; Plato, of the forms. Ordinary common sense may be made perhaps to see the plausibility of Platonism by being confronted with enlightened common sense. What is the direction of the mind in the so-called disciplines, such as science, mathematics, ethics and politics? Perhaps the clearest case for Platonism is provided by mathematics. In mathematics, reference is made to entities that never were on land or sea. Geometry deals with figures—solids, surfaces, lines, points. There is no such thing in nature as a point. If I draw a chalk-mark on the blackboard to represent a point, the chalk-mark has thickness; but a point has neither length nor breadth. The geometrical line has length but no breadth; yet the line I draw has inevitably both. Nor is the circle found in nature, since no object is completely round. In geometry we deal with ideal objects, such as are not disclosed in experience. Shall we say that geometry is nonsense? If mathematics is knowledge, it must be that there are objects which are real and are not disclosed in perception.

Or take arithmetic, which is the study of number. When a child counts 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., what objects is it referring to? Numbers are not concrete things; one cannot see the number 2. Of course, I can see a pair of apples, a pair of oxen, the pair of husband and wife; but the number 2 is something different from these pairs. The apples may rot, the oxen may die, the wife may divorce her husband, but the properties of the number 2 remain what they are. In fact, all pairs might disappear, but the number 2 would be unaffected. The truths of mathematics do not depend on their exemplification.

The universals are revealed in the field of moral action, too, though not in such complete detachment from particulars as in mathematics. Moral action is the effort to embody ideals in practice. Moral action is striving, and striving is the attempt to bring about something which is not. A man interested solely

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in what actually is would not strive at all; a moral being looks beyond the actual. Thus, the contrast between facts and ideals is implicit in any moral attitude. Take the ideal of justice. No man is wholly just; justice is not given in experience. And yet it is the aim of moral action. Nations fight for freedom, believing that freedom is something real, though it is not actual and cannot ever wholly become so.

The data of the moral life cannot be analyzed in terms of facts alone; moral effort is the attempt to transform facts in the light of what is not a fact, what is non-existent, yet is somehow real.

Is the artist an empiricist? It is true that he is observing, but observation is only the beginning of his task. The artist, as we say, uses imagination in order to arrive at insights which are not given to sense. The distinction between the ordinary photographer and the painter is apposite. Both the photographer and the portrait-painter have a figure before them; the photographer reproduces the figure, whereas the painter only sees it as a point of departure. Though he looks at the particular figure, what he sees and depicts is the type suggested by the model. Thus the model serves to "remind" the painter of the universal. Manet's picture of the boy with the pipe is not a representation of the particular boy who sat as his model; the onlooker who has never seen the boy nevertheless has a sense of recognition upon seeing the picture. By dint of selection and omission, of emphasis and underemphasis, Manet succeeds in confronting the spectator with a picture of a general mood in which exuberance is combined with concentration, and spontaneity with eagerness, and thus transcends the particularity of his model.

The account of art as a disclosure of universals is contrary to Plato's own conception of art. The demonstration of universals from science would be more in accord with Plato's viewpoint. The scientist is supposed to be the man of experience, *par excellence*. Science, we are told, deals with phenomena. Yet science classifies phenomena. Imagine a biologist studying a white rat in the laboratory. So far as we can judge from external observation, the primary object of the scientist's atten-

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tion is the particular white rat in its peculiarities. And yet the biologist is no more concerned with the particular white rat than the painter with the model. He is concerned with this white rat only to the extent that it gives him an insight into the nature of white rats. He is interested in ratness, not in this rat; in the species, not in the individual.

Similarly, the physicist is concerned with events only in their disclosure of the laws of nature; thus, the scientist studies the general and the timeless, not the particular or the temporal. Using the word history in a very loose sense, we may say that history is a record of particular happenings, science of the general laws which govern particular happenings. But of course, history, too, is selective, noting causal relations and studying uniformities. The concern of the intellect is for generalities; it is perhaps *feeling* that induces the mind to attend to particulars. In so far as I am fond of my home-town, I familiarize myself with its streets and houses, and I know how to find my way about. The particular arrangement of streets in my home-town may be unrepeated elsewhere, but that is wholly irrelevant. I learn the ways of the streets and of the brook just in so far as they are unique and unrepeated. Or take affection as directed toward persons. A sociologist studying a criminal is interested in the *type* which the criminal represents (and consequently in his deviations from the type); but the friend, parent, or relative has an immediate interest in the particular individual as an individual.

To sum up, mathematics, science, art, and the moral life are directed toward objects which are not empirical. Unless these disciplines are to be divested of all significance, their objects must be deemed to be real. In all these disciplines, the mind is moving along a path away from particulars to universals; away from the actual to the ideal; away from the sensed to the conceived. The realm of forms is precisely the world aimed at, and contemplated in these disciplines.

The relation of forms to things is ambivalent; forms are immanent in things and they also transcend them. Things participate in the forms; also, they fall short of them. Thus, on

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the one hand, Plato speaks of the presence (παρουσία) of forms in things and of their communion with them (*Phaedo* 100d, *Republic* 476a); on the other, he speaks of the forms as patterns (παράδειγμα) which are imitated by things. We have, then, a double approach to forms in Plato: forms as essences of things; and forms as archetypes.

Correspondingly, we are confronted with an ambiguity in Plato's stated doctrine concerning the intelligibility of particulars. Speaking of dialectic, Plato designates as the true method the one by which the mind divides genera into species, and these into subspecies until it reaches the indivisible. There division, and with it knowledge, come to an end. There is no true and exact knowledge of particulars (*Philebus* 59b). From the forms we leap down into the sea of the many. Plato mocks those who busy themselves with dividing particulars, who conceive the problem of the one and the many as one concerning concrete things, who ask how one thing can be divided into parts and also be a whole. These are foolish questions, he avers, raised by the young, or by old men who have been introduced to philosophy late in life (*Sophist* 251b). In short, the particulars constitute a realm of opinion and not of knowledge. Elsewhere, however, we have a set of passages which seem to state the opposite of the above. The divine souls achieve *true* and *firm* opinion concerning the world of sense—that is to say, belief which is demonstrated, for belief is not firm unless founded on reason (*Timæus* 37b). Referring again to the world of sense, Plato makes the strong assertion that whereas no human being can blend the many into one, and again dissolve the one into many, God is sufficiently wise and powerful to do so (68d). Again, "the gods know and hear and see all things, and nothing of all that is apprehended by *senses* or sciences can escape their notice" (*Laws* 901d).

Thus, sensible things are completely intelligible, at least to the gods; and one is tempted to construe whatever statements Plato makes to the opposite effect as implying a reference to the limitations of *human* reason. If men were like the gods, they, too, would be able to blend the many into the one and dissolve the one into the many. As it is, concrete things are so

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complex that the human mind is incapable of tracing their connection with the realm of forms. Appealing though such a construction might be, it ignores the factor of the receptacle, with its contribution of the element of chance to the world, and its refractoriness to the persuasion of reason. The writer would invoke the duality in the constitution of things, in order to resolve the contradiction. The world of opinion is a mixture of being and not-being. In so far as they partake of the forms, actual things have being; and they have not-being because their participation in the forms is inadequate. The immanence of the forms in things is qualified by their transcendence. Now, at the point at which it is indeterminate, the sensible world ceases to be knowable.

The account which Plato gives in the *Philebus*, of the world as a mixture of the limit with the unlimited, may be considered as a statement of the doctrine of the immanence of forms in things. The concrete object is described as a compound, of which the limit is one of the ingredients. The limit is the principle of determinateness according to which concrete things are fashioned. If we construe the forms as the various modalities of the limit—in short as the diverse ratios—it would follow that the forms are ingredients of the mixed class, namely, as the determining ratios of the members of the mixed class. Such a doctrine poses a problem which Plato finds almost insoluble. Forms are things in themselves; how, then, can they be elements in a context? The doctrine of the immanence of the forms is hard to reconcile with the doctrine of the absoluteness of the forms. A given form is present in many particulars. This would mean either of two things: (*a*) that the form is split up into as many parts as there are particulars. If so, it would lose its simplicity and so its reality. (*b*) Or, that the form is not split up but is reproduced as a whole in each particular; and it can do this only if it exists both in itself and in the world. But, on this hypothesis, it would be separated from itself; it would not be itself (*Philebus* 15b, c). On either alternative, the in-itselfness of the form is destroyed.²

The solution of Plato to this problem, given in the *Sophist*,

²See also *Parmenides* 130b-135d.

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is that realness is both selfhood and relatedness, and that the two are compatible. The forms are in themselves, and they also commune with things and are present in them; in short, they are terms in relations, with the proviso that the relations are not constitutive of the terms.

The meaning of the doctrine of immanence is that there is one and only one world. To seek the forms is not to abandon things, but rather to penetrate into their nature. We discover the forms in the things and in discovering them we are grasping what the things are. Thus, the doctrine of immanence is that of the togetherness of things with forms.

Analogously, we have the innateness of ideas in the mind. To assert that concepts are innate is to maintain that the mind is together with reality. There is no moment at which the mind "discovers" reality. If we begin with the conception of mind as separate from reality, we end up with mind apprehending its own contents. We must grant an innate intuition of the real from the start. Mind, by its very nature, cognizes the world (*Parmenides* 134b). Plato says that knowledge is recollection of what the mind had contemplated in a previous life, when divorced from the body. One may take this statement literally, or preferably as a myth, and convert it into the theory of the togetherness of mind with reality. Knowledge is not an accident which may or may not happen to the mind.

But to return to the topic of the presence of forms in things. The point is that in seeking the forms we are getting at the reality of things. Particulars have a fixed nature which is their own, quite independently of how we think about them. A just man is such by virtue of the presence (*παρουσία*) of justice in him (*Sophist* 247a). In the sphere of the arts, a carpenter embodies (*ἀποδίδει*) or puts (*τίθησι*) the form of the shuttle into certain materials. The actual shuttle possesses (*ἔχειν*) the ideal form, which, then, lies (*ἔσται*) in the appropriate materials. So again with names; the name-maker embodies or puts the ideal name in the appropriate materials (*Cratylus* 389c-390d). The likeness to Aristotle's doctrine of the relation of matter to form is striking. Plato says that the thing has a form which is inseparable from it; it has that form as long as it exists.

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As a result, the thing gets for itself the name of its form. Thus, Socrates is named Socrates and is also named a man.⁸

Given any concrete thing, there is its appearance and its reality. Its appearance is its sensible aspect; its reality is its essential nature. Its appearance arises from its essential nature, of which it is an exhibition. There is, then, no question of eliminating the empirical data, but one of viewing them as surfaces, so to speak, of a solid reality whose third dimension is supplied by the realm of forms. Moreover, the action of a concrete thing is not arbitrary but is determined by its nature. Common sense and the atomists deal with the world purely on the level of matter of fact (*πράγματα*). The empiricist would say that Simmias is greater than Socrates by a head. But the head is small, and "it is a monstrous thing that one is great by anything that is small" (*Phædo* 101b). Plato's own type of explanation of empirical changes (which he describes as safe and stupid) is entirely different. It consists in referring empirical phenomena to a system of forms. A body is sick if it partakes of illness; an object is hot because it partakes of heat. And "Simmias is not greater than Socrates by reason of being Simmias, but by reason of the greatness he happens to have; nor is he greater than Socrates because Socrates is Socrates but because Socrates has smallness relatively to his greatness" (*Phædo* 102b).

The properties of things depend on their natures; likewise, the relations of things among themselves depend on the relations among the forms. The empiricist makes a prediction concerning the future on the basis of customary sequences in the past, proceeding from particular to particular (*Republic* 516d). If you ask him why somebody is sick, he answers, because the man has a touch of fever (*Phædo* 105b, c). Thus, he explains change in one thing by its contact with another. Plato ironically describes this type of explanation as elegant and plausible. Contact between things explains nothing; it states a brute fact without supplying a reason. Plato's explanation is different. There

⁸*Cratylus* 386b-e; *Phædo* 100d-103e; Plato is here describing the relation of thing to form which later led Aristotle to speak of the thing as having an essence.

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are eternal relations between form and form, and—by virtue of their participation in the realm of forms—particulars sustain fixed and universal relations to each other. Snow excludes fire because cold excludes heat. On the one hand, we have timeless relatedness among forms; on the other, dynamic relationship among things; and the first is the cause of the second.

Thus, a concrete thing has definite ways of acting on, and of being acted on by, other things; it has a uniform and orderly relation to its world. Take rhetoric, for example, which is the art of persuading souls by speeches. Both souls and speeches belong to the class of created things; yet rhetoric is an art proceeding according to principles. The true orator classifies both speeches and souls, and studies which class is adapted to which (*Phædrus* 270d–271d). One kind of soul is persuaded by one kind of speech and another by another. The possibility of rhetoric as a science is founded on the fact that there are uniformities of interaction between speeches and souls.

We may then define power—*dynamis*—as follows. What eternal relatedness is to forms, power is to things; power is the exhibition of formal relatedness in the realm of flux. Thus, motion is regulated by what is fixed; and dynamic uniformities are based on formal relationships.

We will now proceed to the topic of the transcendence of the forms. As transcendent, the forms are patterns *imitated* by things, and imitated inadequately. No actual man is really a man, no actual equality is a genuine equality, no white patch is adequately white, no circular figure is quite round. No actual object embodies its nature completely. But this puts the matter negatively, and is a one-sided account. Concrete things strive to attain their form; Plato's words are "aiming at," "aspiring," "desiring to have or to be" (βούλεται, προθυμείται, ὀρέγεται, *Phædo* 74–5). The actual thing intends its nature; it is a movement with a direction. But inevitably, it falls short of its aim. Thus, the actual thing consists of two movements; one toward a goal, and another away from it. There are both the striving and the failing. The striving of the *Phædo* corresponds to the *eros* of the *Symposium*.

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The actual world, then, is not a display of being, but of the becoming of being. The unreflective mind assumes that the concrete world consists of this, of that, and of the other; it supposes that to look around is to take note of things, of actualities, of beings. These suppositions are naïve and uncritical. The category of being does not strictly apply to anything in the empirical world. There *is* nothing; there is only the coming into being. The empirical world is an exhibition of becoming; it is the passage from incompleteness to completeness, as to a limit which is never reached. Thus, the forms are never realized in the flux (*Republic* 472d); they are not actualities. Should we say that they are possibilities for actualization? Owing to the nature of the receptacle as indeterminate, the concrete world is incapable of realizing the forms. The forms are, so to speak, impossibilities.

By virtue of their distance (so to say) from forms, things are indeterminate. The particular cannot be comprised and isolated in a definition; existence cannot be demonstrated from formal considerations, and an actual characteristic cannot be adequately described in terms of universals. There is an element of chance and brute fact in the natural world, and therefore of unintelligibility. Take triangularity, on the one hand, and triangles drawn on the blackboard, on the other. The abstract formula defines the triangles up to a point but not beyond it; the formula delimits the particulars without determining them. The fact that this triangle is an isosceles and the other a scalene does not proceed from the formula of triangularity. Suppose now we amplify our definition to mean: isosceles triangle; yet within its narrower limits, we are still at liberty to draw a smaller or a larger isosceles with blue or with white chalk. No matter to what degree we carry the amplification of the formula, the particular will always elude it.

As forms are to things, so are concepts to sensations. The realms of being and knowledge mirror each other. Forms transcend things; and concepts transcend images of sense. Sense-images flicker and fluctuate, while meanings are stable. If, during an inference, as I proceed from premises to conclusion, my meaning should change, I have not demonstrated what I had

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set out to prove. Thought requires identity of meaning throughout time (*Parmenides* 135c); empirical meaning is never the same, but changes with the change of context and of psychological attitudes. Thought is a cross-reference between different contextual situations. Thus, concepts are not images, nor are they empirical meanings.

Sense-images are unique to each person, yet knowledge is universal; thus concepts are common to different minds (*Gorgias* 481c, d). By means of concepts we achieve sameness of reference to different objects, sameness of reference to different minds, sameness of reference to different epochs of the same mind. Concepts are principles of identity in knowledge (*Cratylus* 385-6, *Sophist* 249c). Concepts anticipate experience; and experience presupposes concepts. In experience, I know that the given equality is not exact equality. The mind could not know this, unless it already had a conception of abstract equality. "We must have had knowledge of equality before the time when we first saw equal things and thought: 'all these things are aiming to be like equality and fall short.' . . . Then, before we began to see or hear or use the other senses we must somewhere have gained a knowledge of abstract or absolute equality, if we were to compare with it the equals which we perceived by the senses, and see that all such things yearn to be like abstract equality but fall short of it" (*Phædo* 75a, b). Concepts are norms for percepts, enabling the mind to test whether the given equality is exact. The standards for experience are not derived from experience; as we would say today, they are *a priori*.

For these reasons, Plato distinguishes concepts from percepts, both intrinsically and in point of their origin. How, then, are concepts had at all? We may generalize the notion of experience to mean discovery, learning, all acquired knowledge. Such knowledge is a temporal occasion, which comes to be and lapses. Now, a process of learning presupposes the knowledge of certain criteria and rules by which the knowing activity is tested and carried out. Knowledge as an acquisition presupposes knowledge which is not an acquisition; there is knowledge as a discovery, and knowledge as a possession. This becomes especially clear in the case of the categories, which Plato calls the greatest

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kinds (μέγιστα γένη). Whatever we apprehend, we apprehend as one and many, as being with not-being, as same, etc. These categories are governing principles in any activity of apprehension; they are inherent in thought and are not arrived at by thinking. What is true of the categories is true of the kinds which are of limited universality—that is to say, of the forms. All knowledge is a process of interpretation. To apprehend a concrete object is to construe it as such and such; to refer it to this or that concept, to interpret it in terms of the conceptual framework. I learn a new language by translating the strange words into words of my native tongue. I acquire knowledge of the world around me by fitting perceptions into my conceptual language. There can be no absolute beginning of knowledge; to understand is to “understand as”; and therefore, there must pre-exist the framework in terms of which I understand my data. Plato’s familiar paradox about learning is to the point. I cannot be really said to *learn* anything from the beginning, for, in order to be able to inquire about a subject, I must know about it. If so, I need not inquire about it. And if I know nothing about it, then I cannot inquire. Plato’s point is that since knowledge is interpretation, there is no origination of knowledge. Knowledge is the establishment of a correlation between the data of sense and the system of conceptual co-ordinates.

Concepts designate the real; they are not *merely* concepts; they are not mental inventions (*Parmenides* 132b, c). The conceptual pattern corresponds to the objective pattern. Hence the conceptual pattern is not arbitrary; it is not one out of many patterns that the mind has arbitrarily chosen. There is only one pattern of concepts which is valid. And this pattern is a fixed determination of the mind; thus, it is innate.

One might well characterize Plato as an anti-immediatist. The current bias is in favor of empiricism; nothing is taken as known unless it be given to sense, or as reducible to something given to sense. But for Plato, knowledge is not givenness; the real is known in experience, only in the sense of being suggested or intended by the given. The real lies beyond the sensed. The sensible fact is a datum but is not known; the real is known but

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is not a datum of sense-experience. The fact that the datum intends a form is not an outcome of mental association; it is an objective relation between the datum and the form toward which it aims. The forms are striven for by things but are never adequately embodied by them. Beauty is a character as such, beyond any perceived loveliness. Thus, meanings are not denotations of sense-data; what is meant is meant purely and simply. Knowledge is a motion, a striving, and a search; it is a transition from the particulars, as intending their natures, to an insight into these natures as such.

We may now sum up the respects in which universals illustrate the standard of the really real. Forms are things-in-themselves; that is to say, they are not relative to anything else. They are what they are. Forms have an intrinsic content; beauty is a definite nature understood by itself and constituted by itself. In the field of experience, the big is relative to the small; in the realm of forms, size is absolute. The forms possess selfhood in respect of their relation (*a*) to things, (*b*) to minds, (*c*) to other forms. Take the relation of forms to things. (*a*) Forms are not separate from things; nevertheless they have their being in themselves. The identities which repeat themselves in the flux are constituted independently of their ingression in the flux. The passing away of this cold object leaves the essence of cold unaffected; likewise, the addition of a cold object to those already existing, in no way alters the nature of cold. This cold object becomes hot; but cold is and remains cold. Thus, forms are exemplified in things but are not relative to them. The nature of justice remains the same whatever the context of city or individual in which it may prevail.

The independence of forms from things is further exhibited in the fact that the forms are norms by which things may be evaluated. The standard by which an existing state of affairs is measured is relative neither to that state nor to any other existing state. It is possible to ask the question whether existence as a whole is good.

(*b*) Consider now the relation of forms to minds. Forms are cognized; in fact, the knowledge of the forms is innate. But

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the theory of the ingreience of the forms in the mind must be supplemented by that of the absoluteness of the forms. The mind cognizes forms which it does not constitute; the forms have their being in themselves. Knowledge, were it constitutive of its object, would not be knowledge; for knowledge is a relation to what is so, independently of its being thought so. There is not the contrast between the form as known and the form as it is. We are speaking not merely of the human mind, but of cognition as such; the properties of the numbers are necessities which even the gods may not reject (*Laws* 818a). The forms are absolute for God.

The objection might be raised that I could not know an object "outside" me; knowledge is necessarily a modification of the mind, and its object is a content of the mind. Thus, for Descartes the mind is a substance of which thought is an attribute. In knowledge, the mind is enclosed in itself. Such an objection rests on the assumption of a subject-predicate logic. Every truth about an entity states a predicate about it; therefore, there can be no relation between one entity and another. In Plato there is no evidence of a subject-predicate logic; on the contrary, there is abundant evidence that his logic (so far as Plato may be said to have been a logician) was a logic of synthesis.⁴ Forms commune with each other; things copy the forms; the soul apprehends the forms (*Parmenides* 133b-d).

(c) Thirdly, the forms are not relative to one another. Of course, as we first stated, forms commune with one another. But in order to commune, they must be. Every form is an intrinsic nature which is contrasted with the other forms. In this sense, every form is an individual—*ἑκαστον* (*Republic* 476a). Each form is a one. Communion is not fusion; in their mutual interrelations, the forms preserve their self-identity. Thus, Plato says in the *Timæus* (52a) that "the self-identical form is one, neither receiving into itself any other, nor itself passing into any other."

Each form excludes its opposite. In the concrete world, opposites are generated from opposites; for example, death from life. But we must distinguish the opposites as such from things

⁴See p. 169.

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in which the opposites are present (*Phædo* 103b); and opposites as such do not generate each other. More generally, in the world of opinion opposites are present together; "in Simmias there is both greatness and smallness," since "Simmias is greater than Socrates and smaller than Phædo" (*Phædo* 102b). But greatness as such does not admit of smallness, and is not altered by it. The exclusion by each form of its opposite is an important fact; it is the principle that each form is a specific and definite nature, making clear and distinct ideas possible. On the other hand, empirical characteristics are equivocal; the fair appears ugly, the just unjust; the double appears no less half than double (*Republic* 479b).

In addition to exclusion of opposites, there is sheer diversity of form from form. Each form is itself, and therefore distinct from any other; whiteness is other than roundness. Each form is identical with itself and diverse from any other form. We are here dealing with the category of the "pure," on which Plato is so insistent. The ideal of purity is achieved in the realm of forms, in that each form is "unmixed" with any other, and is therefore simple. Every form is definitely itself. Thus Plato says that a little white which is pure and contains no trace of any other color is more real than the greatest and most widespread white (*Philebus* 53a, b). In contrast, empirical characteristics are impure and complex. Pleasure is mixed with pain, because pleasure is a relief from pain. Every empirical character is mixed; so-and-so is good more or less; another person is intelligent but at times stupid. Even Homer nods.⁵

⁵See also pp. 60-62 and pp. 168 ff. on the topic of the interrelations of the forms.

PART III
APPEARANCE

CHAPTER XI

APPEARANCE

IN PLATO'S philosophy, the contrast between appearance and reality is fundamental; clarity of knowledge is the ability to distinguish between the two, and error the confusion of the one with the other. The person who takes images for realities is dreaming, whether asleep or awake; true wakefulness of mind is the apprehension of both reality and appearance, each in its nature as distinct from the other (*Republic* 476c, d). There is an ambiguity in Plato's doctrine of appearances, an ambiguity of attitude rather than of meaning, and one which we find often repeated in the history of thought. In speaking of appearances, we may sometimes be emphasizing the fact that they are *mere* appearances, and opposing them to realities. What is, then, prominent in our minds is that appearances are less real, semi-real, or perhaps wholly unreal. But at other times we may be noting the fact that they are *appearances*, namely, disclosures of the truth. From this latter point of view an appearance is an event in which *something* appears. An image is a picture and therefore a revelation of its archetype. Here the opposition between reality and appearance vanishes to a minimum; the emphasis is on the integral unity of the two. Reality makes its appearance in the phenomenon. In the present chapter, and also in the others comprised in this Part, we will consider appearance primarily in the sense of an exhibition of the real. We must make clear to the reader that our discussion will rely for the most part on insights which Plato himself has left undeveloped. We will try to elaborate and interpret hints rather than to summarize explicit doctrines; and our theory will not be capable of strict verification or disproof by reference to Plato's writings.

Plato has no consistent term for what we have called ap-

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pearance; he does use the word φάντασμα which means appearance, but with a restricted application—namely, in reference to inadequate or false appearances. On the whole, he uses the term *idol* (εἶδωλον) to refer to the genus of appearances, exact or inexact; and the word μίμησις or ὁμοίωσις—imitation—to express the relation of the idol to its original. For our purposes we shall use the words *idol*, *image*, *copy*, and *appearance* interchangeably. The history of human thought discloses opposed attitudes toward idols. There have been and still are the iconoclasts—those who have objected to all symbolization as a degradation and a falsification of what is symbolized. And there are the iconophiles and idolaters who have construed symbolism as an enrichment and a manifestation of the real. In Plato, we encounter both iconoclasm and iconophily; commentators have tended to make much of the first, but the second is there too, and should not be ignored.

We shall defend the view that according to Plato *all creation* is the process of making idols. Man, as creative in the arts, is engaged in the production of imitations—in the useful arts, imitations of the forms, in the fine arts, of concrete things. God, no less than man, is a maker of images, in his capacity as the creator of nature; and the world is an artifact of God. The theory of creation, human or divine, is comprised in the theory of idols and of their production. The divine act of creation is one of self-representation; the creature is an imitation of the creator. The process is self-continuing; the image mirrors itself in another image, and so on. God created the cosmos in his image; the world-soul in its turn created the particular souls and physical objects in its own image; for, as the cosmos is a whole and a plenitude, so are its creatures wholes and plenitudes, though in a lesser degree. The principle of creation as self-reflection determines a descending hierarchy of creatures and images.

There is a further point to be considered at this juncture. According to Plato language is an imitation of the objects denoted by it. It is possible to construe Plato's doctrine of creation as meaning that the world is a divine language whereby God speaks to himself, and in which natural objects are signs of his

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essence. We shall consider this point further on; at any rate, what we have suggested is only a speculation. What is more clear is that for Plato the world of time is an appearance—distorted or precise—of the timeless realm of forms. “By virtue of their communion with actions and bodies . . . the forms *appear* (φαιναζόμενα) everywhere, each form appearing in a multiplicity of aspects” (*Republic* 476a).

The notion of the idol is correlative to that of the original (αὐτό). The idol is distinct from the original and yet is connected with it by likeness. An entity becomes an idol by virtue of fulfilling two conditions: (a) it is like its original and (b) it is less real than its original. (a) What is the requisite degree of likeness in an image? The proper degree must be somewhere between complete unlikeness and complete likeness. If the image is completely unlike its archetype, it is not an imitation at all; if it is completely like the original, it becomes a duplicate, ceasing to be an image. There must be no reproduction of the original, for then the image would be another original. Addressing himself to Cratylus, Socrates is represented as asking: “Would there be two things—Cratylus and the image of Cratylus—if some god should not merely imitate your color and form, as some painters do, but should also make all the inner parts like yours, should reproduce the same flexibility and warmth, should put into them motion, life, and intellect, and, in short, should place beside you a duplicate of all your qualities? Would there be in such an event Cratylus and an image of Cratylus, or two Cratyluses?” . . . “I should say, Socrates, two Cratyluses” (*Cratylus* 432b, c). Hence “the image must not by any means reproduce all the qualities of that which it imitates, if it is to be an image.” The image of Cratylus is not a duplicate of the man, because it is *hollow*; lacking motion, life, and intellect, it lacks the very essence of a human being. One may cut down a tree with an axe; but one may not cut down a tree with the picture of an axe. The image does not perform the same function as its archetype; yet to be an image, it must bear some likeness to that function. A gesture which symbolizes cutting may well consist in the motion of cutting, but without resulting in anything being cut; and we are told that a picture

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of Cratylus will have the same colors as Cratylus himself. This is not really adequate to define the requisite measure of likeness but Plato leaves the matter vague. We venture the provisional suggestion that an entity is an image when it reproduces all the characteristics of its archetype, save the function of the latter. But this is not offered as a definition of likeness; it is only a statement of the conditions requisite for its existence. Likeness is indefinable.¹

But our suggestion must be qualified; an image need not reproduce *all* the characteristics of its archetype. A sketch may be good or bad; a name may be well or badly constructed. But the sketch does not cease to be an image of a particular object simply because it adds to the colors of the latter or is wanting in them; and the name remains the name of a given person even when it omits from its description some of his features. If the name-giver "gives all that is appropriate, the image—that is to say, the name—will be good, and if he sometimes omits a little, it will be an image, but not a good one; and therefore some names are well and others badly made." The bad name remains an image because it retains *the intrinsic quality* (ἴδιος) of the thing which it names. The differentiation of the general property of "being an image" from the specific one of "being a good image" helps Plato toward establishing the distinction between meaning and truth. Should it be the case that all images must be well-made in order to be images at all, all statements would be necessarily true, whereas false utterances would be "sounds without sense," "the mere making of a noise like beating a bronze pot." The fact is that we can sensibly ask whether a statement is true or false, and therefore the latter has meaning (is an image) independently of whether it is true or false; and

¹In the *Parmenides*, the conception of likeness is criticized (132d-133a). If we say that a particular is like a universal because both of them share in a common feature, we are launched into an infinite regress. A is like B, because both A and B partake of C, which is another universal. But A is like C, because A and C partake of another universal D; and so on. The implication of this argument seems to be that likeness is an unanalyzable notion, not reducible to common participation in a universal. And in discussing the relation of particulars to universals, Plato resorts to both notions of participation and imitation, without attempting to bring them together.

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"even though the name have not all the proper letters, the thing is still named."²

Images are simple or complex. A painting is composed of pigments; words (which according to Plato are imitations of objects) are composed of syllables and ultimately of unit letters. In their turn, names compose sentences, and sentences together make complex forms of speech. No complex image is an imitation unless its component units are likenesses, too. "Could a painting ever be made like any real thing, if there were no pigments out of which the pigment is composed, which were by their nature like the objects that the painter's art imitates? Is not that impossible?" (*Cratylus* 434a, b). Similarly, names can never be imitations unless the letters out of which they are composed possess some kind of likeness to the components of the things imitated. But a complex, to be an image, must also follow certain *internal* principles of ordering. In discussing sentences as images of facts, Plato avers that "just as some things fit each other, and some do not, so too some vocal signs do not fit, but some of them do fit and form discourse" (*Sophist* 262d, e). For example, neither a succession of nouns (cf. "lion," "stag," "horse") nor a succession of verbs (like "walks," "runs," "sleeps") forms a sentence. There must be the mingling of a noun with a verb; otherwise a sentence has no sense (*Ibid.* 262b, c). To sum up, a complex entity cannot be an image unless its parts (1) are images and (2) are arranged in a certain order.

(b) What further differentiates an image from its archetype is that it lacks the degree of realness which the latter possesses. Of course, images are things with their natures; a spoken word is a natural event with its own essence; a picture is a physical object; images are parts of the natural world. And yet, according to Plato, the image, in some sense, must be less real than what it represents. The question of the kind and degree of realness possessed by an image is left unsolved by Plato, but the problem is posed very explicitly in a conversational passage in the *Sophist* (240b, c), of which we will give a paraphrase. "The image is another thing of the same sort." "Do you

²*Cratylus* 430a, 431c, d, 433 a, e.

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mean another *real* thing?" "No, not real, but like it." "But if it is like the real, it is not truly real. Answer me, is it real or not?" "Well, it must have some sort of existence, since it really is a likeness." "But what sort of existence can it have, if it is only a likeness?" "I must admit that the image combines existence and non-existence in a most perplexing and absurd fashion."⁸

Whether the image be real or unreal, at any rate this much is clear from the passage just cited, that an image is less than fully real. But the matter is relative; we should rather say that the image is less real than its archetype. An image may itself be the original for an image of *it*, and so be relatively real. What kind of thing may serve as an original? The ideal bed is an archetype for the carpenter's bed, and the latter for the picture of a bed. Universals and particulars can both function as archetypes; it would seem, in fact, that any entity can serve as an original, provided it have some measure of determinateness. What sort of things could serve as images? A reflection in a mirror is the image of a particular, and a particular is the image of a universal. Are universals, too, images? Possibly, but the matter is not clear. In the passage where Plato describes the pictured bed as an image of a carpenter's bed, and the latter an image of the ideal bed (*Republic* 597b), he goes on to speak of the ideal bed as having been produced by God. This would seem to suggest that universals are an outcome of divine art, and therefore images. If we take this mysterious passage to mean what it says, universals are creatures (although not temporal ones) and possibly images also, whose archetype, we may presume, is the good. And is the good an image of anything? The answer must surely be no, for, otherwise, we are committed to an infinite regress. We will say that in the series of originals-images, there is a first pattern which is not the image of anything; but whether there is a last image, which is not a pattern for anything, is more difficult to state.

In the *Sophist* (265 ff.) Plato gives an elaborate division of images. He starts with the more general conception of produc-

⁸We have relied on Cornford's translation of this passage; *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 211-212.

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tion (which he defines as the bringing about of what did not exist before) and divides it from two points of view—in respect of authorship and of product. (a) We have production by divine *techne* and by human *techne*. Human art issues into houses, pictures, and the like; divine art into the realm of natural objects. An important way in which human and divine art differ from each other is that man produces his work out of objects already created—in other words, out of mixtures—whereas God makes the elements themselves. (b) There are two kinds of product, originals and idols. God creates not only objects but images also which attend these. Divinely made idols comprise, in the first place, dream-images, and in the second place images of our waking life, such as shadows and reflections in the water or in a mirror. Human beings make not only houses but also pictures of houses, which are a sort of man-made dream for those who are awake. It is significant that, according to Plato, God himself is responsible for the creation of idols; though appearances, idols must have worth.

In the foregoing account, concrete objects (like plants and houses) were construed not as idols but as originals. And yet, surely, the contrast between actual things and idols must be taken as provisional, when viewed in the light of Plato's general thought. The creation of nature is the production of copies, no less than is the creation of shadows, although it must be admitted that actual objects are higher in the scale of realness than shadows. It would not be hard to demonstrate our point by reference to citations from Plato's writings. The cosmos is a picture (εἰκὼν)¹ of the eternal patterns (*Timæus* 29a); and it should be noted that the cosmos includes souls as well as bodies. Souls, too, are images, and amongst all creatures nearest to the really real; thus, souls are imitations of the invisible, and like the divine (*Phædo*, 79c, 80a). Bodies strive to be like the forms but fail (*Phædo* 74d, e); and recollection of the forms arises from the perception of things which are similar to them (ὅμοια). And, as we have seen, universals should be added to the list of divine products and divinely constructed images.

But to resume Plato's division of production. Production is either of archetypes or of images; production of the latter kind

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is imitation. The production of images is divided into two classes, the making of likenesses (*εἰκῶν*) and the making of semblances (*φάντασμα*). Likenesses are exact, semblances inexact images. In the last resort, this distinction cannot be absolute; no image can be completely like its original; even the philosophic state falls short of the ideal because, being built out of human material, it must perish. The intrusion of the receptacle in the image makes adequate representation of the original impossible. The difference is rather in that likeness-making relies on reason and semblance-making on sense; the former seeks truth, whereas the latter implants in the copy not the actual proportions of the original, but those that *appear* beautiful. The trouble is that reason does not agree with sense. Should the artist reproduce the true proportions of the objects, say in a large statue, the upper parts would seem smaller and the lower larger than they are, because the spectator would see the former at a distance and the latter from near at hand. Consequently, the sculptor who is concerned *only to suit the eyes*, alters the true proportions in his work so as to make it look like the original, when it really is not like it. On the one hand, the likeness is other than the original but is like it; on the other, the semblance is both other than the original and unlike it; and moreover, it appears to be like the original because it is not seen from a favorable point of view. The semblance creates a deception in the spectator and is infected with falsehood; it is an image at a second remove from its archetype; it only appears to be an image, without actually being one; or—otherwise expressed—it imitates the act of imitation.

We have arrived at the notable conception of rightness (*ὀρθότης*) in art. The artist aims at excellence in his work, and such excellence cannot be attained by accident, but by a certain order or rightness (*Gorgias* 506d). God, in generating the world (*i.e.*, the mixed class) established a right combination of the limit with the unlimited. When is a work of art—useful or fine—right? The work of art is an image, and it possesses rightness when the image is a likeness of its archetype. Whether a work of art has rightness or not, is determined by objective criteria, independently of subjective preference. The question which

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criticism raises is not "does the work of art please me?" but "is it right?" *i.e.*, "does it conform to its archetype?" To be a good likeness, a painting must reproduce the shape and all the colors of the original. There is a correspondence (*a*) between the parts of the image and the parts of the original; and (*b*) between the whole of the image and the whole of the original. Each part in the image must be like some part of the original, and conversely no part in the original may be left unrepresented in the image. Furthermore, the whole image must correspond to the whole original, in the sense that the order of the parts in the former must be similar to the order in the latter.

Plato approaches the notions of assertion or judgment in terms of the notions of image, archetype and their relationship. There is the act of *referring* (διανέμειν, ἀποδίδειν) an image to an archetype—an act which may take two forms: I may refer an image to that which it imitates, or to that which it does not. Either I may assign the likeness of the man to the man and of the woman to the woman; or I may attribute the likeness of the man to the woman, and of the woman to the man. There are at least two kinds of images which may be thus assigned—paintings and names. Whenever an image (whether a painting or a name) is assigned to that of which it is an imitation, the reference is correct (ὀρθή); and in the case of names, not only correct but true. "But the reference which assigns the unlike imitation I call incorrect and, in the case of names, false" (*Cratylus* 430d).

A judgment, then (if we may use a word which Plato does not mention in this connection) is the act of applying an image to an archetype, or, we might say, of a characteristic to a datum. In terms of our modern vocabulary, a judgment involves—at its simplest—a subject and a predicate; the subject is given, and so is the predicate; and both—so far as the preceding argument goes—are empirical objects. "I can step up"—says Plato—"to a man and say to him, this is your portrait, and show him perhaps his own likeness, or perhaps that of a woman. Similarly, I can step up to the same man and say, this is your name (a name being an imitation, too), uttering the name, man, or possibly the name, woman. We will call the one kind speaking truth and the

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other speaking falsehood, according as we refer to objects names that do or do not befit them" (προσηκον, 430e-431b).

Plato now proceeds to enlarge the class of entities which may be truly or falsely assigned to objects. Not only names but also verbs (imitations of action) may be thus referred to objects. "And if verbs and nouns can be assigned in this way, the same must be true of sentences; for sentences are a combination of verbs and nouns." The assignment of verbs or of names (nouns) represents rudimentary judgment, as when I say, wolf!, or, it is raining; it is only when we use sentences that we reach the level of full judgment (*Cratylus* 431b). It will be noticed (a) that Plato maintains a correspondence theory of truth in the sense that truth exists as the relation of likeness of image to archetype, and (b) that truth and falsehood do not arise as properties *merely* of the relation of image to archetype; they are properties of the act of referring the former to the latter, in short, they are properties of an act of synthesis. But it is not clear, in this connection, that Plato requires a mind—over and above image and archetype—to effect this synthesis. He speaks—perhaps carelessly—of images *claiming* to be like a given archetype. "Names claim (φάσκουν) to be like the truth"; "a picture claims (φησι) to be like" an original (*Cratylus* 438d, *Sophist* 236b).⁴ The suggestion—not further explored—is that the synthesis is an act internal to the complex, image-archetype.⁵

The cognition of images cannot be achieved independently of the cognition of archetypes. We will not know shadows to be shadows unless we have seen their archetypes; in effect, cognition of images is apprehension of image-with-archetype. We will not be able to produce good imitations unless we apprehend the archetypes; nay, even in order to produce bad imitations with the intent to deceive, we must have an adequate knowledge of what we are imitating. "Then he who is to deceive another, *and is not to be deceived himself*, must know accurately the similarity and dissimilarity of things" (*Phaedrus* 262a). It is only the person who is self-deceived that proceeds from an ignorance

⁴What we have been expounding is only a preliminary account of truth and falsehood; the problem will be more fully treated in the next chapter.

⁵See below p. 214.

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of the archetypes. In the order of knowledge, originals come first and images second. Although it is possible to study things through the study of the language which expresses them, such a procedure is unsatisfactory; the proper method is to study things through themselves, and images by reference to them. The consequences of this doctrine for the theory of knowledge are important; there *is* knowledge of originals over and above knowledge of images. In short, the mind is not limited to the contemplation of its constructions, or to ideas. On the one hand there is thought which is the apprehension of images, on the other, there is insight, which is the direct apprehension of the object. The latter serves as a check for the former, and verification is possible.

The next step in the classification of images is the subdivision of semblances. "One kind is that effected by instruments, the other that in which the producer of the semblance uses *himself* as an instrument" (*Sophist* 267a). The principle of division now is in respect of the material used by the artist; the material may be external or internal to him. If I paint a picture, my material, and therefore my product, are outside me; but if I dance, my material is myself. The latter art may be called mimicry. Mimicry may use either the body or the soul; in the first case, the art is singing or dancing, in the latter it is thought and moral action. But mimicry may join the use of body and soul, as in perceptual knowledge, which is a mixture of thought with sensation (264b), or in speech, which is the utterance of thought. Now, although Plato, in the passages cited, classifies mimicry as a species of the art of semblance-making—in short, of the production of inexact or false images—the general tenor of his writings leads to the view that there can be mimicry which is a correct imitation; thus, the dance may be a good as well as a bad imitation of character; and, as we shall see shortly, virtue is a *true* imitation of the divine. The concept of mimicry serves to expand the whole art of image-making into new fields; as, for example, into the field of character. Conduct is bad or good imitation, of bad or good patterns; we are thus enabled to view moral achievement in an altogether new light, and to define it as the process of producing images of the good out of one's soul, and correlatively to define

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the function of the moral teacher as that of producing images of virtue in the souls of his pupils.

Armed with the classification just elaborated, we are now prepared to enumerate the various species of imitation, in respect of the *kinds* of product in which they issue. There are the following large classes: (*a*) the useful and the fine arts, (*b*) language, (*c*) thought, (*d*) human conduct, (*e*) "natural" meaning. All these (except the last) will appear as subjects of succeeding chapters respectively; but it will be necessary to make some preliminary remarks on them in this chapter.

The principle of division between these large classes is that of material used in representing the archetype. The material may be psychological or bodily, speech or action; and as different materials are suited to imitate varying degrees of realness, the classes in question are diversified according to type and level of archetype. The soul is better able to imitate the really real than is the body; within the soul, thought is a more adequate imitation than speech, and both are more adequate than is human desire; within cognition, thought achieves better results than sense. In the physical realm, natural objects represent archetypes of a greater degree of realness than do works of art; among the latter, the products of the useful arts are higher in the scale than those of the fine arts; and there is a gradation within the fine arts, too. Thus, thought is the highest and the fine arts the lowest in the scale of imitations.*

Language is defined by Plato as a vocal sign of the object (*Sophist* 262a). Now, a word is a sign by virtue of the fact that it imitates what it designates. "Letters and syllables manifest the object through imitation" (*Cratylus* 425d). On the one hand there is the word, on the other the object; and the former is a copy of the latter. Obviously, the definition is not adequate because it fails to establish a difference between language and art.

*The division of images as exact or inexact must not be confused with the division of images according as their archetypes are more or less real. A man who knows that he knows nothing has an exact image of the state in which he is; but his condition is one of ignorance and therefore one with a small degree of realness.

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For example, people who "imitate sheep, cocks and other animals are not naming that which they imitate." Both language and music are vocal imitations but they address themselves to different aspects of the object. All things have (*a*) sounds and shapes and many others have colors, too; (*b*) furthermore, each thing has an *essential nature*. Music and design imitate the first; language (we are now speaking of speech) the second. Thus, words exhibit what each thing really is (*Cratylus* 423c, d, e). We might paraphrase Plato's doctrine to mean that the arts reveal the visible surface of the object, and language its essential nature.⁷

Language has similarities with thought; like belief, language (in the form of a sentence) is true or false; true when it states things as they are, and false, as they are not (*Sophist* 263b). Language is part of the larger fact of cognition. In the act of perception, there are two artists engaged in writing upon the mind: first, a writer who inscribes beliefs and statements, second, a painter who draws pictures of the words that have been written (*Philebus* 39a-c). Thus, images, statements, and judgments are all related activities, each resulting in a different type of image, and all together constituting what we call knowledge of the object. Like language, belief or judgment is the representation of a fact; true, when the representation is correct, false when it is not. We have pointed out earlier that, according to Plato, one may assign a picture or a name to an object correctly or not. His account of empirical judgment in general is on the same lines. When a man sees things at a distance and wants to distinguish them, he asks himself "what is this thing standing beside the rock under a tree?" And he answers to himself correctly: "it is a man"; or, being misled, he might call it a figure set up by the shepherds (*Philebus* 38c, d).⁸ For Plato, thought

⁷In other passages, however, Plato does not adhere to the restriction of art to the particular; see below, p. 235.

⁸Yet so far as the writer recalls there is no passage in which Plato explicitly asserts that a judgment is an imitation; and there is one passage in which Plato denies that thought is an image. In order, he says, to avoid getting blinded by looking at things with *my eyes*, I decided to have recourse to *conceptions* and examine the truth of realities in them. But my metaphor is not quite accurate; for I do not grant in the least that he who studies realities by means of concep-

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is the highest form of all representation; it is impossible for anything to be realized in action as it is spoken in words. Thus, Plato (in the *Republic*) is able to manifest in speech his ideal of the city which he is unable to exhibit (*ἀποφαίνει*) in fact. Yet thought shares the vital defect of all imitation; it has less realness than the archetypal forms which it copies. There are degrees of imitation in cognition as there are in all classes of copies; thinking, opinion and sensation correspond to various levels of image-making, according as their archetypes are more or less real.

We conclude that the mind, in thought, is engaged in producing imitations of reality; that therefore the content of thought is other than its object, and that thought, when true, corresponds to its object. In Plato's conception of image-making in art, language and thought, we find the beginnings of a theory of meaning. A symbol means its object by describing it; and description is through imitation. Art and language, no less than thought, are instances of meaning. But we repeat—Plato gives us only the beginnings of a theory of meaning. He did not consciously envisage the problem, yet his thought contains germs which, had they been developed, would have resulted in an explicit doctrine of meaning. In cognition, the soul seeks to con-

tions is looking at them in images (*εἰκόν*) any more than he who studies them in the facts (*Phaedo* 99e-100a). Nevertheless, the passage is not as explicit as it seems. The Greek word for conceptions is *λόγοι*, which also means statements; and we have seen that statements are imitations. Also *λόγοι* are compared with facts or things (*ἔργα*); and these last, as we know, are imitations. What the passage intends to contrast is *λόγοι* and things on the one hand with pictures on the other; it affirms that *λόγοι* are not images of *particulars*. What we take him to mean is that *λόγοι* are imitations of universals.

Moreover, there are numerous passages which imply, if they do not state, that thought is the production of an image. We are told that thinking and speech are the same; thinking is a silent dialogue of the soul with itself and speech a stream flowing from the soul through the mouth (*Theaetetus* 190a, 260d). Speech, *dianoia* (thinking), and phantasy are grouped together as similar kinds, which may be true or false (*Sophist* 260e, 263d). Reason is described as the only adequate exhibition (*ἔνδειξις*) of invisible realities (*Politicus* 286a; *Republic* 485b); *ousia* is said to be revealed (*κατάδηλον*) in reasoning (*Phaedo* 65c). The whole tenor of Plato's conception of truth as correspondence suggests the view of judgment as an imitation. Explanations are said to be *akin* to that which they explain; accounts of the world of flux are themselves in flux, not firm, liable to be overthrown.

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struct out of its own states complexes which are images of the real, thus progressively becoming like the forms; the aim to know things is, in the last resort, the aim to *be* the right sort of man. Knowledge becomes assimilated to virtue, for virtue is the likeness of the soul to the realm of the really real. We have now reached the topic of human conduct in its relevance to the activity of image-making.

"Two patterns are set up in the world, the divine, which is most blessed, and the godless, which is most wretched. But these men do not see that this is the case, and their extreme foolishness blinds them to the fact that through their unrighteous acts they are made like the one and unlike the other. They therefore pay the penalty for this by living a life that conforms to the pattern they resemble" (*Theaetetus* 176e-177a). Thus, man has two choices before him: to transform his soul into a likeness either of the divine or of the evil pattern. Man, as a moral being, is an artist whose material is his own nature; and his aim is to make of his life an imitation of the good. There is an interplay between knowledge and virtue; by contemplating the harmony of the eternal order man imitates and assimilates the harmony into his own soul; by living with the divine we become orderly and divine ourselves, as far as is possible to man (*Republic* 500c, d; also 498e). The moral problem, then, is to reproduce the harmoniousness of the eternal patterns in our souls; through learning and knowledge we are enabled to imitate the unvarying revolutions of God, thus "stabilizing the varying revolutions within ourselves" (*Timæus* 47c). First, there is the image of the ideal in thought; second, an image of the image, in character.⁹

There are degrees of accuracy in the imitation of the good. The man who avoids pleasure *now* from the desire to secure for himself more pleasure later is producing merely an adumbration (*συναρπαγία*, *Phædo* 69b) of real virtue; only the man who restrains himself from love of the good truly imitates virtue. When we have attained the ineffable vision of beauty, we breed, not illusions, but true *eidola* of virtue (*Symposium* 212a). The

⁹The conception of virtue as an imitation of the ideal was taken up by Christianity, as, for example, in the doctrine of the imitation of Christ.

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motive of imitation is love; we strive to imitate that which we admire, and to which we are drawn by the *eros*. Virtue, in its widest sense, encompasses not only goodness of character but also *episteme* and the fine arts in their higher levels. It consists in the making of the whole of man—thoughts as well as desires, body as well as soul—into an image of the good. The philosopher is the man who is completely assimilated to virtue (*Republic* 498e). As with self-education, so with education by others. The good lover aims to transform his beloved into an image of the good. The teacher, and especially the statesman, is a person who with the patterns of justice, beauty and sobriety before him, sets out to make of the human individual and of the human community an image of the divine; he is a painter who alternately looks at the pattern and at his material, mingling and blending in the outcome the hue of the ideal, and producing the fairest painting of all (*Republic* 501b, c). The statesman is an artist; his material is human nature in others; his archetype is the good, and his achieved work is the good state.

In the *Philebus* (36c–44a) Plato presents a most paradoxical theory of emotion, maintaining that fear, hope, anger, pleasure and pain may be true or false. Such a doctrine seems to be against the facts; it certainly runs counter to common sense, whose verdict is admirably stated by the adversary in the dialogue: “If I think I am happy, then I am happy, whether awake, or dreaming, or deluded.” Emotions, in short, are real facts. When I am happy, I am really happy. But Plato has a rejoinder. So are beliefs also facts; when I believe, I am really believing; and yet my belief may be true or false. Granting that it is possible for emotions to be true or false, what are the positive arguments in favor of the view that they are such?

(a) Contrary feelings are mixed together in the soul at the same time; I may feel pain and pleasure simultaneously. The effect of this juxtaposition is to make each *appear* greater than it is. (b) The absence of pain may be felt as the presence of pleasure. The satisfaction of appetite brings relief from pain and nothing else; but the sharp contrast between the presence of pain in the immediate past and the absence of pain now leads

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the soul to confuse the feeling of relief from pain with pleasure. If I have a bad toothache, I look forward to relief from it with an anticipation of the greatest pleasure; yet in my normal, healthy moments, I do not think of the absence of a toothache as a state of great happiness. "Not feeling pain" and "feeling pleasure" are genuinely different in nature (φύσις); and the confusion of the two is an error. In short, there are illusory pleasures and pains, and illusory feelings in general.

Plato compares illusions of feeling with illusions of sense. When I see an object which is either too near or too far, I have a false impression of its size. So with feelings according as they are seen from too small or too great a distance; a pleasure juxtaposed with pain seems (φαίνεται) greater than it is. In such a case, we have a pleasure which is apparent, but not real (42b; also *Republic* 584a, 586d, e; and *Laws* 663b, c). The parallel with Plato's doctrine of semblance-making (φανταστική) is obvious. The sculptor makes statues which looked at from a certain distance appear to be like the archetypes but are not. When we place Plato's assertion that pleasures are true or false in the framework of his general doctrine of archetype-image, the paradoxical aspect of his statement disappears. Universals are reflected in things, and things have their shadows. So is a feeling an event with an appearance; it may appear as it is or as it is not; false pleasures are feelings which appear to be pleasures but are not. They are only semblances (φάντασμα, *Republic* 586b) of real feelings.

A man's whole life may be a semblance. A shallow, impressionable person will never have a real feeling or a genuine conviction; he is not a real man but a semblance of one; being such, he is internally false. In everyday life, a man who suffers personal loss is ashamed of exhibiting his sorrow and even of giving himself over to grief. But as a member of an audience watching the performance of a play, he enters sympathetically into the misfortunes of the hero and unashamedly weeps over him. His feelings, then, are pseudo-feelings; he is engaged in play-attitudes. When a man appears to himself as he really is—even when he is only a semblance—then he has inner truth. Self-knowledge—the healthiest condition a man can attain—is the state in which

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man has a true picture of himself, be it of himself as foolish and ignorant. At the other end, there is self-deception—the worst of all deceptions because “the deceiver is always present and never stirs from the spot” (*Cratylus* 428d)—when one is filled with wrong conceits concerning oneself.

Man has internal truth or falsehood; and since man is an object in nature, we may describe truth and falsehood as properties of natural objects. Plato says that God created not only objects but shadows to attend them; and the hypothesis suggests itself that all objects, human or not, animate or inanimate, are accompanied with images of themselves, true or false. The world, too, is a mixture of reality with appearance. Every actual entity is a thing-with-its-image, declaring its nature by its appearance, truthfully or not, as the case may be. There is “natural” meaning; meaning is not imposed by the mind upon things; it is found there. The literal sense of the word ἀλήθεια (truth) in Greek is absence of concealment; the true is the unhidden. An object invariably makes an appearance, claiming to be such and such. When it expresses its proper essence, when its appearance conforms with its nature, it is objectively true; but when it appears otherwise than it is, in short, when it conceals and disguises its proper essence, then it is false.¹⁰

Thus Plato’s doctrine of creation, divine or human, and of the mixed class, in general, is an iconology. The creator mirrors himself in the creature; the actual is a symbol of the ideal. The energy of creation is the drive to self-imitation. There is a “great chain” of images in which the image of an archetype is also an archetype for another image. The hierarchy of creatures is a hierarchy of images, and degrees of realness correspond to levels of images. For God creation is inevitably a descent; for man creation may be either descent or ascent. Man should strive progressively to make images (whether of himself or of external things) which are more and more exact and whose archetypes are more and more real. For that type of image has the greatest worth which satisfies two conditions: it is true of its archetype,

¹⁰See R. G. Bury’s *The Philebus of Plato*, pp. 201–211, for an illuminating discussion of this point.

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and its archetype is really real. Plato's ambivalence with respect to the world of opinion is an ambivalence about the image. At times, perhaps for the most part, Plato is an iconoclast; the creation of images is a fall, and art is doubly a fall. Man is urged to rise to realities, ignoring images. And at other times, Plato seems to regard imitation as the natural overflow of the really real, and the created world as the expression of God to himself.¹¹

¹¹Plato's doctrine of the imagination may be constructed out of the material presented in this chapter. We take the word imagination to correspond to phantasy, φαντασία. Imagination is sensuous presentation; it consists (*a*) of images directly produced by sense and memory on the mind, and (*b*) of images which express beliefs corresponding to sensation. The outcome of imagination is a semblance, not a correct picture of the object. Examples of imagination would be: perception, imagery in the mind corresponding to belief, and the works of those fine arts which rely on sense. Is imagination creative? In a sense it is, because it gives an image which is unlike the original. In another sense it is not, if by creation we mean a grasp of the universals beyond the given, or the spontaneous activity of the mind. In imagination, the mind is a passive recipient of the images of sense.

CHAPTER XII

ART¹ AND BEAUTY

THE animating force of the human spirit in all its creative manifestations is the dim vision of beauty in the surrounding world. This vision is not only the stimulus, but the goal of all human desires. There is the sensuous perception of beauty in the beginning and there is the apprehension of abstract beauty at the end. The vision of ideal beauty is there indeed at the start; it is innate in man, but dormant; it needs to be aroused. This awakening takes place in successive stages; from the experience of beauty through art we proceed to beauty in nature, in bodies, in souls, thence to beauty in institutions, to beauty in the sciences and in philosophy, until we finally attain the ineffable perception of beauty itself.

The experience of beauty is not a specific one, to be had alongside the other divisions of experience. It is a total experience, continuous with and pervasive of the ordinary pursuits, such as hunting, building, gymnastics, virtuous living. Beauty is not "fine"; it is not limited to the domain of the fine arts; perhaps even, it is not found there. There is no contrast between the beautiful and the useful; the doctrine which relegates beauty to a dream-world is false because the beautiful and the real coalesce. It is not true that we work or reflect, and then, in addition, set ourselves to the enjoyment of beauty. Work and reflection, and, in fact, all healthful living are themselves modes of enjoying beauty. The craftsman is stimulated by a vision of order which he seeks to embody in his raw materials. The cobbler and the carpenter are "in love" with their patterns no less than the statesman is with the city he serves, no less than the lover with his beloved, no less than the poet with his dream.

¹The word "art" in this chapter, unless otherwise specified, is used as an equivalent to "fine art."

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The *organic principle* is of fundamental importance in the realms of things and of actions; and the comprehension of this principle will facilitate our understanding of Plato's attitude toward the fine arts. Why does Plato submit art to the test of moral purpose? In judging music and poetry by their educational and political implications, does he not convict himself of esthetic blindness? Surely beauty has its own value and must be sought for its own sake. We cannot grasp Plato's position unless we divest ourselves of contemporary prejudices concerning art, and enter imaginatively into the pattern of life as it existed for the Athenian citizen during Plato's time. Today art is largely something restricted to museums and to galleries, to a special Sunday among the days of the week, to a distinct corner in our lives. We conceive of the esthetic experience as something separate from the workaday routine of life. Business is only business, so we need to set an evening aside on which to attend a concert. Houses and utensils are just useful things, and so we build monuments whose special aim is to promote esthetic enjoyment. Ordinary movement in walking, standing, or sitting is often not very different from that which a machine might perform; so, to enjoy beauty in movement, we must watch the dancers on the stage. Speaking and writing anyhow as we do, we have to cultivate literature in a separate compartment of *belles-lettres*. To promote beauty, we separate it from ordinary experience and so impoverish both. A statement like Plato's that a change in the style of music might bring about a revolution in the state startles the modern reader.²

But if, for Plato, music is so dangerous, it is because it is so important. His criticism of art is a tribute to its power. "Education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else, rhythm and harmony *find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold of it*" (ἄρισταί, *Republic* 401d). Music is a power in character-formation as fully as knowledge is. Indeed, the power of the arts is more overwhelming than that of rational instruction because it is more direct. But whereas the influence of reason is stable, that of the arts is transitory. Emotions ebb and flow. Yet, if the esthetic experience is repeated a sufficient

²Cf. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, pp. 7-8.

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number of times, it is bound to issue into a corresponding habit in the soul. "Have you not observed that imitations, if continued far into life, settle down into habits and nature in the body, the speech, and the thought?" (395d). What is done in a playful mood insensibly develops into a settled habit.

In the Athens of Plato's day, art was part of the reservoir of experience—not a part so much as a character of experience, the manner of dressing, walking, talking, of being housed, of taking a meal, of worshipping the gods, of getting equipped for battle, of celebrating victory, of enduring defeat. Pindar's lyrics were largely composed to celebrate Olympic victories; Phidias was just a craftsman. For the Athenian there was hardly anything which was specifically literature; Homer's poems were accounts of the gods and of wars; drama was a part of religious ritual. In sum, art was a general aspect of the process of living; its importance came from its permeation of all life; and it was natural for Plato to judge art by its contribution to the organic whole of life. What, asks Plato, is the impact of music or poetry in the formation of habit; what religious insight does it contribute; what is its place in citizenship? There is the demand that the arts fit into the general purpose of life; *there is also the demand that ordinary experience conform to esthetic norms.* Plato criticizes the arts when they violate the organic principle, thereby becoming abstractions. And this is the sense in which Plato imposes the moral test upon the arts; it is the sense that they should play their rôle in enhancing the total life of the individual, taken by himself, or as a citizen, or in his relation to the gods.

To demand that the esthetic moment should not be a moment but an extended duration, to maintain that music has a greater influence on morals than anything else, is surely not a mark of disrespect for the arts. The organic principle is illustrated in Plato's doctrine of the good life, according to which nobility of character is reflected in grace of body, of speech, and of movement. Each phase of experience makes its own contribution, in respect of beauty or ugliness, to every other phase of experience; in short, esthetic enjoyment reverberates throughout the whole series of acts, thoughts, emotions, and institutions. Plato com-

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pares the good life to a musical harmony in which the parts of the soul blend with each other, the soul with the body, voice and gesture with the quality of the soul. Thus, all the diverse displays of beauty form an organism wherein each part acts on every other part, and whence, if one part be removed, all the others would suffer.

We are often told what a paradox it is that Plato the poet should be so critical of the poets. "If a man should arrive in our city bringing with himself the poems which he wished to exhibit, we should fall down and worship him as a holy and wondrous and delightful creature, but we should send him away to another city, after pouring myrrh down over his head, and crowning him with fillets of wool" (*Republic* 398a). It is true that Plato says of himself: "I am no poet"; yet it is obvious that, though he may not have been one in the technical sense, he was full of poetic feeling to which he was quite capable of giving expression. In his dramatic descriptions he is magnificent; he is vivid and evocative, and most of his myths are poems in prose. Especially in his earlier dialogues, not only does he appeal to the reader's critical intellect, but he carries him away by the intensity of his exaltation in the argument. We will maintain that the paradox is only superficial. In attacking conventional poetry, Plato is not attacking poetic inspiration. In fact, it is because of his belief in the value of poetic inspiration and of the vision of beauty that he condemns imitative poetry. The latter is a caricature, a distortion of the vision of beauty. Thus, Plato criticizes poetry in his capacity as a poet. The vision of beauty is essential to all genuine insight, and the poets miss it. Beauty is beyond all symbolism and all art; it can be grasped by metaphysical insight alone. The philosopher is the only true poet, and what goes by the name of poetry is as far from the genuine article as sense-experience is from knowledge.

Plato's attitude toward poetry and all the fine arts is closely integrated with his general metaphysical position. It is, in fact, a deduction from it; and conversely, his general position is an induction from his critique of poetry. His condemnation of the fine arts is rooted in his doctrine of the contrast between particular and universal. The particular as particular is cherished

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and valued in the field of the fine arts perhaps more than in any other human discipline. The painter seeks what is unique in the object, and he grasps it, not in so far as he shares a common essence with other human beings, but by virtue of his own concrete essence. In the fine arts, we seize the individual in the world by what is individual in ourselves. It may be objected that the artist is not concerned with the particular as such, but only as it reveals the universal. Even so, it must be granted that the artist is concerned with the universal only as it is found in particular manifestations. His intuition is a sensuous intuition; and he conveys meaning through symbolism. Value, for the artist, lies in the junction of the universal with the particular; a vision which is not embodied is not a work of art; it is nothing. Thus, in the artist's world, the universal is inseparably entangled in the concrete particular.

Now, for Plato, the really real is found in the realm of abstract forms; the particular is a distorted image of the universal, and, to the extent that it is particular, it is unreal. The painter, whose meaning is exhibited by color, and the musician, whose meaning is revealed by sound, are, so far forth, dealing with the world of opinion. The poet leads the soul downward, away from the really real; his inspiration comes from the reverse *eros*. To rediscover the way of truth, man must make a radical break with the habits and attitudes of the poet. He must turn away from symbols—which, being concrete, are feeble imitations of the ideal—to the vision of abstract beauty. The "old quarrel between philosophy and poetry" to which Plato refers (607b) is a genuine dispute, based as it is on the opposition between universal and particular. And, we must repeat, it is a quarrel between ideal poetry and the imitation of it.

Now, the reader, while agreeing with Plato that the standpoint of the fine arts, with their emphasis on the value of embodiment, is incompatible with a doctrine of pure forms, may draw a different moral from the story. Plato comes to the conclusion that the insight of the artist is inadequate; the reader may infer that Plato's own philosophy is inadequate, inasmuch as it fails to make a place for the insight of the artist. Thus, Plato's theory of the arts is of singular importance with respect

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to his general thought. It discloses the meaning of the general doctrine by displaying in a sharp and definite manner what it implies. Whatever the merits of this dispute, it is undoubted that Plato has given voice to a universally recurring strain in human thought, namely, to the puritan and iconoclastic attitudes, to the conviction of many wise men at all times that there is something weak and even silly in poetry, that the man as artist is devoid of seriousness, of reality, and of importance.

It is time that we discussed words. We have been using the word "art" to designate the class of activities such as poetry and music. Now the word "art" translated into Plato's Greek would correspond to *techne*, and by *techne* Plato does not mean what we mean by art. *Techne* is craft, work according to method. Poetry and painting are no more instances of *techne* for Plato than shoemaking and carpentering would necessarily be examples of art from our point of view. Thus, our terminology in this chapter is at cross-purposes with that of Plato. Modern usage distinguishes between the fine and the useful arts. For Plato, the fine cannot be anything but the useful; almost certainly shoe-making and carpentering are fine arts for him, whereas painting and sculpture are not. Obviously, this difference in vocabulary reflects a difference in doctrine. To explain the change which has come about in the meaning of the word *techne* from Plato's time to ours is to reveal the transformation in esthetic theory, and even more, the change in human attitudes and values which have taken place meanwhile. But our concern lies elsewhere just now; we must make clear and justify our terminology. Plato has no comprehensive word for what we now call the fine arts; sometimes he uses the word music generically, but mostly he refers to each individually. Now, since Plato fails to give us a term, we are going to adopt the phrase "fine arts" from contemporary usage, admitting the fact that such a use is arbitrary and contrary to Plato's intent.

Art is imitation.⁸ The essence of the doctrine of imitation is that the work of art is referential—that it is a symbol of something, whether of a concrete or an abstract object, whether of a subjective or an objective fact. When Plato speaks of art as

⁸See the preceding chapter for a technical analysis of imitation.

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imitative, he does not necessarily mean that it is concerned with a bodily object; it may refer to psychical attitudes, as music does. But in every case, the work of art does not terminate in itself; the esthetic perception is an incomplete fact pointing beyond itself, in the same fashion as the concrete object points beyond itself. Art is representation. The implications of such a doctrine in the field of criticism are momentous. The artist is conveying an emotion, or representing an insight; and the work of art must be criticized by reference to the depth of emotion and insight which it conveys. A technically excellent rendering of a shallow insight is inferior to a cruder rendering of a penetrating insight.

In discussing the arts, Plato refers among others to statuary, architecture, weaving and embroidery (*Republic* 401a). But his primary concern is with the dance, painting, literature and music. Plato is not interested in the technical aspects of the arts, and disclaims any knowledge of them. He speaks of literature as consisting of speeches and fables which deal with events in time—past, present and future. He divides literature in respect of manner rather than of content. There are the narrative and the imitative poets; the former stand outside their subject and refer to it in the third person; they are the epic poets. In the imitative arts, the poet impersonates his characters, as, for example, in the drama—both tragic and comic—and speaks in the dialogue form.⁴

Music, too, is representative; what it imitates is not external objects but subjective states, moods, and attitudes. Music consists of songs and tunes. The latter have three parts: words, harmony and rhythm, the words governing the other two. Plato greatly prefers simplicity to complexity in music.⁵ From his city he would exclude triangles, harps, flutes, and all many-stringed and polyharmonic instruments, keeping the lyre and the cither. Similarly for rhythm; “we must not pursue complexity nor great variety in the basic movements” (*Republic* 399e). There is quite a touch of the Spartan in Plato. He prefers his stories

⁴Plato is now using the term imitation in a special sense; of course, all art is imitation.

⁵But see below, p. 250.

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and speeches served up to him simply, without meter. He accuses the poets of seeing things in a mist of words; and is convinced that, when stripped of its musical coloring, a poetical work would make a poor showing.

In taking up Plato's analysis of art, we must distinguish between what from his point of view is bad and what good art. This terminology is inexact, because bad art is not unequivocally bad, and good art is such only relatively. We can achieve a more exact way of speaking by making use of Plato's conception of the ladder; there are levels of esthetic experience. There is one that is lower and another that is higher. The implication of Plato's notion of degrees of reality is that his attitude cannot at any point be taken as sweeping. If he is condemning art now, the reader must note that Plato permits art at another level to escape such condemnation. Also, our study is essentially of the vision of beauty; the steps in the ladder of art are part of the greater ladder of insight into beauty. We will begin with the consideration of the lower level of art.

Art deals with illusion (φάντασμα). The scientist is intent upon the real nature of an object, the artist upon the object as it appears. A concrete thing is an arrangement of sensible qualities according to a certain proportion and for a certain end. The real nature of a concrete thing is just this organization and function. The task of the scientist is to ascertain the intrinsic formula of the object; the artist, on the other hand, leaves out both formula and end; he observes only the sensible aspect of things—their face, so to speak. Consider the painter, distinguishing his work into two stages: that of observation and that of production. The scientist measures, counts, and weighs; he seeks and finds absolute sizes. The painter, ignoring the science of measurement, deals with relative sizes and relative colors. He observes the concrete bed which is made by the carpenter in imitation of the ideal bed. This places him at two removes from the really real. Even so, the painter does not observe the bed as it is but as it appears from a given position. In short, he obtains an image of a phantom, the copy of a copy, and is at a third remove from reality. Lacking all knowledge, he imitates

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what appears to be beautiful to the many, who know nothing.⁶ Protagoras held that the individual man is the measure of all things; that is the artist's standpoint as well. He considers the world as it is for him at a given moment from a particular perspective; he sees it as something unique for a unique percipient. A house viewed from the front appears quite different when viewed from the side. The common world of reason disintegrates into a variety of private objects for private selves.

Now, take the painter as producer. What the painter makes is not a real thing but only the appearance of a real thing. The picture of a bed is not a bed, any more than the reflection of the bed in a mirror is real. Thus, the painter does not make anything that is real; he is not a δημιουργός (as the craftsman is). Both as an observer and as a maker, the painter deals in illusion.

A concrete object is a mixture of the limit with the unlimited; it is the ordering of random motion for the best. The artist disrupts the unity of the mixture; ignoring or ignorant of the factor of the limit, he confines himself to the unlimited alone. The sensible is an image of the ideal; the artist views the sensible in abstraction from the ideal. His vision is false because abstract. Insight is valid only when organic—that is to say, only when it fuses diversity with unity, fact with rationality, accident with necessity. This explains why, according to Plato, the painter of the bed is further removed from the truth than the maker of the bed. The furniture-maker is concerned with the bed as a mixture; his business is to impart order to the indeterminate material on which he works; he views the particular as an instance of a universal.

Plato issues a general challenge to Homer. Though his words are bold and direct, Plato's manner is apologetic. "I am no poet," he says in so many words, "and I may give myself away as a crude rustic in my comments on poetry. I have revered Homer from childhood—Homer, the king of tragedians and teacher of all beauty in tragic poetry. Indeed I am quite conscious of the spell of poetry and would gladly have the best

⁶*Ibid.*, 602b. Yet elsewhere Plato asserts that in order to deceive the spectator one needs a *knowledge* of the archetype and of the possible ways—good or bad—of imitating it; cf. *Phaedrus* 262a.

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possible defense provided for it. But we must honor truth above persons. So I put the following question to Homer: Friend, tell us what cities have been better governed, owing to you, as Lacedæmon was because of Lycurgus, and Athens because of Solon. What inventions for the business of life do we owe to you, as we do to Thales? Or if you lay no claim to public services, have you perchance contributed any particular way of life to humanity? We have the Pythagorean way of life; is there any specifically Homeric way?" The answer is no to all the questions. Homer's spacious poetry, moving and charming as it is, contains not one single insight for posterity (*Republic* 595, 599-600, 607).

We have discussed the object which the artist imitates. Let us now turn to the subjective side. What resources in human nature does the poet draw upon, to what aspects of human nature does he appeal? The artist works solely with and upon the *irrational* part of the soul; and his inspiration comes from the primitive man in him. "He resembles a fountain which gives free course to the upward rush of water; he is often compelled to contradict himself, and he knows not which of the contradictory utterances is true" (*Laws* 719c). In man there is an ungovernable, untamable part, full of confusion, fretful, unstable, violent, and liable to excess. It discloses itself in sexual desire, anger, the various appetites, pleasures and pains of the soul. On this part reason sets a guard in normal life, controlling, even repressing it. Art—and here Plato would not exclude even the "noble and wonderful form of tragedy" (*Gorgias* 502b)—releases this part from the guardianship of reason and gives it full rein. Man as poet, or man as audience to the poet, gives himself over to the irrational soul and is swayed by it. To use contemporary terminology, art appeals to sheer emotion for its own sake. Thus, art issues from the aspect in human nature which represents the receptacle, just as it concerns itself in the world with what belongs to the receptacle in the object. As insight, the artistic experience corresponds to the lowest division in the divided line of knowledge; as human nature, it is the lowest manifestation of the *eros*—primitive and anarchical.

Tragedy induces pity; and comedy, laughter. A person who

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has suffered adversity is expected to control his grief and suffer loss with composure; but as audience to a tragedy he enters with sympathy into the lamentations of the hero bewailing similar losses and pities him. In a comedy—and for that matter, in private talk—a man will laugh at and delight in conduct which he would vigorously condemn if enacted on the stage of daily life. As an artist, then, man abandons the values of real life. Art is an escape from values; it is—to borrow James's phrase—a moral holiday. Nor can man sustain himself with the reflection that such a moral holiday is harmless; by pitying weakness in others, we form the habit of self-pity. The composer of a comedy shall be forbidden to ridicule a citizen, either with or without passion.⁷

The motive of art is pleasure pure and simple. The moralist aims at inculcating in man a union of pleasure with virtue, so that he may enjoy what is good; to the artist, moral purpose is

⁷Compare with the following quotation from Bergson: "What drama goes forth to discover and brings to light is a deep-seated reality that is veiled from us, often in our own interests, by the necessities of life. Poetry always expresses inward states. But among these states some arise mainly from contact with our fellow-men. They are the most intense as well as the most violent. Were man to give way to the impulse of his natural feelings, were there neither social nor moral law, these outbursts of violent feeling would be the ordinary rule in life. But utility demands that these outbursts should be foreseen and averted. And what interest advises, reason commands. Under this dual influence has perforce been formed an outward layer of feelings and ideas which cover, when they are not strong enough to extinguish it, the inner fire of individual passions. But volcanic eruptions occur. . . . And if the earth were a living being, as mythology has feigned, most likely when in repose it would take delight in dreaming of these sudden explosions whereby it suddenly resumes possession of its innermost nature. Such is the kind of pleasure that is afforded by drama. Beneath the quiet humdrum life that reason and society have fashioned for us, it stirs something within us which luckily does not explode, but which it makes us feel in its inner tension. It offers nature her revenge upon society. Whether it weakens society, or strengthens nature, it has the same end in view: that of laying bare a secret portion of ourselves, what might be called the tragic element in our character. This is indeed the impression we get after seeing a stirring drama. What has interested us is not so much what we have been told about others as, the glimpse we have caught of ourselves—a whole host of ghostly emotions that would fain have come into real existence, but, fortunately for us, did not. It also seems as if an appeal had been made within us to certain ancestral memories belonging to a faraway past." *Laughter*, Translation by A. Mitchell, pp. 157-160.

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irrelevant. Art neither instructs nor edifies; its aim is enjoyment, and whether the enjoyment be realized through contemplation of something good or of something bad, the artist does not care. But the natural basis of life is teleological. All things in nature seek the good; and they exist to the extent that they embody the good. To this fact the artist is blind; he sees nature as in playful movement, exuberant and disorderly, and revels in this disorder. Also, the natural basis of *human* conduct is teleological; the human soul has a function. Art is non-functional activity; it is make-believe, or as Plato calls it, play (*παιδιά*). It is not a serious enterprise and lacks genuineness. The poet's responses are unreal; the rhapsodist weeps over the sufferings he is recounting, but his tears are false.

That there is a necessary opposition between the good and pleasure is not a part of the Platonic thesis; the good pleases. But pleasure, being unlimited, extends beyond the good; and whereas the virtuous man restricts himself to those pleasures which come from the performance of virtuous acts, the artist is indiscriminating. The artist divorces pleasure from the good; he destroys the organic unity in human experience between desire and purpose; he makes of pleasure an abstraction.

Where there are no standards there can be no selection. The poet seeks to gratify all the pleasures and to satisfy everybody. The poet and the demagogue are alike. The poet appeals to the "many" within him and without; he is characterized by catholicity. The esthetic temperament consists in sensitiveness and responsiveness to the infinite variety of things; the artist is a receptacle for all nature, reproducing the endless diversity of phenomena, whether outside him or within himself. In the play, I enter into the feelings of all the characters, criminals as well as saints, and share their points of view; I accept them all as valid. But living means choosing and excluding; some things are good and some are bad, and what is bad must be destroyed. Universal sympathy involves the abandonment of moral standards, and a certain weakening of fiber. I owe sympathy only to principle, by which I may judge character. Thus, the artist sins against the principle of exclusion, of not-being. But the craftsman is rigidly selective; he includes and excludes

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by reference to an ideal standard. We can now see clearly why Plato exiles the imitative poets from the state. The principle of citizenship is justice, which is differentiation. The poet fails to conform to the norm of citizenship because he violates the principle of justice. In the ideal state, each citizen is identified with a particular function; but the poet is a universal craftsman, creating "plants, implements, gods, and himself" (*Republic* 596c, 598b). What the citizens know severally, each as an expert in a particular field, the poet knows all by himself; he poses as an expert in every field. The actor imitates all characters; like the democratic man, he has no character of his own.

We have the artist as man. Such is the man with the dramatic temperament. In his intellectual life he never quite believes; he only fancies; ideas pass before him like images, like pictures in a gallery; he enjoys them all; he is polygamous in thought. Or if he chooses, it is for a time; he has intellectual enthusiasms rather than convictions. Nothing goes deep; there is a certain externality to his moods and ideas. Such a man has no reality; he dramatizes his own life; he poses for the public, and primarily for himself. Plato has one general name for this attitude; it is flattery (*κολακεία*); and he uses this term to denote a genus which includes not only poetry but sophistry, oratory, the art of the demagogue, and the empirical arts in production as well.

The sophist, the demagogue, and the orator illustrate the same principle of catholicity which we found exemplified in the poet. The sophist knows everything (*πάνσοφος*); he expresses a willingness to instruct the student on every subject under the sun. Like the sophist, the poet knows too much; he is a universal creator. Both violate the principle of justice. The demagogue, the sophist, the orator, the poet, the tradesman for whom "business is business"—all are catholic, gratifying the multitude and its appetites, without any selectiveness.

Let us now sum up Plato's indictment of the poet. The poet fails in respect of truth, of the good, of the principle of differentiation. He breaks up the unity of human nature by dissociating passion from the control of the best, and he further ignores the organic unity of universal nature by holding the concrete image apart from the abstract truth which it represents.

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Beneath the fervors of Plato's attack on the poets, the reader may discern a theory of art with which he might agree, while dissenting from the condemnation which goes with it. That the artist is concerned with the sensuous and the unique in things, that he is receptive to the many-sided variety of nature, that he draws his inspiration from his emotional nature as distinct from conceptual thought, that he peoples his world with fantasies and illusions, that he seeks immediate enjoyment as divorced from purposive action—all these are statements to which many theorists and practitioners of poetry would consent. The reader may, however, proceed to ask himself whether Plato, so discerning in his judgment of the nature of poetry, may not be wrong in his estimation of it. The insight of the artist is false only on the assumption that the receptacle is unreal. The poet and the painter are concerned with the particular and the unique; their vision is defective provided only the descent from the formal to the concrete is taken to be a dilution of reality. The artist enjoys the world and communicates that enjoyment; but may it not be true that the good life is not limited to the pursuit of the good? That art discovers reality and value in immediate experience and in the enjoyment of it is a fact to be held, not against art, but against the formalism of Plato's philosophy.

Yet in the end, Plato allows a useful function even to art on a lower level. A man of the right sort will not imitate, in a play, a character inferior to him, *except in the few cases when he is doing some good* (*Republic* 396d). Plato holds that the senses deceive; he also says that the senses provoke reflection by presenting the mind with contradictions which it is incited to solve (523e ff.). Play is non-functional; and yet, in play, the child is forming habits which will be valuable in later life. Children rehearse in play the situations with which they will be confronted when they grow up. Play, and possibly art, too (since it is play), are an imaginative anticipation of life. Wine-drinking is educational for the adults. Provided that the master of ceremonies remains sober, a wine-festival is good because, by getting drunk, the adults are exposed to temptation by their passions without risk. What is non-functional, even what is bad, may

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have a function. "It is impossible to learn one of a pair of contraries without the other, if one is to be a wise man. But to put both into practice is equally impossible." So Plato proposes to impose mimicry of anything ludicrous, through ignorance, on slaves and foreign hirelings (*Laws* 816e). The various stages of art will all be represented in the community by people whose level of insight corresponds to these stages.

We now proceed from the lower to the higher level of art. This is a change of degree which is also a change of kind; it entails a turning around of the soul of the artist from the contemplation of shadows to that of realities. On the lower level, art is evil and false; on the higher level, art represents a definite achievement of value. It is wrong to regard Plato as merely engaged in criticizing art; he is also engaged in setting up the principles by which any work of art may be judged. And his particular criticisms of art are applications of these principles to the matter in hand. In this section, we will be concerned primarily with the more fundamental question of what the pattern of good art is; once we have grasped this pattern we will be able retrospectively to understand Plato's reasons for his judgments concerning particular works of art. Inasmuch as the value of a work of art is determined by objective standards, change in the style and type of the arts is pointless, even harmful. The essential thing is to get hold of the true principles and then cling to them. Plato is a traditionalist in art; truth does not change in art, any more than it does in science or mathematics. Plato even goes so far as to suggest, following the example of Egypt, the incorporation of the principles of art into legislation, thus making any change in artistic style a crime. Yet he hesitates; how can one be sure that one has grasped the truth concerning musical correctness? "To effect this would be the task of a god" (*Laws* 657a, 816c).

As usual, the arts in which Plato is more directly concerned are poetry and painting, music and the dance. And his discussion of the arts is more detailed in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, both of them dialogues primarily concerned with education. The topic of art is a subdivision of the topic of education. On the higher

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level, art restores the true order whereby the better controls the worse part in the soul. The essence of good art is the same as the essence of the good life, namely, discipline (ἐγκράτεια, *Republic* 431a), wherein impressions are organized according to a pattern, and the passions are ruled by reason. Have pleasure as your standard, if you like—says Plato in so many words—but only the pleasures of the best and the best-educated. The appeal is to civilized desire. Not man but the good man is the test. The objection is not to the presence of passion, but only to absence of control by the limit.

Along with piety, what distinguishes man from the animals is that he alone is endowed with a “pleasurable sense of rhythm and harmony” in motion (*Laws* 653e). This is a native quality elicited by education. The origin of the artistic impulse lies in the natural tendency to movement. Children leap about wildly and cry out; the various art-forms arise when this natural movement is made rhythmical. The impulse to motion is of two kinds: motion of the voice, and motion of the body. Rhythm in the first is music; rhythm in the second is dance. Thus, the material of art is wild irregular motion in all living things; the achievement of art is control of frenzied movement (of voice or gesture) by the principle of order. Art has two parents: frenzy and rhythm; it is Bacchic as well as Apollonian. Art, on this level, belongs to the mixed class; its character as a discipline arises from the presence of the limit. However, discipline enters by way, not of destroying the spontaneity, but of sustaining it. In art, the natural feelings, the immediate sensations, the spontaneous motions, the frenzy and the inspiration are utilized and controlled.

There are three conditions for artistic rightness; a work of art must be an exact representation of its original; its original must be a virtue, not a vice; the work of art must have charm. In sum, it must be true, good, and pleasant. (a) The relation of the work of art to its original is that of likeness (ὁμοιον) or equality (ἰσότης). It must be similar to its object in respect both of quantity and quality; it must reproduce the dimensions of the original, the number of its parts in their proper places and in their mutual relationships, down to the shapes and colors

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of the object. Thus, the good artist frees himself from the distortions of perspective and distance, and grasps the constitutive formula of the object. This is the demand of truth in art. (b) It is not enough to achieve exactness of representation; the artist must represent the right things. Not any subject matter will do; the artist selects only those objects which are good. We shall admit into our city only hymns to the gods and the praises of good men. The dramatist should never depict the unjust man as happy; the dancer should convey the mood of bravery, never of cowardice. The poet should sing two kinds of song, one for war and one for peace. There is the mood of man suffering adversity, and the mood of man controlling adversity; man under the compulsion of necessity, and man as free. The songs of war should depict steadfastness and courage; those of peace, modesty and joy. Correspondingly, there are two divisions of the dance, peaceful and warlike. The warlike dances represent modes of eluding blows and also motions of attack. "In all these cases the action and the tension of the sinews are correct when there is a representation of fair bodies and souls in which most of the limbs of the body are extended straight; this kind of representation is right, but the opposite kind we pronounce to be wrong" (*Laws* 815a). On the other hand, the dance of peace should depict man in a state of prosperity and in the corresponding mood of joy.

All imitation of ungoverned passion and of frenzy will be prohibited. Our young men will not be allowed to play the rôle of women wrangling with husbands, defying heaven and loudly boasting; still less women that are sick, in love or in labor; nor the rôle of cowards and madmen; least of all will they be allowed to imitate "neighing horses, lowing bulls, the noise of rivers, the roar of the sea, and thunder" (*Republic* 395d-396b).

(c) A work of art should please. The third condition is not co-ordinate with the other two. Charm is not an independent test; as Plato says, pleasure is not a cause by itself, but is an accompaniment to the fulfilment of the other two conditions. What is wholesome in food is pleasant; so what is "right" artistically is charming. The doctrine that pleasure as such determines artistic rightness is blasphemous (*Laws* 655d). Pleasure

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tells us nothing about intrinsic value, since it does not discriminate between good and bad. But pleasure is good and should be had from works of art as the inevitable concomitant of truthfulness.

There is something almost shocking in the demands which Plato makes upon art. The condition as to exactness of representation seems to reduce painting to unimaginative photography, or, at best, to mechanical drawing; the demand that the artist should restrict himself to virtue for his models seems to subordinate art altogether to morality, and to deprive it of any independence of viewpoint. One is reminded of André Gide's aphorism that more crimes have been committed against art in the name of virtue than in any other name. In Plato's scheme, art becomes an instrument of politics; the statesman censors works of art for reasons of state. In short, the contribution of art as a distinct function is ignored.

The answer, partly, is that Plato does not *subject* art to the tests of knowledge and virtue; he is emphasizing the organic unity of these three functions. If, in Plato, art is reduced to morality, so is morality reduced to art. To be virtuous is to have inward harmony and grace. Also, the demand of truthfulness in representation is a demand for esthetic values, in the ultimate analysis. An object is real to the extent that it embodies proportion and harmony; truthfulness in a work of art consists in a vivid evocation of pattern. Now, the real pattern does not lie on the face of the object and is not grasped by photographic perception, so to speak. Appearance distorts and conceals the truth; the artist recovers it by the use of imaginative insight. Thus, beauty is the test of artistic rightness in the last analysis, if not immediately. Plato appeals to truth and virtue as criteria only because he holds that these two are manifestations of beauty.

Although such considerations mitigate what is objectionable in Plato's viewpoint, they do not altogether remove it. We will proceed further beyond Plato's conscious intent, and try to disentangle the implications of Plato's doctrine from his explicit assertions, while admitting that perhaps Plato himself was not aware of these implications. Theories of art may be divided into two schools: one school emphasizes the distinctness of art from

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the intellectual and ethical attitudes; the other emphasizes its interdependence with these. The non-Platonic school construes artistic vision in terms of pure immediacy, divested of intellectual content; the Platonic school regards immediacy in art as the vehicle of meaning. According to the Platonic school, art arises from belief and gives expression to it. It is significant that for common sense, the word belief connotes both judgment concerning truth and moral conviction. And it is in this sense that art issues from belief. Thus, art is essentially religious, arising as it does from a felt conviction concerning the universal nature of things.

Now, the great art of Athens in Plato's time was, in fact, religious. The masterpieces of tragedy were not concerned with men as casual individuals in casual encounters; they dealt with man as confronting destiny. Greek tragedy views man in the background of cosmic forces, in contrast with much of modern drama which deals with human beings as immediate phenomena in their immediate relations. The question is whether Plato was justified in making an induction from Greek art to all art, whether all great art is not nourished by conviction concerning first and last things, and is not an evocation of a felt insight into the order of nature.

We have said that, for Plato, art is the exact representation of characters of things. There is no real knowledge of things apart from knowledge of the forms which they embody. Art is intelligent experience. "Is it not also true that if there are any likenesses of letters reflected in water or mirrors, we shall never know them until we know the originals—but such knowledge belongs to the same art and discipline?" "By all means." "Then, by heaven, am I not right in saying that by the same token we shall never be true musicians, either . . . until we are able to recognize the *forms* of soberness, courage, liberality, and high-mindedness, and all their kindred and their opposites, too, in all the combinations that contain and convey them, and to apprehend them and their images wherever found" (*Republic* 402b, c).

There are several remarks to be made on the passage just quoted. We cannot know the images unless we know the forms

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of which they are the likeness. Esthetic insight is insight into the universals as embodied in things, or alternatively, insight into things in terms of their forms. Thus, art is a vision of the forms somehow; a work of art possesses rightness to the extent that it conveys a pattern through a medium. The perception of the artist is clothed with universal meaning. And the meaning which is conveyed is not casual but organized. For the artist has a knowledge of the forms as organized into a system. The interrelatedness between forms and between realms of forms makes for an interrelation among the arts. Plato does not conceive of the arts as separate activities, but as constituting one organic art together. For instance, he objects to the sundering of tune from poetry, and of dance from both (*Laws* 669e). The rhythm of the dance corresponds to the rhythm of the music, and the music to the poetry. Dance, music, poetry are elements in one determinate activity; for instance, the use of the harp without the accompaniment of dance and song is declared to be the sign of a boor (*Laws* 669e). But whether painting and sculpture also enter into the unity is not clear.

Furthermore, the artist apprehends the forms with their opposites; that is to say, the artist cannot produce good works unless he knows the bad. To sum up, artistic insight is a knowledge of the whole structure of forms and their contraries as they are mirrored in the realm of appearance. *It is a grasp of order through its concrete embodiment.* Finally, the knowledge of the likenesses belongs to the same discipline as the knowledge of the originals. That is to say, artistic insight is continuous with all knowledge; it constitutes a lower step than reason on what is one and the same ladder of knowledge. As the concrete objects are reflections of the forms, so the forms are reflections of universal beauty. Thus, ultimately, art is an imitation of beauty (*Laws* 668b).

We will now consider in some detail the kind of insight which the poet obtains into the forms and ultimately into beauty as such. That he has some kind of insight into these is clear from the above; it is, however, unlike philosophical insight. The poet grasps beauty sensuously, in its embodiments, and not as it is in itself. For example, he has an immediate certainty that this par-

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ticular scene is beautiful without having formulated any standards of beauty to himself. His certainty does not proceed from reasoning; he has recognition without recollection (vide *Meno* 98a, concerning virtue). What, then, enables the poet to recognize beauty? Divine inspiration, answers Plato. No man can produce lasting poetry by *techné*, or while in a state of sanity; the poet is an inspired madman, possessed by the gods (*Phædrus* 245a). What does Plato mean by *mania* or enthusiasm? We will say that enthusiasm corresponds to true opinion as contrasted with *nous*, or reason, in the ladder of knowledge. The problem is more general, embracing, as it does, ethical knowledge as well. Statesmen conduct the affairs of cities successfully without having thought out for themselves a general theory of the good life, since they are unable to transmit their knowledge to their children. Statesmen, for the large part, do not arrive at their conclusions by reasoning from first principles; they have a kind of flair or intuition for what it is best to do; or, as Plato says, they are divinely inspired. In sum, the poet knows this concrete object to be beautiful without having the abstract pattern of beauty before his mind; the statesman knows this line of conduct to be right without having the form of the good before his mind. This is true opinion; it is true, because, as Plato says (*Meno* 99c), it works; many and great things are done by it. But it is only opinion and not knowledge; it is belief *that* something is so without knowledge *why* it is so.

Thus, human beings have a way of acquiring true beliefs concerning matters of esthetic and ethical value, which is not the way of reason (*ὄντι νοῦ*, *Meno* 99c). We might call it imagination; Plato calls it inspiration. Both terms alike point to the fact that there is no definite technique for obtaining novel insight; one can only wait and be ready for it when it comes. To be possessed by the gods is to be passive; the insight comes or does not. This type of insight is non-rational in the further respect that the very content of the insight is non-conceptual. The inspired poet knows now what he is uttering (*Meno* 99c, d). While I may be capable of recognizing a given dance-movement as rhythmical or not with unerring discernment, I may at the same time be wholly incapable of giving a definition or explana-

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tion of rhythm. The forms, and beauty itself, are felt, not cognized conceptually. Enthusiasm is cognition of beauty by way of feeling; and it is a cognition which is appropriately expressed in myths, in works of art, or directly, in the conduct of life.⁸

The immediate apprehension of rightness in art and in conduct is not unlike a species of moral taste; it enables the young to discern right and wrong immediately, without having recourse to the pattern of the good. This makes for the importance of music in the training of the character. "The well-educated man both sings and dances well." Plato goes so far as to say that the whole of the dance is identical with the whole of education (*Lysis* 654b, 672e). Chants and songs are a way by which virtue is made attractive; by these virtue is taught as though by play. Art is a way of making the good vivid and thus strengthening its persuasive power over the emotions (664c). But the habits of art are not just a step to the habits of virtue, to be abandoned as soon as virtue is attained; in the mature life, the two are joined in an inseparable unity. No man can cultivate virtue while ignoring taste in manners and speech. The taste of a community in respect of music and the dance is an index to its moral standards. Thus, a state cannot concentrate on character to the neglect of esthetic education. The converse is also true. An individual intent on becoming a good poet or painter cannot afford to ignore the ordering of his inner life. Rhythm, whether in bodily movement, or in the conduct of the soul, is one and the same rhythm. "Like invites like" (*Republic* 425c). Good speech and grace of movement follow upon a good disposition; and the latter is nurtured by the former.

The orderly dance and music have a healing effect upon the turbulent part of the soul; they have a psycho-medicinal function. "Whenever one applies an external shaking to affections of this kind (*i.e.* fears), the external motion thus applied overpowers the internal motion of fear and frenzy, and by thus overpowering it, it brings about a manifest calm in the soul and a cessation of the grievous palpitation of the heart which had existed in each case. Thus it produces very satisfactory results. The children it puts to sleep, literally casting a spell upon them.

⁸See *infra*, p. 280.

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The Bacchants, who are awake, it brings into a sound state of mind instead of a frenzied condition, by means of dancing and playing, with the help of whatsoever gods they chance to be worshipping with sacrifice" (*Laws* 790e, 791a). Thus there is a kind of homeopathic treatment of motion by motion, and of emotion by emotion. The inner frenzy is overcome by the ordered frenzy of the dance; the inner commotion is drawn out of the soul and objectified into the activity of the dance. And with the resulting purgation, the soul is rendered calm. Is it possible that the passage we have just cited supplies a clue to the meaning of Aristotle's so famous but no less obscure phrase that tragedy purges the emotions by pity and terror?

Yet all art of the better sort, controlled though it be, has one trait which disqualifies it from being a serious contribution to the vision of beauty. The artist is a creator of phantoms; that is to say, he is no creator at all. A painter holds the mirror to nature and obtains reflections, not realities. It is one thing to make the picture of a table, another to make a table. The handicraftsman, despite the fact that he does not produce the really real, is entitled to the name of demiourgos—creator or maker. But the painter is not; he has produced an illusion of a table; his is a pretense at making. Practice is superior to imitation. If a poet or painter were able, asks Plato, to create the original which he depicts, do you suppose he would at all care for the illusion? Paraphrasing Shaw's epigram, we might say that he who can does; he who cannot becomes an artist. Talking about life is no substitute for living it; a dramatist inventing characters cannot compare, as a creator, with parents engendering offspring in flesh and blood. Far better memorials for a man are noble deeds and works than works of art; it is preferable to be the theme of praise than the praiser (*Republic* 599a, d).

Yet the difference between the two is not so sharp as it seems. Compare the actor with the historical character whom he is depicting. The actor does not really live his life; he plays at living it. But even the actual man living out his life in days and nights is not *really* being the man he is; for, according to Plato, all actuality is an appearance of reality. Both the painter and the maker are removed from the real, the former more than the lat-

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ter. The difference is one of degree. And as they are alike in what they lack, so they are alike in what they have. The work of art is, after all, a serious contribution; both the work of art and the concrete object have *some* degree of reality. We are dealing with the ladder of the vision of beauty, and art is one step upward. Thus, Plato in the *Symposium* (209d) classifies the poetry of Homer and Hesiod as real creations ensuring immortality to their authors; and elsewhere (*Phædrus* 248d) he ranks the poets above the craftsmen.

CHAPTER XIII

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WE WILL next consider the vision of beauty as manifested in what we might call *actual* things—actual in the sense of belonging to the world of opinion rather than that of conjecture. For instance, there is the contrast between the actual table and the picture of the table. Under this heading we will classify together (*a*) works of craftsmanship, such as household furnishings, and implements (*σκεῦη*), that is, works of the “useful” arts; (*b*) virtue in the individual and in the state; (*c*) finally, what might be called outcomes of natural productivity, as, for example, the engendering of children by man, or the world as an outcome of divine creation. We must reiterate that the law of continuity prevails in all creative activity; art, craft-work, nature, and virtue are all manifestations, on varying levels, of the impulse to beauty. In leaving art, we do not leave the esthetic attitude behind us; rather, we go forward with it. To create a planet or a state, to order appetites or physical motions, to get knowledge out of sense-experience or to make a utensil—all these follow from man’s innate impulse to create; all alike are animated by the stirrings of love; all are stimulated by the vision of beauty.

We are now considering production of things, *i.e.* genuine creation. Man is already pregnant, suggests Plato, in approaching woman (*Symposium* 206d). This somewhat paradoxical statement is intended to convey the fact that man has an internal impulse to create; he creates because he must. The soul is self-moving. All creativity, whether in art or craft, ethics or politics, arises, like the sexual impulse, from man’s urge for immortality. The creative impulse is the affirmation of eternity in time. Due to the frustrations experienced at birth, the creative impulse is dormant, just as innate knowledge is dormant; it needs to be

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aroused by the vision of beauty. Beauty is the presiding muse in all birth. And the stimulus is beauty in some *actual embodiment*—for example, in a woman, or in a boy, or in surrounding nature—beauty as already achieved in an actual city or in an actual science. In the divine activity, the vision of abstract beauty comes first, and the embodiment after. But man, in his life on earth, must begin with some concrete manifestation and thence rise gradually to the abstract pattern of beauty. The process is self-continuing; an existing instance of beauty excites man to create a further exemplification of beauty, which, in its turn, serves as a stimulus for further creation.

From the vision of beauty in the actual thing comes the release of the creative impetus; and from this release issues an actual creature of beauty. Thus, we have the stimulus and the outcome, with the *eros* as the link in-between. Since motion is the very essence of the soul, we may say that the history of man, when guided by reason, is nothing more than what he does to himself and to other things for the sake of beauty. Man as artisan of beauty is the whole of man. Plato points out that the word poetry in Greek means any production; “for of anything whatever that passes from not-being into being the whole cause is poetry, so that the products of all the arts (*techne*) are poetry, and their craftsmen are all poets. . . . It is just the same with *eros*. Generically indeed it is the desire of good things” (*Symposium* 205c). Let us study each kind of craftsman in turn.

(a) The creative impulse finds its first genuine opportunity in the making of tools, household furnishings, and so forth. Since actions have their intrinsic natures, there is such a thing as a science of action, namely, *techne*—art. We must act not as we wish but as the nature of the action prescribes. For example, if we undertake to cut anything we should not cut as we wish and with whatever tool we wish, but in accordance with the nature of cutting and with the appropriate instrument. So, too, burning is an art determined by the intrinsic nature of burning (*Cratylus* 387a, b). *Techne* is the process of embodying form in material. Consider, for instance, the making of such a tool as a shuttle. The process of making a shuttle is one of embodying

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the form of the shuttle into wood. The materials may vary, but the form remains the same. In the making of a borer, different smiths use different iron, but so long as they are embodying into their material the same form, they are making a borer (*Cratylus* 389c-e).

Plato mentions builders and shipwrights by name; each of these "selects (ἐκλέγει) the things he applies to his work; not at random, but with the purpose of giving a certain form (εἶδος τι) to whatever he is working upon; . . . each of them arranges everything according to a certain order, and forces one part to fit and suit with another, until he has combined the whole into a regular and well-ordered production" (*Gorgias* 503e). That is to say, the craftsman has a standard in view, so that his selective activity is guided, not by chance impulse, but according to a rule. He rejects some materials and includes others; and upon what he includes he imposes a type of order, suiting each part to each. By virtue of the methodical limitation, the product achieves an individuality; by virtue of the integration of the materials included, the product achieves a unity. Thus the world of craftsmanship has the wholeness and integrity of a work of art; moreover, its harmony is not anyhow, but a harmony arising from the suitability of its individual members to each other. The product of the craftsman has the rightness of a work of art, and, in addition, has more substance.

When is a work of *techne* right? When the product (ἔργον) conforms to the ideal form. Plato takes the hypothetical case of a carpenter making a shuttle; supposing, he asks, the shuttle breaks while the carpenter is making it; then will the latter make another shuttle with his mind fixed on that which is broken or on that form with reference to which he was making the one which he broke? The answer is that the carpenter will have in mind the latter, which is the real shuttle as such (*Cratylus* 389b). Rightness has no ethical connotation, in our modern narrow usage of the term ethical. Rightness is the quality attaching to a sound job, without reference to motive or to choice in the producer. Rightness is a relevant consideration not only in the *producing* of things but in the *criticism* of them, once they have been produced. The world of opinion is not something merely

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to be noted; it is a job well or badly done. And criticism is by reference to principles internal to the object—internal in the sense that they constitute its nature.

Thus *techne* is based on knowledge. If we abstract numeration and measurement from *techne*, what is left is worthless. Plato divides *techne* into two classes: a lower and a higher. The lower kind relies on conjecture fortified by past experience; to this kind music, agriculture, and medicine belong. The higher kind, which includes the art of building ships and houses, uses measurements and instruments yielding exactness in the result (*Philebus* 55e–56c). In *techne*, theory and practice meet; action is controlled by method. The theory of a craft is, so to speak, inherent (ἐμφυτον, *Politicus* 258e) in its application, and is not conceived independently of practice. But this is true only of particular details of action; there is a generalized theory which is constructed independently of its application. The architect prepares a plan which he then transmits to the masons (260a). In Plato's definition of *techne* we find the doctrine that practice can be an embodiment of theory, and that action should proceed according to a pattern. Like all well-mixed concrete things, the works of *techne* are mixtures of the limit with the unlimited. It has been said often that, though the Greeks discovered the ideal of orderly thinking, it remained for the Romans to conceive the ideal of orderly practice, individual or institutional. But in Plato, we find the Roman ideal anticipated. The social context in Plato's time was one in which practice tended to be in charge of "practical" men—for instance, medicine in the hands of "empirical" doctors. Protesting against these customs, Plato upholds the pattern of community activities and arts which are illumined by science. The empirical practitioner proceeds by rote; his mind is entrenched in routine. But the scientific doctor acts from an investigation of the disease and its causes, offering not palliatives but remedies. The former prescribes the same drug for all ailments indiscriminately; the latter classifies diseases, distinguishing them from one another.

By virtue of his recognition of the interrelation among the forms, the craftsman makes wholes by fitting part to part, whether he makes ships, houses, cities, or virtues. *Techne* is the

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making of complexes or wholes in which all the parts are particular things adapted to one another. The internal organization of the whole is an exhibition of *dynamis* in the sense that part acts upon part. The parts are joined together in friendship (*φιλία*) whether in the universe or in the city; and reason is the "golden cord" binding the constituent members together in the soul, in the city, and in the world at large. Thus reason functions in a manner analogous to that of the vowel in the syllable, or of the greatest kinds in the interweaving of the forms. It is a principle of selection and exclusion. We are told that statecraft is the art which weaves all the parts of the state most perfectly together (*Politicus* 305e). A musical piece is a composition (*σύστημα*) of various notes properly adapted to each other, produced on the basis of the knowledge of the interrelations and contrasts of the notes and of their corresponding effects upon the movements in the body (*Philebus* 17d).

Finally, *techne* is the adaptation, according to the standard of the mean, of actions to suit ends and circumstances. A speech is good provided it is a certain kind of speech made at the right time, of the appropriate length, in a certain manner, and designed to persuade the hearer to a certain action or belief (*Phædrus* 272a). Thus, rightness in action, speech, or virtue is a form of tact; it is the composition of a variety of factors, such as means, ends, and the circumstances of time and place, into a properly harmonized whole.

Over and above the maker of the implement, there is the man who uses it. The knowledge of the technician is inferior to that of the user. An implement has a function; now, the maker is not the judge of whether the implement which he has made actually performs its function; he must consult the person who will use it. The user knows best and reports to the maker; the flute-player gives orders to the flute-maker. There are, in all, three types of art, that which uses, that which makes, and that which imitates. The maker has right opinion; the user has knowledge; the imitator has neither (*Republic* 601d-602a).

(b) Then there are those who deal with the soul—in the individual, or in the group. These are the orators, teachers, and statesmen; their aim is virtue, which is rightness in respect of

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the functionings of the soul (*Ibid.* 506d). That the formation of virtuous habits and the organization of cities is an advance in the scale of beauty beyond conventional and in the direction of ideal music can easily be shown by numerous citations from Plato's works. "Then he who blends gymnastics with music and applies them most suitably to the soul is the man whom we should most rightly pronounce to be the most perfect and harmonious musician, *far rather than* the one who brings the strings into unison with one another" (*Republic* 412a).

In individual virtue, there is the discipline of reason upon appetite, imposing order upon chaos, limitation upon excess, direction upon spontaneous activity. The relation of reason to appetite is not so much a conflict of two forces as a concord, in which each part contributes its share to establish harmony through contrast. Again, Plato's use of musical terms for an account of virtue is striking to a degree. "Do you see, then, that our intuition was not faulty just now that discerned a likeness between temperance (*σωφροσύνη*) and harmony? . . . It (temperance) extends literally through the entire gamut, bringing about the unison in the same chant of the strongest, the weakest, and the intermediate, whether in wisdom, or, if you please, in strength, or for that matter in numbers, wealth, or any similar field" (432a). Temperance is like a chant, or perhaps a dance, in which a variety of psychological motions is harmonized according to a certain rule, such that the three activities of the soul, reason, spirit, and appetite, receive their due place. Aristotle quotes the above passage as an example of faulty definition by metaphor.⁹ He fails to see that this is not merely a metaphor, but that a point of doctrine is involved—the point, namely, that the characteristic traits of esthetic experience are not peculiar to art, but are pervasive of all human experience. That there are differences at the same time, Plato would not deny. On the one hand, there is the uniform character of the general rule of harmony; on the other, there are the specific differences of different realms of subject matter, by which the condition of harmony is qualified and particularized.

Plato interprets justice itself as a musical concord. "A man

⁹*Topics* IV. 3. 5, quoted in Paul Shorey's ed. of *Republic* I, p. 362.

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must not suffer the principles in his soul to do each the work of some other, but . . . having first attained to self-mastery and beautiful order within himself, and having harmonized these three principles, the notes or intervals of three terms quite literally the lowest, the highest, and the mean, and all others there may be between them, and having linked and bound all three together and made of himself a unit, one instead of many, self-controlled and in unison, he should then and then only turn to practice . . ." (443d, e). Let us analyze the traits common to justice and to music, as exhibited in the foregoing passage. Justice, Plato says, includes self-mastery; so does beauty in the dance consist in the control of spontaneous motion by rhythm. Justice is the demand of self-limitation upon each part of the soul so that it may not overflow its natural bounds; so is beauty achieved in art by restraint, and an inward control of emotion. Justice is the principle of differentiation; so does beauty entail contrast. Finally, justice is the co-operation of the diverse parts for the sake of the whole, as music is the unison of diverse notes. And as the notes form a scale, so do the parts of the soul. The transition from justice in the individual to justice in the state is obvious. "Strains of music are our laws." In a well-ordered state, in which each individual confines himself to a specific function, there is the same fine precision, the same adjustment of part to part, as in a musical harmony. Such a state needs no poets, for it is a poem, and the statesmen are the poets. But we will quote Plato's justly famous passage *verbatim*. "Now as to what are called our 'serious' poets, the tragedians—suppose that some of them were to approach us and put some such question as this:—'O Strangers, are we, or are we not, to pay visits to your city and country, and traffic in poetry? Or what have you decided to do about this?' What would be the right answer to make to these inspired persons regarding the matter? In my judgment, this should be the answer:—'Most excellent of Strangers, we ourselves, to the best of our ability, are the authors of a tragedy at once superlatively fair and good; at least, our whole state is framed as a representation of the fairest and best life, which is in reality, as we assert, the truest tragedy. You are poets and we are poets, both

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makers of the same strains, rivals and actors in the fairest of dramas, which true law alone can bring to perfection'” (*Laws* 817a, b).

The statesman is the demiurge of freedom; he imitates virtue in himself and should imitate nothing else; it is not for him to impersonate characters in a play (*Republic* 395e). He is an artist who, first of all, molds and fashions himself, but on whom compulsion is laid to stamp the timeless patterns on the plastic matter of human nature (*Ibid.* 500d).

(c) Finally, there is the divine demiourgos, creating nature from the love of beauty. Man creates and makes from the need to escape death; but God is eternal and his creativity does not arise from any lack. The whole of nature is an exhibition of beauty, more perfect than any other work which utilizes the receptacle. “*Heaven* and earth and *gods* and men are held together by communion and friendship, by orderliness, temperance, and justice; and that is the reason, my friend, why they call the whole world by the name of order (τάξις). . . . Geometrical equality is capable of great things both amongst *gods* and amongst men” (*Gorgias* 508a). A star, not less than a state but more, is a composition of delicately adjusted parts; and the whole of nature, from the greatest to the least, is an organism of harmonious motions, exhibiting integrity, completeness and rightness. There is gracefulness in the movement of celestial bodies and in the flight of birds; there is the beauty of each individual creature, and there is the beauty of the mutual adjustment of each part to each other and to the whole.

Two things may be said by way of comment upon the general theory of craftsmanship. In the first place, Plato expects all creative work—and not merely works of art in the restricted sense—to conform to the norm of esthetic rightness. In the second place, the failure of the fine arts arises from the fact that they locate beauty in a realm of illusion, while the crafts succeed because they take beauty seriously, welding the experience of beauty with useful, purposive action. Nevertheless, the crafts fail too; their products, though more substantial than those of art, are not substantial enough. An artifact and a vir-

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tuous habit are *images* of beauty; the craftsman embodies beauty in concrete objects, and nothing which is in the world of flux is really real—not even ordered souls or ordered cities. Craftsmen deal with the temporal world—what has been, is, or will be; they study how things come about, how they act or are acted upon. They investigate the objects of opinion and make use of opinion in investigating them (*Philebus* 59a). For an achievement of the vision of beauty, we must rise from the sensible to the intelligible world. Poetry and production aim at a goal forever beyond their grasp; the beauty, of which they give only an intimation, is finally seized in science and philosophy.

Thus the line of the vision of beauty is divided broadly into two segments, the empirical and the rational. The empirical approach seizes only images of beauty; the rational approach leads to the vision of beauty itself. For Plato, beauty is intelligible, not sensuous; the heard tones of music, the seen colors and shapes of painting, are not part of the esthetic experience, though they may occasion it. The empirical may be a step toward or away from the rational approach, as the case may be. Although the blazonry of the heavens is the fairest thing in all creation, it falls far short of the truth and can serve only as a paradigm for the study of realities. Astronomy and harmonics are comparable disciplines in that they both study movements, the former through the eye, the latter by means of the ear. And as astronomers spend their time vainly exploring the visible movements of visible stars, so do students of music expend much useless labor measuring audible concords and sounds. "They talk of something they call minims and, laying their ears alongside, as if trying to catch a voice from next door, some affirm that they hear a note between, and that this is the least interval and the unit of measurement, while others insist that the strings now render identical sounds, *both preferring their ears to their minds*" (*Republic* 531a). The serious musician is intent not on heard sounds and harmonies, but on intelligible concords. Beauty is to be found in the science of harmonics, wherein the ear of the mind grasps the concordance of numbers and listens to the strain executed by dialectics (531c, 532a).

What intelligible beauty precisely is, it is not easy to infer

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from Plato's writings. Though his references to beauty are frequent, they deal with its effects and relations rather than with its nature. Only in the *Hippias Major* does he raise the question of the general character of beauty, to leave it unresolved, the dialogue being of the obstetric kind and having as its purpose to convince the reader of his own ignorance on the matter. We are obliged to proceed cautiously and very slowly, gathering material from indirect references and sifting hints on the nature of beauty from among Plato's critical remarks concerning actual instances of beauty.

Beauty is a universal essence pervading things. The mare, the pot, the maiden, and the lyre are all beautiful; there must therefore be an essence of beauty, participation in which renders objects beautiful. We say that monkeys are less beautiful than men, and men less so than the gods; in comparing these, we are using a standard of beauty which is distinct from the loveliness of each object, since it tests it. Thus, we must distinguish (αὐτὸ τὸ beautiful things from beauty as such *καλόν*, *Hippias Major*, 288a). Beauty is something in itself and for itself (αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτὸ, μεθ' αὐτοῦ, *Symposium* 211b); it has the independence and self-identity which are the marks of the really real. Though ingredient in things, beauty has its own nature. Beauty is not such at one time, and other at another, not such in one position, and other in another, not such for some, and other for others. Beauty is the same always and for all (*Symposium* 211a, *Hippias Major* 294d). Thus, beauty is absolute and universal, independent of time and space and people. Beauty in an object is not how we feel about it; we feel about it as we do because the object is beautiful.

Beauty, though intelligible and universal, is not a form; at least, it is not a specific form; like white, man, city. It is a metaphysical principle, constitutive of the forms. Is it then to be identified with the good? Plato uses the terms *kalon* and *agathon* together frequently; thus, he says that good things are beautiful (cf. *Symposium* 201c); but the juxtaposition of the two terms is significant only on the assumption that their meanings are distinct. And elsewhere (*Phaedrus* 250e), Plato seems to differentiate beauty from such an ultimate form as

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wisdom; thus, he says of beauty that, of all the forms, it is the most visible to sense. But perhaps we shall be able to throw more light on this subject after we have considered the abstract nature of beauty.

Beauty is to be found in formal structure. It is not clear whether this is a definition or whether it is a statement of the criteria to which everything which has beauty must conform. Beauty is order. Now the idea of order is analyzable into two parts, diversity and unity. An object is beautiful when it has members which compose themselves into a whole. (*a*) The parts must be definite. It has been sometimes supposed that Plato objects to variety in favor of simplicity, because of his vigorous denunciation of certain types of contemporary music and acting as manifold and complex. He would indeed go so far as to abolish the harp and the flute because of their complex polyharmonic character (*Republic* 397-9). Now, Plato is not assailing genuine complexity. Justice in the state entails that each man should perform a different function; a just state is not homogeneous, but yet it is fair. The trouble with the music in question is not complexity, but confusion; such music mixes its rhythms. So does Plato criticize the man who would undertake many functions, thus losing his specific nature. The apparent requirement of simplicity is really one of limitation, by which definiteness may be achieved. (*b*) But definiteness is not enough; there must be a variety and a contrast of definite effect. Plenitude—a condition of the good—is also a requisite for beauty. (*c*) Finally there must be integration of the diverse elements. The variety must be ordered; the parts must have definite relations to each other and to the whole. And the balance between variety and unity is a matter of delicate adjustment; the variety must be no greater than is compatible with unity (cf. 423b, concerning the size proper to a city). If to a sculptor coloring the statue of a man, it were objected that he is not applying the fairest pigments to the fairest parts of the statue, namely, the eyes, he could justifiably reply that he should not be expected to paint the eyes so fine that they would not be like eyes at all. It is only by *assigning what is proper to each that the whole can be rendered beautiful*. And so, in the good state, the aim of the legis-

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lator is not the exceptional happiness of any one class but the happiness of the city as a whole (*Republic* 420b, c).

Thus beauty is a general form of order, and an object is fair through its structure, not its content. In speaking of fair colors, shapes, or sounds, Plato makes it clear that he is not referring to what "most people would mean by these words, such as the beauty of animals and of paintings," but to "the straight line and the circle and the plane and solid figures." As for beauty in sounds, "I mean that those sounds which are smooth and clear and send forth a single pure note are beautiful not relatively but absolutely" (*Philebus* 51c, d). If now the question be asked what particular order constitutes beauty, the answer is that beauty cannot be further defined. Beauty is a formula of order in general which varies in its applications. Each thing has its own order appropriate to it (*Gorgias* 506e). There is no one definite order which is the order for all types of beauty; beauty is diversified, and each specific beauty makes a specific contribution to be known directly, and not deduced from the general principle of order.

The apprehension of intelligible beauty is subdivided into two sections—science (or philosophy) and the ineffable vision. In science, man apprehends beauty as manifested in the forms which are pure, timeless, complete, and integrated into a perfect structure. The forms are realities; correlatively, science is a genuine insight whereas craftsmanship is not. Nevertheless, on the level of science, the mind perceives beauty in its manifestations and not in itself. Thus, there is a step beyond science, the last step in the long and arduous ascent, at which man "comes to know the very essence of beauty" (*Symposium* 211d). The vision comes suddenly (ἐξαίφνης), that is to say, not as a result of reasoning. It is an immediate intuition, non-conceptual, whose content may not be described (οὐδὲ τις λόγος οὐδὲ τις ἐπιστήμη; *Symposium* 211a).

But the empirical approach is a prerequisite; by seeing beauty here, we recall the beauty beyond here and now. Art plays a useful rôle in that it provides the stimulus for the recollection of ideal beauty. But it does not provide the content of the vision, for it only recalls to the mind what it has known from another

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life, or perhaps always knows in its timeless character. The beauty missed or adumbrated in poetry is fully disclosed in the mystical experience. *The vision of ideal beauty constitutes Plato's religion*; it is a mystery into which man is initiated and whereby he achieves the blessed life (*Phædrus* 250b). Its religious character arises from the fact that in the vision of beauty man rises beyond the natural into the supernatural. Also his relation to the latter is a union with it. The distinctive trait of the vision of beauty as a cognitive act is that it is a fusion of the soul with its object. This is true of all its levels; the esthetic attitude is one of participation throughout. The *eros* is the desire of the soul for intercourse with an object beyond it; and from the intercourse comes a new creature. On the plane of intelligence, the *eros* culminates in the union with the divine and the breeding of true examples of virtue. Beauty is the lure of the good; it is the character of the good as possessing and as possessed.

CHAPTER XIV

LANGUAGE

THE *Cratylus* is the source-book for Plato's theory of language; it is a dialogue almost unique among Plato's longer works in that it does not stray off into by-paths but limits itself to the topic in hand. But the student is advised to consult the *Sophist* too, in order to grasp what lies back of Plato's linguistic views; and in the *Sophist* to concentrate on the discussion of images. For Plato, language is appearance; it is a construction in which man imitates the real. Language is therefore akin both to art and to thought—superior to the first and inferior to the second in its character as a representation. Speech (and in this chapter we will, with Plato, concern ourselves chiefly with language as spoken) is the expression of the impetus in man to imitate the real and so to assimilate himself to it; and in studying language, we shall be indirectly investigating the pattern of the world.

Language is an expression (δήλωμα) of facts; words are signs (σημείον) of things, both of their component elements, and of the things taken as wholes. Language declares all things; there are names for each and every thing (*Cratylus* 408c, 427c). Now, art, too, signifies objects and it is important to differentiate language from art, especially from music, which, like language, uses the medium of sound. Art signifies the empirical surface of the object, its color, shape and sound; language expresses the *essence* (οὐσία) of the object—what the object is. "Just as a shuttle is an instrument for separating the web, so is a name an instrument for distinguishing one thing from another according to differences in nature." This should not be taken to mean that colors, shapes and sounds cannot be named; of course there are words for these, namely the words we have just used; nevertheless, the words express the essences of the colors, shapes and

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sounds respectively, whereas art conveys the particular embodiment, *this* color, *this* shape, *this* sound. Art seizes upon the unique, language upon the common, universal characteristics of the object, thereby grouping things which are alike together (435e). As we would say today, language deals with concepts—even when the words are proper names, for as we shall see presently, proper names are descriptions of what they name. A painting of a dog reproduces the unrepeatable features of the dog, the particular shade of his skin, the peculiar conformation of his features, and so forth; but the word, dog, expresses a common character, in short a universal.

There is a second point, which perhaps depends on the first. Language is communication. Thought is silent, a conversation with oneself; in speech we repeat our thoughts aloud *to some one who is present* (*Philebus* 38e). Speech is for the purpose of instruction, and instruction is a social process. Language conveys a general idea from one person to another. "Speech makes all things circulate and move about" (*Cratylus* 408c).¹

On what does the correctness (*ὀρθότης*) of language depend? Are names conventional, do they depend on mutual agreement among men, or have they a reason in the nature of things? Does a word belong to an object intrinsically, or is it assigned arbitrarily? Does a name originate spontaneously (*αὐτόμαστον*), by chance, or in order to fulfil a function? These questions are discussed at length throughout the *Cratylus*, where the opponent maintains that a name is a piece of the human voice applied to things at will. There is no natural suitability of words to things; no name is more correct than another. The right name is whatever I choose to assign to an object; and if I change the name, the new one is right, too. If I want to call a horse a man, I am at liberty to do so. Different cities have different words, and the barbarians have a different language from the Greeks. Nobody can say that the barbarians are wrong; all of them are equally right.

Plato takes issue with this view. There are right and wrong names. It is the old controversy between *nomos* (convention)

¹But the fact that we can understand each other presupposes that we have similar mental states (*Gorgias* 481d).

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and *physis* (nature). Plato believes that the world is ruled not by chance but by reason; everything has a function; and nothing happens arbitrarily, not even the process of assigning names to things. Back of the arguments of his opponent Plato discerns the doctrine of Protagoras the sophist. Protagoras had said that man is the measure of all things, and therefore that all impressions and all beliefs were equally true; one man is no wiser than another. So does the opponent maintain that the rightness of a name is relative to the whim of the speaker; that all names are equally appropriate, and all name-givers equally right. Plato, who rejects the relativistic doctrine of Protagoras, must also reject the relativistic theory of language. Things, he says, have a fixed nature, not in relation to ourselves, but in and by themselves (*Cratylus* 386e). This thing is a stone not because I think so, but because it is so. Not only things but actions too have their intrinsic natures. Take cutting, for instance; one must cut not as one wishes, but according to the nature of cutting. In other words, there is a formula for the act of cutting. An action is concerned with an object; and the formula varies according as the object varies; cutting this kind of wood is a different process from cutting another kind. An action requires a tool (*ὄργανον*); weaving is performed with a shuttle and cutting with an axe. The character of the tool is determined by the action and by the object with which the action is concerned.

Now, speech is an instance of action; it is an action concerning objects (*περὶ τὰ πράγματα*). Likewise, it has a definite nature and is naturally suited to the things with which it is concerned. We speak not according to our fancy but as the nature of speech prescribes. The tools of speech are words; it follows that words are not arbitrary, but must be suited to the function of speech and to the objects with which they are concerned. Naming and being named are activities governed not by our desires but as the things prescribe (387d). Thus, words have a natural correctness (*ὀρθότης*) and there are experts in name-making as there are experts in all the crafts and sciences.

In making a tool like a shuttle, the craftsman contemplates an ideal which he endeavors to embody in his material. So the

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name-maker fixes his eyes on the ideal name (ὃ ἔστι ὄνομα), which is fully known to the gods alone, and thus makes the actual name. The rightness of the actual name is measured by the degree in which it conforms to the ideal name.

The fact that a variety of names exists for the same object offers no difficulty to Plato. A universal has a variety of embodiments. In a tool, we distinguish the form from the matter; the matter may vary but the form remains the same. "Different smiths do not embody the form in the same iron, though making the same instrument for the same function, but so long as they reproduce the same ideal (ἰδέα), though it be in different iron, still the tool is as it should be, whether it be made here or in foreign lands" (389e-390a). The material for names is words and syllables, and ultimately the medium of sound. The variety of sounds, of syllables, and of names, is a variety of actualizations of the same ideal name. We find words "differing in syllables and letters but expressing the same intent" (394c).

A name is a universal. The term "man" is not the word which I pronounce when I say "man"; what I pronounce is only a particular instance of the term; otherwise we should have a different name every time we pronounced the word. But a term is a universal in a further sense. Two languages have different words for the same object; these different words are embodiments of the same ideal name. Thus, a name is not identified with any *specific* term, it is a *generic* type of sound.

In judging whether an actual name embodies its ideal, we must not be too meticulous. The fact that letters have been transposed, added or subtracted, does not change the name. Provided a certain core (τύπος 432e) is preserved, changes of letters do not matter. Often words are altered by usage, or for the sake of euphony, without thereby affecting the identity of the name. The physician's drugs, when prepared with various colors and perfumes, seem different to us, but to the physician they are the same. So to the superficial observer, if some letter in a name is added, transposed or subtracted, the name seems to have become different, when the experienced student of language knows that the name is the same because its force (δύναμις, value or effectiveness) has not changed (393a). Here

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Plato is vaguely hinting at the distinction between essence and accident in an object.²

Who is right, Protagoras or Plato? Which view is sound—the view that language is conventional, or the view that language is natural? Surely the sophist is wrong. Language is not the result of a deliberate decision; it is a growth. It is not an arbitrary fact but the expression of the culture of a race—as much so as are its manners, morals and religion. But the reader might object that this is beside the point. The view that language is a natural outgrowth of the race is not so different from the position of the sophist who maintains that all things are relative to man, and who is willing to grant that usage plays a part in the formation of language, along with convention. Plato's point against the sophist is on different ground—that language is objectively conditioned, and that it does not depend on subjective factors, whether individual or racial.

Even so construed, Plato's doctrine would still remain in harmony with the common-sense view of the subject. Culture reflects the character both of the race and of the environment. Language originates as a response by man to his surroundings, expressing a particular mode of man's enjoyment of his world. Change the pattern of the environment and you change the pattern of the language as well. The response is conditioned by the objective situation; that is what Plato takes account of. He seems, however, to ignore the other side, which is that the response is also conditioned by the subjective factor.

But an element of paradox nonetheless does enter into Plato's doctrine, and particularly into his account of the *mode* of the appropriateness of language to the facts. A name is a sign of an object by virtue of the fact that it is *like* what it signifies. In language, "things are made manifest through imitation in letters and syllables" (425d). In short, names are images of objects;³ they have a natural appropriateness in that they are imitations of things. To give Plato's full definition verbatim: "a name is a vocal imitation of that which is imitated, and he

²See also *Phædo* 103b, e.

³As we shall see below, they are really images of one's belief concerning objects.

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who imitates with his voice, names that which he imitates." To this definition Plato adds the qualification already cited⁴ that language imitates the *essence* of what it names (423b-424a).

As we shall see, the substance of this theory is that every name, at least in its original form, is a description of what it names; and the correct name is a correct description. Plato goes on to ridiculous lengths in order to show how, for instance, a proper name indicates just those qualities which the person named has. Letters, no less than names, are words, and by their very sound, describe the qualities that they name. Plato engages in a detailed philological investigation of words in which only the barest outlines of a principle of classification may be discerned by the reader. He examines predominantly names (both proper and common) of the invisible, incorporeal entities, such as (a) gods, demons, souls and their states, and (b) "noble" universals such as virtue, justice, wisdom, *ousia*. (c) He further studies the names of the elements such as fire, air, water, but omits all consideration of common names for concrete objects like ox, horse, stone, etc. He makes the interesting observation that language is a sign not only for objects but for language itself. There are names for the letters (e.g., *alpha*, *beta*) in which the nature of the letters is displayed; there is even a name for names, namely name. We will insert in this chapter Plato's account of only a selected group of words, with a view to providing the reader with an example of Plato's method, and although the writer is not competent to pass on the philological merit of Plato's hypotheses, they are clearly most ingenious and often highly amusing.

Orestes (mountain-man, from the word ὄρος, meaning mountain) indicates a person who is fierce and rude. Agamemnon (admirable for remaining) indicates the type of man who would resolve to toil to the end and endure until he had executed his resolution. And the proof that Agamemnon had these qualities is his long retention of the army at Troy and his endurance. Artemis (Diana) gets her name perhaps from the fact that she hates sexual intercourse (ἄροτον μισεῖ) between man and woman. Athena, the name of the goddess of wisdom, means

⁴P. 253.

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“the mind of God”; Ἀθηνᾶ being derived from ἄ Θεονόα by chance compression. The word ὄραι (seasons) should be pronounced in the old Attic fashion ὄραι; now the word ὄρος means limit; and the seasons divide and limit winters and summers and winds and the fruits of the earth. Γυνή (woman) is γόνος (birth); θυμός (spirit) comes fromθύσις, which means the raging and boiling of the soul. *Boulé* (intention) denotes shooting (βολή). *Doxa* is derived from the pursuit (δίωξις) which the soul carries on as it engages in the knowledge of things. The muses and music, in general, are named, it would seem, from μῶσθαι, searching and philosophy. *Uranus* (sky) is rightly named, for the word comes from ὀρῶ τὰ ἄνω (looking at the things above). Sometimes names correspond to whole sentences. Take the name of Zeus, which has two parts, *Zena* and *Dia*; the first means life (ζῆν), the second cause (δι’ ὄν), and the two combined mean author of life.

The intent of the name-giver can be found best among ancient names, preserved mostly in the speech of women. The passage of time introduces slight modifications, excisions and incisions of letters, with the result that the meaning of the name is deflected or hidden. Another enemy of truthfulness in words is the desire for euphony. Some people “care more for the shape of the mouth than for the truth” and dress the names up with the result that by now the original words have been completely buried underneath euphonious transposition. But, as Plato himself admits, the process of showing that a word has meaning by decomposing it into other words which have meaning must stop somewhere. There must be elements or primary names which are not composed of other names. These are syllables and ultimately letters. Thus, according to Plato, individual letters are names which designate objects by imitating them. The letter *rho*, in *rhoe* (flow) expresses motion because “the tongue is least at rest and most agitated in pronouncing this letter.” Hence not only *rhoe*, but such words as τρέμος (trembling), τρέχειν (running), κρούειν (striking) include the letter *rho*. Whenever the name-giver wants to imitate that which involves blowing, he uses letters like ψ (as in cold) ψυχρὸν, or ζ (as in ζέον seething); and he appears to have thought

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that the compression of the tongue in the pronunciation of *delta* and *tau* was naturally fitted to imitate the notion of binding and rest. "And perceiving that the tongue has a gliding most in the pronunciation of *lambda*," he used *lambda* to express smoothness and softness, as in *λεία* (level), *λιπαρόν* (sleek), and *κολλῶδες* (glutinous).

What is usually called a name is a whole consisting of syllables and letters and is therefore a complex name made up of primary names. It is not an imitation unless the names (letters) out of which it is composed are imitations. A painting is not an image of that which it depicts, unless the pigments in the painting are by their nature like the object imitated. In the same way, "names can never be like anything unless those elements of which the names are composed exist in the first place and possess some kind of likeness to the things which the names imitate." And the name-giver must know the properties of the letters—the way in which the letters fit together, and whether one letter is to be applied to one thing or many are to be combined into one syllable, and in turn whether syllables are to be combined and by their combination form nouns and verbs.

To what extent does Plato intend his philological observations to be taken seriously? Plato disclaims any philological competence on his part, saying "I do not positively affirm any of my account of names to be true" (428a). Knowing nothing of the truth, he adds, we are only guessing at human opinions concerning these matters. So Plato prefaces his derivations repeatedly with the word "perhaps"; at other times he suggests a variety of alternatives between which he does not decide; and on occasions, he refers to his account of a particular word as only probable (402a). He refers to himself as speaking on the spur of the moment (*παροχρήμα*); as inspired like a prophet; he talks of wisdom suddenly descending on him, he knows not whence. Now, wisdom which comes from inspiration is belief without proof; it is opinion and not knowledge. But though Plato describes his own familiarity with the subject as inadequate and as on the level of opinion, he envisages a scientific study of names. There is such a thing as scientific philology which awaits completion.

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We may still ask how far Plato intends his *general* theory of language to be taken seriously. Is he not perhaps jesting throughout as he himself hints? The theory that language at all times describes what it denotes is indeed paradoxical, as Plato is fully aware; "the doctrine that letters and syllables display objects by imitating them must seem ridiculous" (425d). And yet is the theory of denotation through imitation so ridiculous after all? Plato does not really think so. "Answer me this question," he says; "if we had no voice or tongue, and wished to make things clear to one another, should we not try, as dumb people actually do, to make signs with our head and person generally? If we wished to designate that which is above and light, we should, I fancy, raise our hand toward heaven in imitation of the nature of the thing in question; and if the things to be designated were below or heavy, we should extend our hands towards the ground; and if we wished to refer to a galloping horse or any other animal, we should, of course, make our bodily attitudes as much like theirs as possible" (422e-423a). The impulse to designate by imitating is natural to man; and besides, the conception of language as imitation fits in with Plato's general theory of craftsmanship as the process of making images of things.

But there is a still greater "wave" to be overcome. Toward the end of the discussion (435 ff.), Plato seems completely to abandon the theory of designation through likeness. Words can have a meaning, he says, even when they are unlike the objects they denote; in such cases, the basis of their rightness is custom and convention. By the very nature of the case, it seems impossible that names should always have meaning through likeness; how, for example, could words be like numbers? (435c). Language is a physical medium and is incapable of imitating incorporeal things.⁵ Shall we say that Plato has been indulging in fanciful invention? It is not possible to determine the answer with certainty; of course, Plato has been having fun, but the writer is still unconvinced that Plato has been simply and solely jesting throughout his extended elaboration of the doctrine of language as imitation. The reader will recall that the issue

⁵See also *Politicus*, 286a.

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arose in the first place as a controversy concerning the relativity of things to man. In advocating the natural correctness of names, Plato has been attacking Protagoras. And yet, even from the standpoint of Plato, there is a measure of truth in the relativism of Protagoras. Things have their essence by reference to themselves; but their sensible aspect is relative to man. The concrete object is a combination of being with not-being. While it is true that concrete things behave according to fixed rules, there is nevertheless something unpredictable in their behavior. In Plato's cosmology, the prevailing factor of order does not preclude the intervention of chance. The actual object is a mixture of necessity with accident. So with language, which is a joint product of nature and custom. The character of a name is conditioned objectively; it is determined by the nature of the thing it denotes. Yet the name is not adequately an image of the thing; chance—in the guise of custom—intervenes, and modifies the name.

But this does not account for the specific instance of the names of numbers—names which are not imitations in any fashion. Speech, Plato has said, is an action, and actions have fixed natures. But perhaps not all activity is according to a rule. God's aim to introduce order into the world is thwarted by the receptacle; there are random motions which wholly escape the divine influence. There are levels of activity, according to the degree to which they embody order. Thus the Platonic doctrine that creation is the impregnation of chaos with order is not to be taken as meaning that every empirical object is integrated. Plato's ambiguity concerning the question of whether language is a likeness is part of his wider ambiguity concerning the question whether things are likenesses of the forms or not.

What is, then, our conclusion about Plato's view of language: is signification constituted through imitation or not? We know that things strive to imitate their natures. Language is a *tendency* to imitate; often it succeeds, but sometimes it does not. Actual language can never quite attain the form of the ideal language, which ever remains that of imitation; as Plato says in concluding the argument, "language would be most excellent

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when all its terms, or as many as possible, were based on likeness" (435c).

Names are never immediate imitations of things. They are a display of our beliefs concerning things. Names are imitations of imitations. What language directly makes evident is thought; speech "reflects opinion in the stream that flows through the mouth as in water" (*Theætetus* 206d). Actual language conveys the actual thoughts of human beings. For example, primitive people were primarily impressed by the motions of things; they believed that all things were in flux, and they employed names to convey this belief. The word ὄν (being) comes from ἰόν (going) and οὐκ ὄν (not-being) means not going (οὐκ ἰόν). Names were invented by "the school of dizzy philosophers who, because they themselves went round and round, thought that the world did also." Measured as knowledge, language is at the level of opinion, for the name-makers had not advanced beyond experience.

Quite apart from the consideration that actual language conveys *phantasia*, language at its best is a poor introduction to the knowledge of things. In studying names, we are studying things at second hand, for names are images. We must seek a direct insight into the archetypes, thus obtaining the truth both about things and their images. To those who would conduct their investigation into nature through the study of names, Plato points out that names are often in conflict, just as opinions are, and the issue as to which name is right cannot be settled by an appeal to names alone; we must look beyond, to things. It is absurd "to count names as one counts votes" as a way of resolving the issue. In any case, the study of names cannot be the beginning of knowledge, since, to assign a name to an object, one must first know the object. Plato is really attacking those who would restrict philosophy to an investigation of words and their meanings. "To the degree that one becomes indifferent to names, one grows richer in wisdom" (*Politicus* 261e). On this point, Plato, who had seen enough of the verbal disputations of the sophists, was inclined to feel strongly; he was convinced that

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exclusive concentration upon the analysis of meanings, without reference to truth, was a trivialization of philosophy. If a man "finds pleasure in dragging words about and applying them to different things at different times, with the notion that he has invented something difficult, our present discourse asserts that he has taken up seriously matters which are not worth serious attention" (*Sophist* 259c). Of course Plato was fully aware of the importance of the clarification of concepts and pursued it in all his dialogues. But the analysis of concepts was part of the larger task of achieving a knowledge of the real. So in the *Cratylus* he proposes that we turn from words to things, which "should be studied without their names, through themselves, and—when they are alike—by a comparison with each other" (438e).

Summing up the limitations of language as imitative, we reach the following: (a) At best, names are only images, and therefore removed from the truth; (b) names are poor images because they are constructed out of physical material; it is significant that in discussing specific cases of words, Plato refers to them as imitations in the measure of the possible (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, cf. *Cratylus* 433c, 435c); (c) some names are not even images, and are based wholly on custom. (d) Language is either written or spoken. Written words are inadequate to the aspect of thought as alive; thought ever moves from question to answer, from hypothesis to hypothesis, from data to premises and thence back to the data. But what is written is immobile; it does not speak; it is a crystallization of thought. Spoken words are mobile and alive, catching the fluency of thought and answering questions. Speech is adaptive to the stream of thought in one's self and in the listener. Yet even speech in the last resort is inadequate to the truth, for speech is a temporal process with all the limitations of a natural event, and incapable of representing the eternal. Speech is a descent from and a dilution of thought.⁶

Like all Greeks, Plato is fond of words, for their own sake; his dialogues are rambling picnics in the fields of language, wherein, like a child, he gambols with sounds and words and

⁶See *infra*, p. 386.

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their groupings. Plato is near enough to the primitive age of man to appreciate the worth of spoken language; he is, if you like, atavistic, close to the sources of human behavior, deploring the emergence of writing, which, as he feels, spoils the immediacy and freshness of speech. And like all Greeks, he is fond of talk; his belief that speech is nobler than action reveals the true Greek. It was natural that he should be interested, as a philosopher, in the nature of the medium which he enjoyed so much. And only one who has loved language, and loved it to such an excess that he has been caught in its snares, could hate language as Plato did. It is chiefly the races which are naturally reserved and love silence that wax romantic about language. Language is a horse which keeps throwing its rider down, intent on its own wandering ways, leading the mind away from the direction it has set before it. Plato constantly warns his pupils against the tricks which language plays with thought, urging them to hold the reins tight, even to descend from the horse, and walk the solid earth of fact.

We will now proceed to the more formal, logical aspects of language. Language consists of structures integrated out of units, the units being letters. Letters form syllables, syllables words; words together form propositions, and propositions enter into more complex propositions. There are three kinds of letters—first, vowels; second, consonants. As examples of the latter, we may cite the *S* in Socrates which is a “voiceless letter, a mere noise, as of the tongue hissing”; also the letter *beta* which has neither voice nor sound (*Theætetus* 203b). Third, there are the semi-vowels which have some sonant quality. Each of these three kinds has its own subdivisions; and all together have a common bond which in a way makes them all one, so that we are unable to learn any letter without learning them all (*Philebus*, 18c, d).

A syllable is the simplest unit formed by the joining of letters together. A syllable is a complex formed according to rules, not anyhow; thus, there cannot be a syllable without a vowel. And syllables are joined together to form words, which are the units of language as used. Words are of two kinds, nouns and

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verbs; a noun is a vocal sign denoting an agent, a verb a sign denoting an action (*Sophist* 262a).

Words are joined together to constitute propositions. Plato's term for proposition is *logos*—verbal statement. Asserting a proposition is different from naming. A proposition includes a name, but goes further and asserts a judgment by combining verbs with nouns (*Sophist* 262d). A sequence of words consisting of verbs alone, or of nouns alone, would not constitute a proposition.⁷ (a) A proposition has meaning both as a whole and in its parts (*Cratylus* 385c). (b) It is meaningful as a whole, only provided it fulfils certain conditions of order; "those words which when spoken in succession do mean something fit together; but those that mean nothing in their sequence do not" (*Sophist* 261e). (c) A proposition is either positive or negative; there is positive or negative relatedness of verb with noun. Thus, a proposition is a relational complex, which may itself enter into more elaborate complexes. (d) A proposition has what Plato calls a quality (*ποιόν*); it is true or false.

The passage in which Plato gives his account of truth and falsehood (*Sophist* 260e–264b) is so brief, considering the magnitude of the topic, and so compact, as to be excessively obscure; thus, our explanation of it must be an interpretation to a generous degree. The reader might justifiably ask why the discussion of truth and falsehood should be undertaken as part of an investigation of the properties of language rather than of thought. The answer is that Plato offers an account of truth and falsehood as found in sentences and not in judgments. From this fact the reader should not too hastily infer that Plato locates truth and falsehood in verbal statements exclusively. Thought is nothing other than speech with one's self, and as speech is true or false so also is thought (*διάνοια*, *Sophist* 264a, b). Thought

⁷It is a curious fact that Plato should limit predicates to verbs which denote action; his definition of propositions would seem to exclude any statements in which relations among universals are asserted; for instance, the statement that men are animals. Plato was of course aware that not all propositions assert actions of agents; in another connection, while discussing beliefs, he had used as an example the assertion that five and seven are twelve (*Theaetetus* 196a). It simply so happens that in the *Sophist* he confines his attention to empirical propositions.

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is either identical with speech or analogous to it in that both are images of facts, and what applies to speech applies equally to thought.

There are two senses in which Plato uses the word falsehood or error. In the first, error consists in taking images for realities. People whose horizon is wholly bounded by sense are liable to error in this sense. Truthful belief, correspondingly, would be one which established the difference between images and realities. The beginning of wisdom is the knowledge that one knows nothing; *i.e.*, that one knows images alone. But now suppose a man to have arrived at the distinction between images and realities; there still remains the question whether in any given case the image he entertains is a correct or an incorrect imitation of the facts. This is the other sense in which Plato uses the words truth and error. In the first, error would be the confusion of images with realities; in the second, it would be failure of the image to conform with reality, even when the two were kept distinct. The two senses correspond to two different steps in learning; there is, first, the realization that what one hitherto had taken to be realities were only shadows; and there is, next, the effort to make of one's images fitting imitations of the real. There is, perhaps, a third stage, which, dispensing with images, dispenses with truth and error also; but to discuss this stage would take us too far afield. For the purposes of theory of knowledge, the second is the technical and important sense of truth and falsehood; and in what follows that is the one which we will discuss.

It must be stated at the outset that meaning is independent of truth. By identifying the two, the sophists were able to assert that all statements are true. If I assert something, they had urged, there is something which I assert, and therefore the assertion is true; if my assertion is false, I am asserting nothing, in short, I am not making an assertion, I am uttering words without sense. All meaningful propositions are true; all false propositions are meaningless, and therefore are not even propositions. Against the sophists, Plato maintains that "it is possible in speech to utter that which is and that which is not" (*Cratylus* 385c). A proposition is a complex, an actuality with its own de-

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gree of being, which is meaningful because it fulfils its own conditions of order; and further because it is an image, or rather a composition of images. Now, an image is an image, whether it represents its archetype correctly or incorrectly.⁸

In the *Cratylus* (431b) Plato maintains that truth and falsehood are properties of even more elementary structures than propositions; a noun (designating an object) or a verb (designating an action) may be true or false. Presumably, on seeing an object, I may say "Man!" or on seeing a motion, I may say "Fire!" and though I have not uttered sentences, I have nevertheless uttered what is true or false. But in the *Sophist* Plato begins with propositions, that is, with combinations of a noun with a verb, as when one says "a man learns," such a phrase being the "least and first of sentences." Every proposition must be about somebody or something; were it about nothing, it would not be a proposition. This seems to imply that the proposition, through its subject, always denotes something which is real. The sophists had made the point that a false statement is about nothing, and therefore is not a statement at all; and Plato counters by saying that the subject is real, and the false proposition is therefore meaningful. Also, the sophists had urged that a proposition which is false with reference to one thing is true of something else. Plato's point is not only that every proposition has a real subject, but that it has *this particular* subject. A proposition, even though false, has the same subject as the fact; the subject defines the locus of reference for the proposition; it identifies the fact of which the proposition is an image, and by which its truth or falsehood may be tested.⁹

We are now ready to see what constitutes truth and falsehood in a proposition. We will repeat the more important of Plato's own statements on this matter. "That speech which says things as they are is true, and that which says them as they are not is false" (*Cratylus* 385b). "Error is thinking things which are contrary to things that are" (*Sophist* 240d). Hence, in error, we do think things; a false judgment is not absence of thought, or nonsense; and falsehood is a disparity between things in the

⁸See *supra*, p. 204.

⁹The word "subject" is our own; Plato never uses it.

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mind and things in fact. "A true proposition asserts the things that are as they are about you (*i.e.*, about the subject); a false proposition states things different from things that are, and hence asserts things that are not, as being" (263b). The passages so far deal with affirmative propositions only; but in the following passage, both positive and negative propositions are under consideration. "A false proposition asserts the things that are, as not being, and things that are not, as being" (*Sophist* 24.1a). By analogy, we may construct the following statement concerning true propositions, positive and negative: "A true proposition asserts things as being which, in fact, are; and things as not being which, in fact, are not." We will make these two statements central in our discussion of truth and falsehood.

The starting-point is the conception of a complex, analyzed in a previous chapter (Chapter IX). Both propositions and facts are complexes, and truth is a correspondence between the two kinds. Significantly enough, Plato interrupts his discussion of truth and falsehood in order to remind us of his conclusion concerning facts. "For we said, you know, that in respect to everything, there are many things that are, and many things that are not" (263b). Thus, a fact consists of a subject which has a positive relation with some predicates and a negative relation with others. A proposition, too, is a complex consisting of a noun and a verb, the noun denoting the subject, and the verb the predicate; also a verb is affirmed or denied of a noun. Let us consider actual examples. We have the fact that Theætetus sits, and is not flying. Now, take the true propositions, "Theætetus sits" and "Theætetus is not flying"; there is a correspondence between the component elements of proposition and fact respectively; and there is correspondence between the modes of relatedness in the two complexes. In the fact, "sitting" is positively related to Theætetus; so it is in the proposition. Again, in the fact, "flying" is negatively related to Theætetus; and so it is in the proposition.

Proceed now to the pair of false propositions, "Theætetus is flying" and "Theætetus is not sitting." These propositions have the same terms as the facts; they are both false, nevertheless, because they weave the terms otherwise than they are woven in

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the facts. In the first proposition, "flying" mingles with Theætetus; in the fact, it is rejected by Theætetus. In the second proposition, "sitting" is rejected by Theætetus; but in the fact, it is accepted by Theætetus. A proposition then is false when it relates positively what the fact relates negatively; or when it relates negatively what the fact relates positively. Falsehood consists in the fact that the type of relatedness exhibited in the propositional complex is *other* than that in the factual complex; and truth consists in the fact that the type of relatedness in the former is the same as in the latter. We thus return to the statement from the *Cratylus*: that speech which says things as they are is true and that which says them as they are not is false.

Our interpretation of Plato's doctrine of truth and falsehood is not at all certain; it is only a hypothesis concerning what he means, and Plato's remarks on the subject are too scanty to allow of only one interpretation.¹⁰ And it is possible that Plato's words are vague because his thought on the subject had not attained definiteness. But of this we can be reasonably sure: there is an absolute reality, and truth is some sort of correspondence with it. Plato's theory of truth is part of his general theory of rightness in production; affirmation, which is an instance of production, has that rightness which consists in a likeness to the really real. A coherence theory will not serve the purpose because it leaves out the factor of reality; a pragmatic theory will not do, because reality is articulated, and exact conformity with its structure is possible and required of the mind. The advocates of theories of truth other than as correspondence proceed from the assumption that it is impossible for the mind to imitate reality, either for the reason that reality is indeterminate or because reality is unattainable, man being conceived as enclosed in his own mental states. Plato rejects both of these alternatives.

¹⁰Mr. Cornford has a different account; cf. *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 310 ff.

CHAPTER XV

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

PLATO'S doctrine is based on what he regards as a fundamental distinction between opinion and knowledge, *doxa* and *episteme*. "I speak as one who does not know but only conjectures," he says; "but that there is a difference between true opinion and knowledge is not at all a conjecture with me but something I would particularly assert that I know; there are not many things of which I would say that, but this one, at any rate, I will include among those that I know" (*Meno* 98b). Opinion is confused and uncertain; knowledge is absolutely exact and certain. There is a difference both of faculty and of realm envisaged; experience is directed toward "this world here," "to what has been, is, and will be" (*Philebus* 59a); reason toward the timeless. The faculties behave as their objects do; reason, which grasps the unchanging, pronounces verdicts which are firm, irrefutable, final; but opinions are only probable, in flux like their objects, constantly being replaced by other theories, always insecure.

At the present time, we believe that the conception of absolute certainty in knowledge is false. It was possibly mathematics which suggested to Plato the ideal of exactness and infallibility; but today mathematics is not considered to be knowledge as regards either its premises or its theorems. In physics, theories come and go; and in metaphysics no method has been found which could yield infallibility. Plato thought he had the method. We are now satisfied with more tentative results, and we are more modest in our claims; there remains no meaning to the sharp contrast between opinion and knowledge. Knowledge is only opinion, and opinion is knowledge, in the measure that we have knowledge. Plato founded his distinction upon the metaphysical theory of a contrast between the timeless and the tem-

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poral; but the metaphysical theory is an opinion too. We treat the premises of any system, in science or in philosophy, as assumptions, and the data as fluid; the premises are molded by the data and conversely.

Shall we then condemn Plato's theory of knowledge from the outset? In Plato we encounter the romantic idealization of reason, later resurrected by Descartes: the view of reason as a perfect tool and universal in its scope, and the ideal of a method which, once discovered, is sure to lead the mind to complete success. And yet Plato, romantic and wrong-headed though he may have been, was pragmatically justified; he erred on the right side. Plato had to combat two types of mental habit; on the one hand, the primitive religious attitude and its envisagement of the world through imagery and myth; on the other, the emphasis on practical knowledge, which relies on empirical procedure and makes rough and ready generalizations, and these only to the extent that they affect immediate results in practice. Against both these tendencies Plato set forth the ideal of clear thinking in terms of sharply defined abstract concepts, of a knowledge which is pure—that is to say, carried on for its own sake—and therefore universal, self-critical, methodical, and certain. The doctrine of exact and infallible reason had to be accepted and believed in wholeheartedly before it could be firmly established; only after it had become an ingrained habit and a respectable tradition could man safely afford to open his eyes to the weaknesses of reason. And in justice to Plato, we should remember that, according to him, the ability to attain final truth was a possession only of the gods and of the few men to whom they vouchsafed it (*Timæus* 53d).

Plato divides opinion into two—conjecture, which is lower, and belief, which is higher. Conjecture is directed toward shadows and reflections in mirrors and in water; it is the apprehension of semblances.¹ At this level, man views the concrete thing in relation to a particular perspective; as, for example, the painter who, in making a picture of a mountain, notes its appearance from a certain position and its color in the particular context of a cloudy

²See *supra*, p. 204.

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sky. At this level, where mental activity is at its minimum, man has not yet co-ordinated the appearances by the bond of the enduring object; what he perceives therefore is a succession of floating aspects. Conjecture is the state of pure presentation; in the absence of criteria of selection, all sensations are on an equal footing, illusions and dream-images being regarded as no less real than the perceptions of normal and waking life. Conjecture is the instrument of the artist, whose primary concern is with the immediate content of momentary presentation. Conjecture entails a certain level of desire—namely, the life of appetite, in which every impulse is gratified without discrimination.

The second subdivision of opinion is belief (*πίστις*). The data of belief are the archetypes of the images given in conjecture; in short, the realm of belief consists of objects with their appearances. The change is one from sensation to perception. In belief there are the beginnings of integration, the aspects being grouped together as aspects of something. There is also recognition, as when I know that what I am now seeing is the same thing that I saw before. There is also classification, as when I realize that both Socrates and Plato are men. Lastly, there is inference; the dwellers in the cave take note of customary sequences, and infer the future from these (*Republic* 516d). Belief, then, contains all the manifestations of intelligence, but in a rudimentary form. On the level of belief, man is unconscious of his knowledge (*Meno* 85c); he is, so to speak, dreaming of the forms (*Politicus* 277d). For example, though I recognize this person as the same that I saw before, I am unable to describe how I recognize him; or though I perceive that both he and another are men I have no clear notion of what it is to be a man; or though I make inferences, I have no notion of essential, and therefore of universal connections. Just as in the *world* of opinion, universals are entangled with particulars, so in *opinion* itself concepts are mixed with sensations. The defining characteristic of *πίστις* and, along with it, of all opinion as distinguished from reason, is that the former does not apprehend forms in their purity, it does not abstract, and consequently is vague.²

²What should also be emphasized is that in opinion concepts are not lacking; what is lacking is purity of concepts.

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Failure to make abstraction connotes inability to explain (*διδόναι λόγον*). At the level of *πιστις* we are unable to validate our beliefs.³ *Δοξα* is conviction *that* "this is so" without the reason *why* it is so; it is affirmation without proof. On the level of empirical knowledge, existence is presented as sheer matter of fact; also sequences of events are noted without being explained. As events are atomic so are beliefs. At this level, beliefs lie side by side, so to speak, uncoordinated, like independent existences. Opinion is sheer vigor of belief arising from the contemplation of brute fact, and infected with its own vagueness and relative anarchy. It should be remarked that the question of truth and falsehood does not enter into the definition of *δοξα*; *δοξα* need not be false; yet a belief which is true remains *δοξα* so long as it is unsupported by proof. The passage from opinion to reason is not always a change from false to true belief; knowledge is innate, and the slave-boy in the *Meno* knew all the answers. But he did not know why these were the answers.

Opinion, then, described positively, is integration of sensible data into enduring objects; described negatively, it is lack of *abstract* concepts, of proof, of systematization of belief. In the *Sophist* (264b) Plato describes *δοξα* in different terms; he introduces the term *phantasia* (fancy), which he defines as the union of sensation with belief.⁴ *Phantasia* must not be confused with the imagination, poetic or otherwise, though it includes it. *Phantasia* comes from φαίνεσθαι—seeming or appearing—and includes the "how something appears" as well as "that something appears." *Phantasia* is the givenness of a perceptual fact along with the interpretation of it by judgment. "Would you say that often when a man sees things at a distance and not very clearly,

³Since conjecture is relatively unimportant for the purposes of our discussion, we will ignore it henceforth and treat *πιστις* and *δοξα* as equivalent.

⁴And in the *Theaetetus* (161d) he speaks of judging by means of sensation. Plato uses the word *δοξα* ambiguously: in the *Republic* he defines it as empirical apprehension; but elsewhere, and especially in the later dialogues, he employs it to mean judgment generically, judgment concerning the forms as well as the sensible world. A mathematical judgment concerning numbers is *δοξα* no less than a judgment concerning beds and tables. In order to distinguish between these senses, we propose to use "opinion" for empirical thought, and "judgment" for the synthetic activity of mind whether it operates with pure or impure concepts.

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he wishes to distinguish (or judge—*κρίνειν*) what he sees?—Yes, I should say.—Next, then, would he not ask himself: ‘what is that which is visible standing beside the rock under a tree?’ And after that our gazer might reply to himself correctly, ‘It is a man.’ Or, again, perhaps he might be misled into the belief that it was a work of some shepherds, and then he would call the thing which he saw an image” (*Philebus* 38c-d).

There are three phases to be distinguished in *phantasia*, as illustrated above. (a) There is the givenness of the datum in sensation. Sensation is insight after a fashion—insight into the visible surface of the object. (b) There is the interpretation of the given in judgment, whereby concepts or images are applied to the datum, truly or falsely. Thus, judgment is a relating activity of the mind whereby a complex is produced which is an image of the datum of insight. (c) Finally, there is the process of thinking—*dianoia*—whereby the mind proceeds from the given to the interpretation; this is cross-examination, the method of question and answer, reflection. The interpretation is a hypothesis concerning the data, which must be tested. The mind wonders about the data and deliberates; the deliberation culminates in a decision, which is a judgment. The decision may come slowly or with a sudden bound, when the soul comes to an agreement with itself and is no longer in doubt (*Theaetetus* 190a). Thus, thinking is a process of which the conclusion is the final act; in thinking, the mental content is indeterminate, in a conclusion it is definite. The search is not for its own sake, but in order that the mind may arrive at a conclusion. We will discuss sense and judgment in more detail.

The given is apprehended in sensation. Sensation, in turn, is the result of an interaction between two movements; the movement in the sense-organ, and that in the object, the first slow, the second rapid. Take the seeing of an object by the eyes as white. Before the interaction of the two movements has taken place, the object is not white, and the eye does not see. When the two motions meet, they produce two other motions, one in the eye, whereby the eye becomes a seeing eye, and another in the object, whereby the latter becomes a white object. Thus, the definite colors are not a property of the object taken by

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itself; they are relative to the act of seeing (*Theætetus* 156a-e).

This interaction of sense-organ with external object is a *pathos*, or passive condition, from which arise our perceptions and our judgments concerning them (179c). The origin of *phantasia* is in a feeling which becomes objectified in sense and clarified in belief. Sense is followed by memory, a purely psychical activity, consisting in the preservation of impressions. In memory, the mind is like a piece of wax on which sensations (and thoughts too) make an imprint (191d). The next step is recollection; memory "saves" the impression, and recollection revives it. In recollection the soul would seem to be genuinely creative; "when the soul has lost the memory of a sensation or of something it has learned, and then alone by itself regains this, we call everything of that kind recollection" (*Philebus* 34c). There are certain points worth noting in this short sentence. Recollection is of belief as well as of impression; the soul may recollect a memory which it *has lost*; recollection is of empirical data, and does not mean awareness of universals, as it does in the *Phædo*.

Sensation, memory, and recollection constitute the initial phase of *phantasia*; judgment is the next. "Judgment arises in us from sensation and memory"; "a man receives from sight or from some other sense the beliefs and utterances of the moment" (38c, 39b). Thus, judgment is an empirical occurrence whose contents come from sense and memory. In a striking figure, Plato compares the senses and memory working together to a writer who inscribes words in the soul; "and when the writer writes the truth, true judgments and true statements are produced in us" (39a). Thus the soul is like a book, and judgments are the inscriptions written on it by sense and memory. Although in these passages Plato suggests that judgment is a passive outcome in the soul of the operation of sense and memory, clearly that is not what he means. But we must first note several derivations from sense and judgment acting jointly.

There is speech, which is an exhibition of what has been judged to other minds; then there is the reproductive imagination. In the mind, over and above a writer, there is also a painter, illustrating the ideas with images (39b). What we

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judge about we also imagine; and thus we *behold* in our own minds the images of our judgment and our utterances. Empirical judgment requires pictorial imagery. This is the point at which fancy (*phantasia*) as a form of knowledge makes a connection with the artistic imagination. The ordinary painter produces pictures outside himself, of the objects around him. But in *phantasia*, the mind produces internal pictures, of which, indeed, the painter's pictures are objectifications. In fact, the connection with artistic fancy is even wider than that. Both knowledge and the fine arts are productive activities producing images; thus, the theory of knowledge and the theory of the fine arts are alike branches of the theory of images. Judgment is an image of sense, speech of judgment, imagination both of judgment and of speech. Finally, there are pleasures and pains accompanying images. The judgments and the images relate to the past and the present, and especially to the future; they are anticipations. And the man who anticipates (and visualizes in imagination) an abundance of gold coming into his possession feels pleasure now. Anticipations are pleasant or painful; they are hopes or fears.

To sum up, *phantasia* consists of the following steps: the primary feeling or *pathos*, sense, memory, recollection, *dianoia*, judgment, speech, imagination, pleasure and pain; these are arranged in the order of temporal priority except that memory and recollection may be either of sense or of judgment. Simplified, this list would read, sense, *dianoia*, and judgment with their respective derivatives. We have in the list presumably all the components which go to make up the actual fact of empirical thinking. Probably to these we should add a further component, namely practice. In *doxa* concepts are entangled not only with percepts but with behavior as well. On the level of opinion, thought is part of the larger fact of human response—not occasional but habitual response. *Doxa* is ingrained in the practices and routines of the manual crafts, such as agriculture with its generalizations about the changes of the seasons, or music learned by ear, when the mind finds the pitch of a note by conjecture, or medicine. In *doxa* thought exists as a component of massive, unanalyzed experience with its other ingredients of emotional

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coloring and active discharge; and intellectual development consists in the separation of the factor of thought from the total personal attitude.

Judgment is an interpretation of the datum of sense in terms of concepts and of categories. Everything that exists has its description (λόγος—*Euthydemus* 285e); it has a “what” (ὅτι ἐστὶ—*Republic* 515d) and judgment is the answer to the question: what is the object that I see? (*Philebus* 38d). Whether I answer that it is white or round, a man or a mountain, I am applying a concept to a datum. Over and above the specific concepts there are the universal concepts, *i.e.*, categories, which Plato calls common notions (κοινά), used in all judgment. Examples of these are existence and non-existence, likeness and unlikeness, unity and plurality, goodness and beauty. In judging, we affirm that the given exists or does not exist, that it is other than something else, that it is one or many, that it has worth, and so on. The above list is from the *Theaetetus* (185c–186a); in the *Timaeus* (37b) there is a slightly different one. There we are told that the soul, in contemplating that which has its substance dispersed (*i.e.*, a concrete object), declares existence, activity and passivity (we would say causality), identity and difference, relation, time, place and manner. A simple judgment consists in the application of all the categories and of a specific concept to a datum.

We had seen that, according to Plato, judgment is derived from sense and memory. Paradoxical as this may seem, there is a sense in which he means it. Sense apprehends empirical characters (δρώμενα εἶδη, *Republic* 510d), this particular shade of color or this particular shape. The soul “perceives the hardness of the hand through touch, and likewise the softness of the soft” (*Theaetetus* 186b). Now, such perceptions are indispensable as a reminder of the concepts used in judgment. But the contribution of sense is solely psychological; it has no cognitive import. When, upon seeing something, I judge that it is like whiteness but falls short of it I must of necessity have independent knowledge of whiteness (*Phaedo* 74–75). Similarly with respect to the categories. Plato makes the singular statement that sensations are natural to man, whereas the reflections upon these,

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with reference to their *being* and *use* are acquired, if at all, with difficulty and slowly, through education (*Theætetus* 186c). One might almost infer that for Plato categories are acquired and sensations innate, for he also says, speaking of some of the common notions: "I think that these also are among the things the essence of which the soul discerns in their relations to one another, reflecting within itself upon the past and present in relation to the future" (186a). But the sense in which the categories are acquired by education and by reflection concerning temporal events is only the one in which the innate ideas are latent and have to be elicited into consciousness.

We repeat that *phantasia* is not mere apprehension of data; there is no such thing as *mere* apprehension of data; to perceive, say, a particular color is at least to perceive it as something which exists and is other than other things. *Phantasia* is empirical only in the sense that it is belief based on sensation. And its value as knowledge is very little indeed. "We never hear or see anything with exactness"; "the senses cannot reach the essence of anything" (*Phædo* 65b, d). It is the duty of the philosopher to eschew the senses and to seek to know by reason operating alone. While making such flatly critical remarks, Plato, in his usual way, elsewhere adds statements in which the rôle of the senses is described as valuable. The senses have a way of provoking reason by the very contradictoriness of their content. Thought arises in the effort to solve a problem set by experience. The senses present things as both light and heavy, hard and soft, both as one and as an infinite multiplicity. Such contradictions constitute a puzzle which intrigues reason, and puts it to work. Thought clarifies the confusions and separates off what is jumbled together in sense. Thus, sense, by its very defects, serves as an alarm-clock for reason. Nor does Plato consistently think of the senses as thwarting knowledge. God bestowed vision upon us in order that we might comprehend the ideal order by means of the perception of actual order in the heavens; and by the gift of hearing he revealed to us harmony as embodied in musical sound (*Timæus* 47b-d).

Plato does not consistently use the term *doxa* in a strict sense, namely as thought with an empirical reference; there is another

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looser sense of *doxa* as belief of any sort, whether it concerns particulars or universals, *provided it is not based on proof*. Of *doxa* in the latter sense Plato at times notes the weaknesses and at others the merits. Thus *doxa* often stands for the state of mind of the average man with its mass of unorganized opinions on any subject; for the spirit of traditionalism, and for beliefs that reflect popular consent. It also stands for beliefs based on authority, like those that we acquire from teaching and bringing up. *Doxa* is dogma. Opinion is the complacency of dogma; the opinionated man, unable to answer questions, can only reiterate his beliefs louder and with more heat. Hence, Socrates' method for stirring a man out of his dogmatism is to raise and to insist on the question of the reason why. *Doxa* embraces beliefs concerning morals too—those beliefs about what is honorable and just which we imbibe uncritically from our social *milieu*. The spirited man does not rise above the level of *doxa*; his code of honor and decency comes from his family and social group. Indeed he is virtuous and his beliefs are mostly right; nevertheless he has failed to rationalize his beliefs and his virtues. The function of the spirited part is to preserve and execute the orders of the rational part; like a soldier it obeys reason blindly.

When Plato envisages the absence of proof in *doxa* in a more favorable light, he is inclined to think of *doxa* as a type of insight, an immediate intuition into the truth (*μαντεία*; *Republic* 431e). At such times Plato speaks of *ᾠσιον ἄλογον*—right opinion. One cannot be quite sure whether Plato means by right opinion something specifically different from opinion as such. The writer is inclined to think not. Just as Plato is sometimes impressed with the fact that the particular distorts its nature, and at other times with the fact that it expresses it, so Plato sometimes construes opinion as a step away from knowledge and sometimes as a step toward it. There is a faculty in man for grasping the truth without reasoning; its operation may be noted in the statesman who, although not educated in philosophy, still succeeds in discerning what is good for the city on any particular occasion by a kind of *flair*. Not because they were wise did Themistocles and other men rule their states.

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That these statesmen—and indeed all sorts of able men in the community—have not obtained their beliefs through reason is proven by the fact that they cannot communicate their specific abilities to others; if they knew what they knew they would have taught it to their children. And yet Athens is full of families in which notable parents have succeeded in educating their children in everything but their own virtues. They did not understand what virtue is, far less were they in a position to teach it. Such *eudoxia* (faculty of right opinion) in statesmen, public leaders, and ordinary men, Plato also calls enthusiasm, comparing it with the inspiration of the prophet. “We can say of the statesmen that they are divine and enraptured, because they were possessed by the gods” (*Meno* 99d). Thus, right opinion, not derived from reasoning, comes to men as a flash of inspiration, or, as we might say, by imagination.

Nevertheless, right opinion must submit to a mundane test; its justification is pragmatic. Those divine men who have no *nous* achieve great things in their words and deeds; the results of opinion are fine and good.⁵ For the practical purposes of every-day life, right opinion will do just as well as rational belief. “If a man knew the way to Larisa, or any other place you please (knowing it by right opinion) and walked there and led others, would he not give right and good guidance?” (*Meno* 97a-d). In fact, he will be just as good a guide as the man whose belief is rational; no, not quite as good, because he could not be counted on always to lead aright. The point is important. “Those who hold right opinion without intelligence do not differ appreciably from blind men going the right way” (*Republic* 506c). *Episteme* is knowledge of the reason why, and is therefore firm; belief which is true but not proven is unstable. Like the images of Dædalus, opinions run away; enthusiasms cool off; revelation loses its authority, conversions lapse. Felt convictions, unless grounded on reason, are fleeting things.

There is no conflict between right opinion and reason. The former is an insight into the truth by a leap of the imagination—a glimpse by means of symbols, through myth, in the con-

⁵*Meno* 98c, 99c; *Theætetus* 200e; also *Philebus* 58c.

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fused immediacy of feeling. Opinion, while confused, makes for conviction. The source of belief is non-rational. Reason clarifies the glimpse, elicits the content of the myth, tests and stabilizes the belief. Human beings cannot ascend to reason save through the stage of opinion; in the order of human development, true opinion, that is to say imaginative insight, comes first and reason second. There is the stage of having an idea, and that of proving it. Right opinion supplies reason with its raw material, contributing the insights which the latter may formulate. From the myth comes the doctrine. In its turn, reason provides the tie of the cause with which opinion is chained to the soul.

From opinion we rise to *noesis*—thought; the change is from belief without proof to rationally validated belief, from concern with particulars to concern with universals. The contrast is, say, between the state of mind of the practical farmer and the botanist. The first distinguishes various kinds of fruit, according to their visible qualities and behavior, and has habits of dealing with them; the second distinguishes the fruits according to species. The farmer bases his classification on confused recognition, the botanist on strict analysis of abstract characteristics. In *doxa*, meaning is constituted by reference to sense; in reflection essence becomes revealed as such (*Phædo* 65c); thus reflective meaning is pure and non-sensory.

Noesis is divided into two stages, understanding (*dianoia*)⁶ and knowledge—*episteme*. Understanding expresses the method of the ordinary sciences and mathematics. These are sciences only in a loose way of speaking; they are not truly sciences (*Republic* 511c, 533e). On the level of understanding, we grasp the essences through particular examples; the geometer, for instance, deals with triangles by means of actual triangles drawn on the sand; in short, understanding is only an indirect insight into the forms, an apprehension of the essences *via* sym-

⁶Plato uses this word ambiguously; he means either the lower form of *noesis* or the general process of reasoning in all stages of cognition, empirical or reflective. For the sake of keeping the distinction clear, we will speak of understanding, on the one hand, and of thinking, on the other.

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bols. The archetypes of *pistis* are symbols for the understanding, as the data of conjecture are images for *pistis*. Furthermore, understanding starts with unproved hypotheses and fails to validate belief by reference to a first principle. The so-called sciences assume certain initial propositions and certain undefined notions, giving an account of neither. Understanding treats what is a hypothesis as though it were a principle; it is essentially uncritical. The so-called scientist proves everything but his premises, which he is unwilling to discuss. He is a dogmatist, though on a higher level than the practical man. How then could understanding be regarded as knowledge, properly speaking? Where the primary assumptions are unproved, nothing is known, neither the premises nor the theorems deduced from them (*Republic* 533c).

Over and above the initial assumptions, understanding employs specific hypotheses in solving particular problems. Whereas *episteme* demonstrates by reference to principles, understanding uses the method of hypotheses, proceeding *downward* (ἐπι τελευτήν, *Republic* 510b). What is this method of hypotheses, strictly speaking? Unfortunately the subject is left obscure in the Platonic works and we must glean what we can from scattered references. Unable to grasp the reason why, we make a stab at it by assuming a hypothesis. "Grant me this hypothesis"—says Socrates, speaking of the theory of ideas (*Phædo* 100b). Understanding lies between *doxa* and dialectic; the mind has left particulars but has not reached principles. It can make only guesses, but guesses according to method. We assume a hypothesis which has an intrinsic plausibility (is safe and sound; 100a, d) and is generally acceptable (96c). Then we draw out its implications concerning both the thing assumed and its relations to everything else. We also assume the denial of the hypothesis and draw out its implications, too. (*Parmenides* 136c). We thus construct a pattern of consistent and coherent propositions, or rather two deductive patterns, of which the initial premises are mutual contradictories.

Then we submit our patterns to certain tests: (a) We inquire whether the consequences of the hypothesis reduce it to absurdity (128a, 136a, b) or again whether the consequences

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involve any contradiction. Of course if there is a contradiction in the consequences, there is one lurking in the initial hypothesis. We cannot be too careful in testing our hypothesis, as the mere scrutiny of its contents is no guarantee that we will uncover its internal defects, if any (*Phædo* 107b). (b) We compare the pattern with the data; if there is a conflict, the hypothesis is false. For example, in the *Meno*, Socrates is engaged in ascertaining the nature of virtue. Let us assume, he says, that virtue is knowledge and see what follows. If virtue be knowledge, then virtue can be taught, and if virtue can be taught, there must be teachers and learners of virtue. Now, in fact, there are neither, and therefore the primary hypothesis is false (89c, d, e). It would seem that for Plato a hypothesis is what we would call today an explanatory theory, to be tested by reference to the data of sense. A hypothesis is correct if it "saves the phenomena." Plato's statement, then, that understanding moves downward means that the so-called sciences submit their hypotheses to the test of the perceived facts and not of an *a priori* principle. And Plato's assertion that geometry uses the symbolism of concrete lines, angles, and figures may be more liberally interpreted to mean that in the various sciences the mind conceives of laws as embodied in the facts, and not abstractly. *Doxa* directs itself to particulars and uses laws incidentally; *dianoia* directs itself to laws and employs particulars incidentally.

(c) Finally, we test the hypothesis by its conformity with the initial general assumptions and with our beliefs concerning the universe. You will justify your hypothesis "by assuming some other one which seemed to you the best of the higher ones, and so on until you had reached some one which was *adequate*" (*ἰκανόν*, *Phædo* 101e). The adequacy of the higher hypothesis consists in the fact that it is a cosmological theory; but it is still a theory. For instance, in the *Phædo*, Plato is concerned to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, and he does so by showing how it follows from the doctrine of the theory of ideas. But the latter is a hypothesis which he assumes (100b), and also tests by reference to the phenomena. The third test, then, is one in which a hypothesis of limited scope

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is shown to be coherent with a philosophical generalization; nevertheless it does not constitute demonstration, since the principle by which the theory is tested is itself a hypothesis.

We can thus see why the method of hypotheses fails to lead to certainty. Take the first test of a hypothesis, which is non-contradictoriness—consistency in short. Consistency is not a proof of truth; a deduction in geometry may be consistent but if its premises are wrong, the whole system of consequences is wrong too. The important matter is the beginning; if that is sound, all else is sound (*Cratylus* 436c-e). The second test of a hypothesis is comparison with the facts as given to sense; but for Plato sense is not sound, its data are fluid, not definite enough rigidly to check any theory. Instead of inquiring what virtue is by assuming a particular hypothesis and drawing out its implications, we should adopt the direct method of studying the essence of virtue; this method would give a knowledge both of the essence of virtue and of its teachability (*Meno* 100b).

Assuming that our interpretation is correct, in the conception of *dianoia* Plato anticipates in a rough way the method of inquiry illustrated in modern science. A scientific theory is expected to be verifiable by the data and to be coherent with other beliefs; it is not expected to be deducible from an *a priori* principle. In *dianoia*, the mind hovers between the realms of sense and of essence, conceiving universals through concrete instances, and laws as descriptive of things. And this combination of abstract with concrete thought is the characteristic of the scientific method. In *dianoia*, the mind, which has been moving toward a first principle, gives up the quest either from complacency or from despair; what Plato deprecates as a failure has become for us the ideal for intellectual achievement.

As examples of *dianoia*, Plato examines mathematics (arithmetic and geometry, plane and solid) and, among the so-called sciences, chiefly astronomy and harmonics. Harmonics and the general science of sound were for the Greeks what possibly the science of physics has been for modern thought. Physics is the earliest of the modern sciences, and it has provided the pattern for the other sciences that followed. Thus, we refuse to allow

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any new type of inquiry to be described as scientific unless it attains experimental methods of verification and exactness of formulation and measurement, as illustrated in the science of physics. For the Greeks, harmonics appear to have served as the pattern-science; by revealing to them that the variations in sound correspond to differences in rates of vibration and to exact ratios between them, it led the Greeks to the general conception of the universe as number, *i.e.*, as subject-matter for quantification and mathematical formulation. If sounds have number, so must the soul have a number, and the elements, and the virtues, too.

Both in astronomy and in harmonics we study motion; in the first, the motion of bodies, in the second, motion in sound. Plato deplors the fact that the harmonics of his day consisted in the measurement of audible concords and sounds against one another. The true object of the student should not be heard sounds but the generalized problems of the proportions and concords of numbers (*Republic*, 531a-c). Does he mean that harmonics should study the quantitative proportions between numbers of vibrations in sound? The answer is not clear. Similarly Plato criticizes astronomy for studying the actual heavenly bodies in and for themselves. The orbits of these have deviations and perturbations (530b); they are not exact imitations of the ideal circle and are unworthy as objects of the true scientist. In astronomy, we must pay no attention to the heavenly bodies (530c); what then are astronomers to study? the perplexed student may well ask. Shall we say that Plato is in favor of theoretical as against descriptive astronomy (and physics, in general)? Plato asserts that the astronomer must pursue the realities of things, the absolute truth with respect to equals or doubles or any other ratio (530a, b). How, then, is astronomy to be distinguished from mathematics, if at all? Perhaps all science at this level is mathematics; there would remain this distinction, however, that astronomy would be the study of a particular type of number. Perhaps the solution to our problem is this: the function of the astronomer is to set up a *pattern of coherent abstract concepts* relevant to a specific field, namely that of the heavenly bodies. Plato describes astronomy as the

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science of the abstract form of motion, and of its various subdivisions and shapes; not of particular and actual celestial bodies but "of the essence of speed and slowness in true number and in all true figures both in relation to one another and *as vehicles of the things they contain*" (529d).

Plato's attitude to mathematics is curiously mixed. On the one hand, he praises mathematics as the prelude to dialectic, training the mind in the power of abstract thought; indeed, when he realized the extent of the prevailing ignorance concerning the theory of incommensurables, he says that he was utterly astounded and was ashamed both of himself and of the Greeks in general, deploring such ignorance as *swinish* (*Laws* 819d, e). Yet, on the other hand, he states in another passage that he has rarely come across a mathematician who could reason (*Republic* 531e). The distinction which underlies this apparent contradiction in attitude, is the one between mathematics as it should be and as it actually is pursued.

Mathematicians are apt to be horse-traders rather than theoretical students, though Plato does not use exactly those words. What he does say is that philosophical geometry and calculation should be distinguished from "the mathematics of the many" which is used in buying and selling, trade and building (*Philebus* 56d, 57a). Thus (a) mathematics should be pursued as a theoretical discipline without reference to its application. (b) It is a study of abstract forms and not of objects embodying these forms. While it is true that the geometer makes use of visible forms, such as written figures, and talks about them, "he is not thinking of them but of those things of which they are a likeness, pursuing his inquiry for the sake of the square as such and the diagonal as such and not for the sake of the image of it which they draw" (510d). "Geometry is not the business of making diagrams but the discovery of realities" (*Euthydemus* 290e). As for arithmetic, it is not the business of mathematics to add up oxen and armies; arithmetic is the study of number, not of things numbered (*Republic* 525d). "Two and two is four" is a statement not about pairs of visible and tangible things but about the numbers two and four in their essence. Thus, mathematics is divorced from existence;

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its propositions in no way refer to actuality, and their truth is indifferent to the passage of events. Mathematical statements deal with "that which always is and not with that which comes to be and passes away" (527b). (c) Mathematics has nothing to do with operations, mathematical or otherwise. We are told in school that adding one to one makes it two, as though a number could be changed by a juxtaposition. Even worse, we are told that by dividing the number one we get two; but division cannot multiply (*Phædo* 96e-97a). In fact, unity has no parts and cannot be divided, nor can unity be increased, for the number one is identical with itself. When one is added to one, it is not addition which is the cause of two, but participation in duality (*Phædo* 101c); and ten is more than eight not by two but by number (101b). In brief, operations such as addition, subtraction, and division have no place in arithmetic construed as the formal nature of number. The same is true of squaring, etc., in geometry (*Republic* 527a).

Yet mathematics is not *episteme*, for the reason that it is uncritical and fails to attain first principles. In geometry and arithmetic we grant the notions of the odd, of the even, and of an angle, without giving any account of them. Also, mathematics starts with hypotheses which it leaves undisturbed (*ἀκίνητον*); that is to say, which it does not discuss. The conclusion is that in mathematics we dream of being and have not a clear waking vision of it (533c). Shall we say that mathematics will become a waking vision when it is transformed into logic?

All the disciplines discussed so far—harmonics, astronomy, mathematics—are only the prelude to the strain of dialectic. But before we reach the melody itself there is another preliminary musical phrase which must be gone through; this is the study of the correlation of the various disciplines (531d).⁷ *Dianoia* represents the level of intermediate generality at which the confused integrations of *doxa* are broken up into a number of distinct regions each with its own integrating principles. But an attempt to reach final unity by a correlation of the several

⁷Thus another defect of the sciences on the level of *dianoia* is that they are restricted in their subject-matter.

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distinct disciplines is not properly philosophical, because it is *ad hoc* and has no recourse to a first principle. We cannot reach the ultimate one by stringing partial views together; dialectic makes a fresh start, substituting a synoptic view for the special perspectives of the so-called sciences. Dialectic is the attainment of the unity which is dreamt of on the level of *dianoia*. Moreover, in dialectic we achieve the ideal of rational demonstration only envisaged in *dianoia*. For instance, Plato speaking of the so-called scientists says: "So it is with the geometers, astronomers and calculators—not knowing how to use their prey, but only how to hunt, I take it they hand over their discoveries to the dialecticians to use properly, when they can find any who are not utter blockheads" (*Euthydemus* 290c). The so-called scientists do not know what they are doing; in dialectic, the mind not only becomes aware that hypotheses have been employed as principles, but, what is more important, it succeeds in providing the needed demonstration. Dialectic is complete self-criticism and self-knowledge. From the unawareness of complacent ignorance in *dianoia*, the mind moves through awareness of ignorance to *episteme* itself.

Strictly speaking, the defining features of dialectic are two: (a) it is demonstrative knowledge and (b) it is abstract knowledge. In dialectic, we construct a system of propositions based on a known first principle, and we apprehend pure forms without the intervention of symbols. To begin with the first—Plato states that dialectic *destroys* hypotheses (*ἀναρᾷ*, 533c); that is to say, the mind does away with the dogmatic attitude toward scientific premises and considers them critically. Then it goes on to use the hypotheses as "footings and underpinnings" (511b) and thus ascends to the first principle. After the ascent, there is the descent, which consists in the drawing out of the consequences of the first principle. The procedures in the ascent and the descent respectively are so different that we must go into their nature in some detail. Going beyond any of Plato's explicit statements, we may say that there is reasoning *to* first principles, and reasoning *from* first principles. Reasoning of the first kind is not strict at all; there can be no demonstration

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of first premises, demonstration being deduction from premises. Yet, although the premises of knowledge cannot be proved, neither are they arbitrary, for, if they were, all the conclusions drawn from them—that is to say, the content of the scientific and mathematical disciplines—would be arbitrary and uncertain also. If there is knowledge at all—and that there is Plato has no doubt—there is also a method of arriving at first principles, which is not the method of proof but is dialectical. What precisely the method of dialectic is, Plato does not state—perhaps for the good reason that by formulating it he would be converting it into a premise. As we have pointed out, dialectic advances toward a first principle by using hypotheses as springboards (ὁμῶς, 511b); and in his dialogues Plato reaches a conclusion by going from alternative to alternative, scrutinizing, rejecting and finally (sometimes) accepting one. The investigation of an alternative which is later rejected is an integral part of the process of discovery. “Only by a devious passage through all this can the mind attain the truth” (*Parmenides* 136e). “Wipe out”—he says on another occasion—“all that we have stated before, and see if you have any clearer vision, now that you have advanced to this point” (*Theaetetus* 187b). The dialectical method can be described only in terms which Plato sometimes uses—it is the “rubbing” together of conflicting hypotheses, the living through by the mind of various alternatives in the light of considerations which confront it. “Only after continued application to the subject itself and intercourse with it, is the truth brought to birth in the soul, suddenly, like light which is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter sustains itself” (*Epistles* 341c, d). The conclusion comes as a flash; that is to say, there is no guarantee that it will come; and some of Plato’s dialogues end inconclusively. Reasoning from premises is analytical, the conclusion disclosing what is contained in the premises; it has certainty but does not yield novel insight. Reasoning to premises results in discovery; at the end of such reasoning there is more knowledge than in the beginning, and also more clarity. Whereas in the descent we start with rigid notions, in the ascent we start with fluid concepts which we alter and determine as we proceed.

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In the descent the mind reverses its course, proceeding downward to a conclusion, through various intermediary stages (*Republic* 511b). There is descent in dialectic as there is in *dianoia*; but the descent now starts from a first principle instead of from a hypothesis. The first principle—though Plato does not state what it is in the passage cited—must be the idea of the good; from this idea we make deductions which cover the entire scope of being. Dialectic is a way of inquiry, “that attempts systematically to determine what each thing is *in every case* (*πρὸς παντός*, 533b). Plato propounds an ideal of knowledge in which every proposition is rigorously demonstrated (save the first, which is arrived at reflectively), which is absolutely universal in its scope in that it extends over every item of being, and which is wholly *a priori* and integrated. For Plato, all knowledge is one; metaphysics is not distinct from the sciences, nor the sciences from each other. Metaphysics, from its own principles, yields consequences which serve as premises in the sciences.

In all the lower levels, the mind is restricted to the contemplation of images; dialectic alone penetrates into the archetypal essences of things. Thus, dialectic is thoroughgoing abstraction, the cognition of forms without reference to their embodiment in concrete things and without the use of imagery (532a). This is reflection and consists of two procedures, definition and division, the first being a scrutiny of individual forms, the second of their patterns of relationship. Let us start with definition. The mind achieves an immediate insight into pure form, which is akin to intellectual perception (*κατιδεῖν*). But insight is only the beginning; we want to know how that which is, is (*Republic* 477b); to give an account (*λόγον διδόναι*) of what we apprehend. Immediacy is not enough; there must also be rationality, that is to say, the definition of what is intuited. “One wants to make clear by definition the object (*i.e.*, the species) which he wishes to explain” (*Phædrus* 265d). In insight the mind takes hold of (*ἄπτεται*) its object, and in definition it explains the object to itself and to others. There is the acquaintance with the form and then the description of it. Plato applies the requirement of explanation even to the knowledge of the good.

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“And is not this true of the good likewise—that the man who is unable to *define in his discourse* and distinguish and abstract from all other things the aspect or idea of the good, and who cannot, as it were in battle, running the gauntlet of all tests, and striving to examine everything by essential reality and not by opinion, hold on his way through all this without tripping in his reasoning—the man who lacks this power, you will say, does not really know the good itself?” (*Republic* 534b, c). The test of one’s possession of insight is the ability to furnish an account of that into which one has an insight; “the dialectician is the man who is able to exact an account of the essence of each thing” (534b).

Definition, says Plato, must not reduce the known to the unknown; and its components must be familiar to the mind (*Meno* 75c, 76d). In what, precisely, does definition consist? In the *Sophist* Plato supplies a number of examples of definition, from which it would seem that to define is to display the relations of mingling and exclusion which a given form sustains to the generality of forms. By defining, we separate off a species from a group of forms, and bring it under its genus, indicating meanwhile its distinguishing characteristics under the genus.

Between insight and explanation, and leading from the first to the second, is the process of thinking. “A general conception is formed by collecting into a unity (by means of reason) the many perceptions of the senses; and this is a recollection of those things which our soul once beheld” (*Phædrus* 249c). In induction we discover what we have known all along. The assemblage of the data does not contribute the knowledge of their unity; it only prepares the way for it. By comparing justice in the city with justice in the state, “by rubbing them together, as though from fire-sticks, we may cause the flash of justice to flash forth” (*Republic* 435a). Or instead of beginning with data of sense, we may use meanings as our starting point. There is the gradual transition from confused to clear ideas. We start with an image or a name of that whose nature we desire to explain. When two or more people engage in a discussion, they meet on the basis of a common name. But though the terms

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be alike, each individual has a private notion of their meaning, and each individual's notion is indefinite. At the start, "our talk, just like the picture of a living creature, seems to have a good enough outline, but not yet to have received the clarity that comes from pigments and the blending of colors" (*Politicus* 277c). The method by which we pass to clarity is that of question and answer—a conversation with others and with ourselves. "It is the methodical study of all these stages which passes in turn from one to another, up and down" that implants knowledge in the mind (*Epistles* 343e). Plato sometimes compares dialectic to running on a course (διαλεκτική πορεία, *Republic* 532b); it is a movement of the mind up and down from data to definition and back, in which it juxtaposes and compares name and object, image and definition. There is no stated formula by which the end is to be reached, no path of inference laid out in advance. The runner makes his course as he runs. Or, to change the figure, there is only the actual human fact of thinking—an organic process which upon reaching its consummation gives forth its fruit. "And it is by means of the examination of these objects, comparing one with another—names and definitions, visions and sense-perceptions—proving them by kindly proofs and employing questionings and answerings that are void of envy—it is by such means, and hardly so, that there bursts out the light of intelligence and reason regarding each object in the mind" (*Epistles* 344b). The methods of reaching a definition and a first premise are alike.

The mind is concerned to know not only the nature of individual forms, but also the systematic pattern of the forms. Such a study Plato calls division—the process of classifying the forms into organized groups, as indivisible species under other species, and these in turn under genera. Plato intimates that he is an innovator in this field; "there was a long-established and careless indolence in respect to the division of classes or genera into forms or species, so that nobody even tried to make such divisions" (*Sophist* 267d). Division does not consist in the separation of the genus into one definite species which is set over against all the other species lumped together under one name; it is the articulation of the genus into its various classes and

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into their definite subspecies. In ridiculing the *ad hoc* way of dividing, Plato suggests that a crane, an animal probably capable of thought, might "oppose cranes to all other animals, and group the rest, men included, under one head, calling them by one name, which might very well be that of beasts. Let us try to be on our guard against all that sort of thing" (*Politicus* 263d). Also mere unification is not enough. Consider a man studying the letters; simply to take letters and group them under the class "letter" is not to produce grammar. Anybody can group men under the class "humans," but it takes a scientist to point out the various species of human nature; and it takes a grammarian to distinguish the various kinds of letters. Knowledge is specificity; we should not proceed from the one to many at once, but through the intermediation of species and genera (*Philebus* 17). Thus, in division, the forms are ordered into sets of restricted groups, and these sets are themselves grouped into wider classes, until a complete integration of the realm of forms has been achieved.

In setting forth his doctrine of dialectic, Plato launched into the world the conception of knowledge as an *a priori* and deductive system of propositions, which reigned not only in Greece but in the seventeenth century (and later) as well, among the rationalistic school. Descartes' Universal Mathematics and Spinoza's Ethics *more geometrico* are comparable to Plato's universal dialectic. Plato's first principle is the idea of the good; Spinoza's, substance. In Plato's thought we might distinguish an informal and a technical approach to dialectic; and it is easier to agree with the first than with the second. Underlying Plato's doctrine of *episteme* as against *dianoia* is the conception of the need of self-criticism, the need to test scientific first premises, at least to become aware that they are assumptions. There is also the view that in the various scientific disciplines the mind selects by reference to special perspectives, and that it is necessary, abandoning these, somehow to achieve a vision of things in their integrity and wholeness. To the writer, this is an admirable version of the philosophic method; it is a doctrine which one can understand even when one does

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not agree with it. But what shall we make of the technical content of Plato's doctrine? Knowledge, for him, has nothing to do with the actual world; it is a knowledge of forms alone in their interrelations—of every form, of the form of every object, but only of forms. Plato holds that it is possible to know what forms and their relations are without recourse to experience—for example, what it is to be an ox, or a man, or fire. His view stands at the extreme right of rationalism; and it seems an incredible view. We are willing to grant that the method of mathematics and logic is purely reflective; Plato would seem to impose upon physics and biology the reflective methods of mathematics and logic.

And yet today we hear of conceptual patterns—not only in mathematics but in the physical sciences as well—which are constructed *a priori*. True enough, the pattern of physical conceptions is held to be suggested by experience, but so, too, must the pattern of geometrical notions originate in intimations from experience; otherwise there would be no principle wherewith to select which mathematical pattern to study. Now Plato, too, maintains that the conceptual pattern is something of which we are “reminded” by experience. He further asserts that the pattern is not verified by reference to experience. Is it too far-fetched to suggest that neither according to the modern viewpoint is the conceptual pattern demonstrated in experience? Experience cannot disqualify a conceptual pattern—at least not in the sense that it can prove it to be false. Various conceptual patterns may be illustrated in experience, and experience does not impose the acceptance of any one in particular, the selection being made for pragmatic reasons. But in addition, Plato holds that the conceptual pattern is *in itself* a term of reference in knowledge—it is not a referent *for* experience. The mind is to study the form of ox, of apple, of star, of motion and so on in the way a mathematician investigates number. Yet the similarity between the dialectical and the contemporary mathematical approaches is apparent only. The mathematician of the present day is not very sure whether what he studies is real and probably does not care; for Plato, the conceptual pattern is a display of the real realm of the forms (*Parmenides* 132b,

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c) in which the idea of the good is articulated. And as the realm of forms is definite so is the conceptual pattern definite and fixed, whereas recent theory of knowledge speaks of alternative conceptual schemes.

Of course, it is grossly inaccurate to talk of "the modern viewpoint" as if that were definite and single; there are a number of diverse modern trends, and the writer does not claim to be as familiar with them as he should be. We must repel any implication that the value of Plato's philosophy is to be measured by the degree of its conformity to modern views. But we are speaking in the present and addressing ourselves to persons living in the present; and by showing how our problems, and to some extent our solutions, are similar to Plato's, we have thought to make Plato's position more real to the reader, more intelligible, and, to a certain degree, plausible.

A possible criticism of Plato's doctrine of *episteme* would be that he construes knowledge as classification rather than as measurement; that he therefore presents an ideal which is sterile of results and which has had a damaging effect upon Aristotle—and through him—upon subsequent Greek thought. Yet we cannot be quite sure as to Plato's conception of division. It is true, he speaks of the classification of the forms, but it is not clear how he construes each form. Are forms to be taken as sheer unanalyzable essences—"whatnesses" such as black, hard and round—and is division therefore a sort of logical and perhaps verbal play with concepts? The writer thinks not. Plato held a mathematical conception of the forms; definition, in the last resort, is equating a form with a ratio of some sort. If that is true, then, dialectic is not barren classification; it is mathematical analysis and measurement.

When we said some sentences above that Plato stands at the extreme right of rationalism, we had in mind his account of the deductive phase of dialectic. But in his view of the nature and need of induction, Plato is much less one-sided than the rationalists of the seventeenth century. In speaking of induction, we mean not merely the inferring of general laws from particular instances, but also the reasoning to premises and in fact all aporetic reflection which leads to discovery. For

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Spinoza, the first principle is given at the outset; for Plato, the first principle is arrived at as the outcome of a process of reflection. In this generalized sense, induction was not, for Plato, another kind of deduction; it was an altogether different form of reasoning; and yet it *was reasoning*. When one finds that induction and all searching for premises are irreducible to deductive reasoning, one is apt to conclude that first premises are set up arbitrarily. That is because one has construed reasoning too narrowly—namely as deductive. Reasoning need not be the analysis of premises. Why not?—the opponent might ask. The answer is that if knowledge exists, and if knowledge is insight, then the process by which the mind arrives at the premises must be valid, for otherwise deduction from the premises would not be knowledge either. Deduction is strict and methodical, in the sense that it is according to stated rules; induction—reasoning to premises—is methodical too, yet not according to a formulable rule; it is a process of thinking whose conclusion is a satisfaction.

Although Plato stresses the sharp contrast between *doxa* and *noesis*, in effect the difference is one only of degree. *Dianoia*, like *pistis*, is apprehension of the forms through images; *dianoia*, in its use of hypotheses, relies on conjecture no less than *doxa* does; just as *doxa* is belief without the reason why, so is *dianoia* naïve and uncritical. Again, *doxa* and dialectic each have three parts—insight, thinking, and interpretation. In *doxa*, interpretation is of a sense-datum through judgment; in dialectic it is the definition of an essence. And both alike use the method of question and answer.⁸

We might speak of the four stages as the ladder along which the mind rises to the first principle; but the figure of a ladder would not be adequate because the distinction between the steps is not clear; there are no definite steps, the various types of thought fading into one another. There are rather four points along a continuous line. We have already pointed out that the ascent is succeeded by the descent, whereby the hypotheses of

⁸Plato refers to the *eros* of the ideal which through intercourse (insight) brings forth as its child *now* (interpretation), *Republic* 490b.

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dianoia are converted into demonstrations. We must now point out that descent also includes the application of the conceptual pattern to the data of sense. In saying this we do not forget Plato's dictum that dialectic descends through forms and rests in forms (*Republic*, 511c); but dialectic is not the only kind of cognition that man must have. "If a person, while having a mastery of the divine circle, is ignorant of the human sphere, he is in a ridiculous condition"; he needs the impure and uncertain arts—in short, *doxa*—if he "is ever to find his way home" (*Philebus* 62a, b). But should we expect the philosopher to be capable of finding his way home; or rather, is not his home in the realm of the ideas? So long as he is on earth, he has his home here, too. The philosopher belongs to both worlds, in and out of the cave; Plato insists that the man who has gone up the hill and obtained a view of the sun must return to the cave, sharing with its inmates their labors and honors. And he adds that, having had a view of the archetypal forms, he will be all the better fitted to apprehend the dark shadows, knowing what they are shadows of (*Republic* 520c). In order, then, to fulfil his function as a human being, the philosopher will translate his conceptual pattern into empirical terms, thus going beyond (or below) dialectic. The student of the various types of human beings, for instance, will, on coming upon a given individual in the flesh, be able to identify him as belonging to this or that type (*Phædrus* 271e). Even gods descend in thought from the one to the many (*Timæus* 68d).

Our soul is sometimes "firmly grounded in the truth about every detail, and again in other cases is all at sea about everything, and somehow or other has correct opinions about some combinations, and then again is ignorant of the same things when they are transferred to the long and difficult syllables of actualities" (*πράγματα*, *Politicus* 278d). Truly the task of applying definite concepts to indefinite percepts is not easy; and the philosopher at the moment when he enters the cave is dazed and at a loss how to find his way about. Practice and habituation to the dimness of the cave are necessary, and with the aid of these the philosopher soon overcomes the difficulty.

The mind then is in continuous movement, under the impetus

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of the *eros* of truth, along the line of being; thought is a rhythm of ascent and descent, of abstraction and then of concrete application; of induction and deduction; a movement to and from premises, from brute fact to principle, and from principle back to fact, no longer (wholly) brute; finally, there is the rhythm of theory and practice. The greatest evil for man is fixation and complacency; that indeed is true error. In his conception of the ascent of the soul along the line of being, Plato has anticipated and perhaps borrowed from the content of religious insight; and his view of the *eros* of truth has a certain similarity to Spinoza's doctrine of the *conatus*. But whereas the *conatus* is not governed by purpose, Plato's intellectual impetus has the idea of the good as its goal.

PART IV

MAN

CHAPTER XVI

HUMAN NATURE

WE HAVE seen that the governing impulse in all creation by man—whether in the arts and crafts, in language, in thought or in character—is the aim to imitate the ideal. In moral action, specifically, man supplies both the energy and the materials of creation; he is also its outcome. In this chapter, we will study the material of moral action; in the next two, the pattern to be imitated; and in the last chapter—on the Portrait of the Philosopher—we will set forth the product.

Ethics and psychology are interrelated subjects. On the one hand, the good of man is determined by the nature of man, in the sense that the virtue of the soul consists in the fulfilment of its peculiar function; and on the other, the nature of man can be studied only in the light of the end of man, since only the ideal is real. In his various remarks concerning human nature, Plato reveals a remarkable richness of psychological observation and an acuteness of analysis; and in his exhortations on how to live well, he shows himself a truly wise man—with the wisdom of one who has laboriously extracted knowledge from meditation upon experience, and especially the experience of living. In this chapter we shall see Plato grappling with the concrete and the particular, but more than this, we shall have a glimpse into the continuity of Plato's thought, and see how he brings his abstract doctrine to bear upon details of fact. It is idle to raise the question which comes first, his general theory or his immediate insights. Plato's mind springs both from the beginning and from the end, starting here with metaphysical speculation and there with immediate experience. In what follows, we shall have ample occasion to note that the unity of Plato's thought is not mechanical, and that immediate insight is not subordinated to

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the general scheme. Plato is readier to sacrifice consistency in order to preserve the contributions of individual insight than to tamper with the latter in the interests of consistency.

In the *Phædo* we are told that the soul is simple, and simple indeed would be the task of the expositor if Plato had uniformly adhered to this statement in its obvious meaning. The detailed picture of the human soul as disclosed in Plato's writings is of something exceedingly complex, of an entity consisting of parts which also have parts, and, what is more, of parts which are at odds with one another. The soul is a stage for conflict. The simplicity of the soul can consist only in the fact that it is an organization of parts into a unity; and this simplicity can exist, not as an initial status, but as an ideal to be achieved. The diversity must somehow be seen in the light of simplicity, and it is better for us to begin with the complexity, working thence toward the unity.

All men are in a state of undeclared war with all men at all times. Such war is the natural condition of man; peace is only a name, but war is the fact, which only fools fail to perceive. Man is in a state of war both publicly and privately; that is to say, there is war of city against city, and of individual with individual. And in addition there is the perpetual warfare waged by man within himself (*Laws* 625e, 626a, d). Thus man is an animal like all animals. Yet man alone of all living things has an innate sense of rhythm and is religious. The natural tendency of the soul is to seek the realm of ideas and the peace and harmony which prevail in that realm. Man has something divine, which is his reason; and reason is his very essence, for he is a man only in so far as he is rational. Man is both earthly and divine; he has a mortal and an immortal part, and it is this duality in his nature which makes any coherent picture of the soul difficult if not impossible. His earthly aspect gives rise to the diversity and confusion in human nature; and the clue to his unity and simplicity is to be found in his immortal nature.

The situation is complicated further by the fact that in this life the soul is in or with a body—a fact which gives rise to the common-sense impression of man as a composite animal. There are thus two degrees of composition: the immortal part is at-

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tached to the mortal part of the soul, and the two together are attached to the body. But whereas the latter is a loose attachment, the former is not; the relation of the soul to the body is not essential to it and may be dissolved, whereas it would seem that the junction of the immortal with the mortal soul is indissoluble in man, though this point may be disputed. And, finally, the soul with the body finds itself in a relation with the general physical environment, and also with other human beings. We have thus the four components, immortal soul, mortal soul, body, and the physical-social situation—in which the first two constitute the human soul, the last its environment, and the body functions as the go-between. Human life is an integration of these four motions. The good life in this world depends upon the harmonious co-operation of all four factors; a well-functioning reason requires manly character and trained appetites; a healthy soul requires a healthy body; and a sound individual cannot grow except in an appropriate environment. Such a harmony was contemplated in the initial plan of the divine demiourgos for man; for example, the body was so fashioned as to provide a scope for the utmost realization of the soul's possibilities. In a semi-humorous passage, Plato raises the question why the intestines of the body happen to be so long; and he answers it by saying that the creator was aware that the human race is intemperate in eating and drinking and liable to take in a good deal more than was necessary, by reason of gluttony. He therefore bestowed on us long intestines which have the effect of protracting the period of digestion, of prolonging the interval between meals, and so of providing sufficient time for the discussion of philosophy (*Timæus* 72d).

And why is the head covered with thin bone, when a covering of solid bone would have made life much safer? The reason is that solid bone and much flesh in the head would have made acute perception impossible. "More than any other part, the framework of the head would have had them, if they could have co-existed, and the human race, having a strong and fleshy and sinewy head, would have had a life twice as many times as long as it now has, and also more healthy and free from pain. But our creators, considering whether they should make a longer-

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lived race which was worse, or a shorter-lived race which was better, came to the conclusion that every one ought to prefer a shorter span of life which was better, to a longer one which was worse; and therefore they covered the head with thin bone, but not with flesh and sinews, since it had no joints; and thus the head was added, having more sensation and wisdom than the rest of the body, but also being in every man far weaker" (*Timæus* 75b, c).

After nature comes nurture; the body must be exercised from birth, even before birth. Plato prescribes a sort of prenatal gymnastic, the character of which he elucidates by a reference to sports. At Athens, he says, we find not only boys but sometimes old men training cocks to fight each other. And to help develop them physically, "each man takes up his cock and keeps it tucked away in his fist if it is small, or under his arm if it is large, and in this way they walk many a long mile in order to improve the condition, not of their own bodies, but of these creatures." This shows that all bodies benefit by motion whether of their own or when carried along by something else. Plato wonders whether the city should not lay down a law requiring pregnant women to take walks, and nurses to carry the children to the fields or to the temples or somewhere else, until they are able to stand upright (*Laws* 789a, 790b).

But we are anticipating. We will return to the problem of the constitution of human nature. To the person who is unable to probe within, but sees only the external sheath, the soul seems to be one. To a more penetrating insight, however, the soul discloses itself as a plurality of parts which may be in opposition to one another. Far from a unity, the soul then appears as a collection of principles which are alien to one another (*Republic* 436c, 440a, 588e). Plato's proof is empirical; he appeals to the inner consciousness of strife. At one and the same time we are conscious of an impulse toward something and of an impulse away from it; thus, my thirst for water is confronted by my simultaneous reflection that water in this case may be harmful to me, a reflection which counteracts my thirst. There is that which impels and that which checks (κλεῦσον, κωλύσον, *Republic* 439c), the energy and the restraint upon that energy. Man is thus di-

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rectly aware of a duality within himself, for, Plato argues, it cannot be that the same thing at the same time moves in two contrary directions. The consciousness of the conflict can be explained only by a diversity of principles, the principle of the impulse and the principle of the inner check. Here we find the source of much of the later doctrine of the duality of spirit and flesh in man; for as Plato says, the one of these principles links us with God, and the other drags us to the earth.

Human nature is subject to two tensions: the lure of the ideal and the lure of pleasure. The divine element is reason—what Plato calls *logistikón*, the principle of reflection and judgment. This is a principle at once of contemplation and practice, of theory and of command. In the conflict just referred to, it is reason which operates as a check upon impulse, and it can so operate because it is an impulse itself. What distinguishes reason is its object; it is the striving after the best, the search for the really real, the apprehension of principle. Man is good by nature; he has in fact no choice; he cannot help loving the ideal. The mortal nature is the love of pleasure, urging man to evil (*Phædrus* 237d, *Lærus* 875c). This love is undirected, ebbing and flowing, fitful and violent; using a modern term, we might call it passion (*πάθημα*). For whereas man is free in his capacity as rational, in passion he is indeed passive and enslaved. Passions constitute the factor of *anagkē* in human nature; they happen to man and are compelling; they are the savage, lawless, primitive undercurrent in human nature. In its conduct passion is unpredictable, partaking as it does of chance (*Timæus* 34c), and therefore establishing insecurity in the very citadel of man's soul. The wild beast in man may be caged and restrained, but never finally tamed; habit may always revert to the original condition of chaos. Passion is irrational, having no internal principle of limitation. It is liable to excess, expanding indefinitely until it becomes overwhelming; it is a form of mania. Whether in the process of inflation, or while retracting, it is not guided by any consideration of ends. From the hopes into which it is easily seduced, it passes to inconsolable depression; it is a mixture of wrath with foolish fears; it is an all-daring lust (*Timæus* 69d). Finally, our mortal nature is irra-

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tional in the sense that it is unconscious. It is witless; it does not understand reason and would not necessarily obey it if it did understand. If reason represents the day, mortal nature represents the night of man's soul. During sleep, while we dream, the animal part of man is released and expresses itself without any sense of shame, "not shrinking from attempting intercourse with mother, in fancy, or with any one else, man, god, or beast. It is ready for any foul deed of blood." The wicked man lives by day the life we all lead in the night. For these passions are to be found in every one: "there exists in every one of us, even in some reputed most respectable, a terrible, fierce, and lawless brood of desires which it seems are revealed in our sleep" (*Republic* 571-2). In short, the human soul hides an irrational lawless animal nature which makes its appearance in our dreams; and this nature is to be found in everybody, be he respectable or acknowledged criminal. The good man, no less than the wicked, must face and cope with these primitive desires in himself. Thus, in striking fashion, does Plato anticipate some of the doctrines of modern clinical psychology.

Now, both these principles, the love of the good, and the love of pleasure, pertain to the nature of man; they are both innate. In the act of creating the human soul, the gods received the immortal principle from the supreme God, and joined it with a mortal kind (*Timæus* 69c). Passions are no less a part of our constitution than reason is; and in the famous myth of the *Phædrus*, the soul is pictured as driving the two horses (including the unruly one) while still in heaven, before it has fallen down to the earth. Certain points need clarification. We have referred to the conflict between the two principles; yet this conflict is not necessary and does not always exist. "Sometimes they (the two principles) agree, and sometimes they are in strife" (*Phædrus* 237e). The aim of education is to harmonize them together, just as they were in harmony when man was created. There is no essential opposition between reason and passion. The mortal part is less *anti-rational* than it is *non-rational*; appetite is the love not of evil, but of pleasure, whether evil or good. In short, the characteristic trait of ap-
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petite, as contrasted with reason, is that it has no characteristic object. It is indeterminate and indiscriminating. It is a potentiality of evil but also of good; thus, it is possible for reason to train the appetites by bringing music and other spells to bear upon them, so that they will find pleasure in the good. We may say then that whereas the relation of reason to the principle of the best is essential, that of the passions is casual. Hence Plato states that the virtues of the lower part of the soul are acquired, and are a product of education through practice and music, while rational virtue is innate (*Republic* 518e). Moral virtue is the outcome of habit; but rational virtue is a gift of the gods.

Now, the mortal soul is divided into two parts, spirit and appetite. The Greek word for spirit is θυμός, which may also be translated as anger. Spirit is the contentious and assertive element, the desire for power and victory in man (*Laws* 863c). It seems to signify the instinct of pugnacity, and, even more, forcefulness and leadership. Spirit is the drive to action, the executive part of man, giving battle and carrying out the desires of reason (*Republic* 440d). Spirit is to reason as the dog is to the shepherd. Plato hints that it is the masculine factor, aggressive and determined, in contrast with appetite, which is feminine—passive and receptive (*Laws* 802e). Of course, both the masculine and the feminine qualities are found in both sexes, and when one or the other is improperly exaggerated we have the effeminate man or the masculine woman. The spirited type of person is the man of honor, the soldier, and, more generally, the man who has an instinctive code of morals, or who receives his code from tradition. As spirited, the soul has an *immediate* attachment to values, whereas reason is the conceptual apprehension of the good. The spirited man is your average decent and honorable man whose code is based on authority or faith, and whose values are those of courage, self-respect, and loyalty. Appetite, however, is not the perception of values at all; it is, as we have said, indiscriminating. Hence, there is a difference not only of kind but of rank between spirit and appetite; the former is better, the latter worse (but not

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bad necessarily). Spirit plays the rôle of an in-between (μεταξύ) in human nature, transmitting the verdict of reason to appetite, and making that verdict effective by the use of force upon appetite. Plato calls spirit the helper (ἐπίκουρος) of reason; it is reason as effective in life. Yet spirit is ambivalent; it obeys reason, but it is also apt to "overturn many things on account of its irrational force" (*Laws* 863b). Just because its attachment to values is immediate—not based on a reasoned-out formulation of principle—it is unreliable.

That spirit is distinct from appetite Plato attempts to demonstrate by pointing to actual psychological conflicts. He recounts the story of Leontius, who, on becoming aware of dead bodies that lay in the place of public execution, felt at the same time a morbid desire to look at them and a repugnance to seeing them. For a while he wavered and veiled his head, but in the end, overpowered by desire, he rushed with wide, staring eyes to the corpses and cried, "There, you wretches, take your fill of the vile spectacle." And when a man's desires constrain him against his reason, he is angry against the principle which dominates him. Thus, in the conflict between reason and appetite, there is a third part which takes sides with the first (439e-440a).

We will now consider appetite or desire. (a) Desire is essentially a striving, *horme*, an urgency of the soul after a thing. It has a positive and a negative pole; it is both attraction and repulsion, embracing and repelling (*Republic* 437b). (b) Desire is the striving to generate, to bring something into being that did not exist before; it is also the desire to conserve what is generated. Thus desire is an impetus to action—a pursuit of something, to catch and to hold (*Philebus* 20d). (c) The object which man seeks to generate is not outside him, but within; in desire, we aim to bring about a certain condition of the soul—or rather of the body—since we are now speaking of the lower appetites, such as thirst and hunger. The body is undergoing a continuous process of dissolution and composition; there is a rhythm of loss and recovery. The function of appetite is to restore the body to its previous condition, to regain for it what it has lost. Thus the aim of desire is the preservation of the

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body. But as we shall see very soon, desire itself is not bodily, but psychical; it is the activity of the soul as concerned with the body.

(d) The immediate circumstance from which desire arises is emptiness (*κένωσις*) of the body; thus, thirst arises from privation of water and is the striving for repletion through drinking. Desire, says Plato (*Philebus* 36a), is "between" these two poles of emptiness and repletion; a movement away from the one and toward the other. (e) We desire the repletion because we have experienced it before. There is no desire without previous experience of what is desired; desire is not original; it is the striving to restore what was, and is not, now. (f) The movement toward repletion is accompanied with an expectation concerning the success or failure of the effort. "We are always filled with hopes all our lives" (*Philebus* 39e). Man is a hopeful animal; in desire, we stretch out to the future and anticipate it. But expectation is not always hopeful; sometimes we anticipate failure, and then our feeling is one of despair.

Hence, desire is a consciousness of present emptiness, and a longing for repletion in the future, derived from a memory of the past. In desire, the soul remembers, perceives, anticipates; it is concerned with past, present, and future. Desire is the soul as engaged with the flow of time. But the awareness of past and present is for the utilization of the future. Primarily, desire is concerned with the future, and expresses the forward movement of the soul.

The first component of desire, then, is striving. The second is pleasure and pain. This affective coloring is an essential ingredient of desire; desire arises as a vague discomfort or anxiety, from which the soul tries to escape. Along with the felt bodily pain, there is the pleasure of expectation. Thus, desire has a mixed affective tone—bodily pain, and mental pleasure. But when my expectation is of failure, then I feel pain. In such a case, there is a twofold pain—that of the body and that of the mind.

Furthermore, desire has a cognitive phase. The proper object of desire is an image furnished by memory. I desire the opposite of what I actually feel; when hungry, what I feel is

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emptiness, and what I want is repletion; that is to say, I desire what is not existent. What is not, cannot be a datum of sense; it must therefore be *conceived* in order that it may be desired. I want food in so far as I have an *idea* of food, *i.e.*, an image saved by memory from previous experience. The content of my want is not so much an idea as a proposition; I desire repletion, *i.e.*, I desire "that I may be filled." Desire, then, is a striving for something mentally entertained; without thought there can be no desire. Starting with the vague discomfort of present emptiness, we are impelled to an equally vague movement of escape. But this movement remains incipient until thought, stirred by memory, formulates an object for desire and thus gives it a direction.

Desire involves expectation. Now, in expectation, the cognitive element is more pronounced still. Hope and despair are present feelings of pleasure and pain, respectively; Plato calls them fore-pleasures and fore-pains (*προχαίρειν, προλυπείσθαι, Philebus* 39d). But they are feelings based on *beliefs* (38b); the mental content is not merely entertained, but also affirmed. Confidence is joy based on the belief in future success; fear is pain based on the belief in future failure. Plato here extends the scope of his inquiry to include not only desire, but the spirited emotions as well—anger, envy, yearning, mourning, jealousy (*Philebus* 47e). All such emotions are mediated by *doxa*—belief. The reference to the future is not requisite; belief may concern the past or the present as well (40c). Thus, I am angry at this man because he has injured me in the past.

How then shall we speak of the appetitive factor in the human soul? We may describe it as thought with an affective coloring, or again as emotion based on thought. But this would be to ignore the factor of *horme*. Properly speaking, the irrational soul—whether appetite or spirit—is a manifestation of the *eros*; it is a striving accompanied with thought and with feeling. The contribution of Plato is his emphasis on the *cognitive* phase of passion. Feelings are neither blind nor merely "subjective"; they are directed toward a cognized object, and are, indeed, forms of perceptiveness. The opposition between passion and reason is not one of absence or presence of thought,

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but of *level* of thought. Reason is apprehension of universals; passion is apprehension of empirical content.

Thus Plato is led to the paradoxical view that pleasures and pains are true or false. Truth and falsehood are qualities of beliefs; now emotions, too, have qualities, such as intensity and duration, and there is no reason why they should not also possess the qualities of truth and falsehood. Plato considers the analogy between belief and emotion in detail. There is a faculty which enacts belief; so there is a faculty for feeling (37a). Again, beliefs have objects; and so have the emotions. Thus, I am not merely pleased; I am pleased with, or at, or on account of, something. Now, a belief is true or false, according as its object is real or not; and an emotion is true or false in precisely the same way. Thus, my anger at this man, because of the injury which I believe he has caused me, is false; for, in fact, he did not cause me any injury.

Nevertheless, the analogy between belief and emotion fails; and this we can prove from Plato's own statements in the same context. Truth and falsehood are properties of belief *directly*, whereas they are properties of emotion *derivatively*, owing to the association of emotion with belief. My anger is false in so far as the belief on which it is based is false (40d). But the matter is not so simple. As Plato himself points out, truth and falsehood attach to emotions in two different ways. In the first place, emotions are true or false according as the beliefs on which they are based are true or false. "Opinions, being false or true, imbue the pains and pleasures with their own condition of truth or falsehood" (42a). This is the sense we have already considered. But there is also another sense in which pleasures and pains are true or false—that is, quite independently of their association with belief. Here truth and falsehood attach to feelings taken as objects; a pleasure is false in the sense that it is illusory.¹

The perceptiveness of emotion is exhibited in Plato's discussion of the comic. The sense of the ludicrous consists in the perception of the existence of false conceit in other people. A man may think himself richer, or more physically endowed,

¹See *supra*, p. 213.

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or wiser, than he really is; thus, he may have false conceit concerning himself with respect to wealth, to body, or to soul. Now, when a man with a false conceit of any kind is also weak, he is ridiculous and a fit subject for comedy; on the other hand, when he is strong and able to revenge himself, he is terrible and hateful, and presumably a fit subject for tragedy. Laughter, then, is the pleasure which we take at the false conceits of those who are weak. And more broadly, laughter is typical of all emotion in its character of being an integration of cognition with feeling.

Laughter can become envy, when we direct it to the ridiculous qualities of our *friends*, for, according to Plato, envy is pleasure at the misfortunes of those of whom we are fond. Human nature being what it is, we are envious of our friends; while we like them, we also take a malicious pleasure at their sufferings. Consequently, envy is a mixture of pleasure with pain. "So now our argument shows that in tragedies and comedies, not merely on the stage, but in all the tragedy and comedy of life, and in countless other ways, pain is mingled with pleasure" (*Philebus* 50b). We enjoy shedding tears during the performance of a tragedy, and similarly, while we laugh during the performance of a comedy, we are also sorry for the misfortunes of the characters on the stage.

We began by setting reason and the mortal soul in contrast with each other, and by describing the mortal soul as irrational. But as we went on in our analysis of the nature of the latter, the contrast became transformed into a similarity. Appetites and spirited emotions are types of cognition and strivings after the good. The difference between reason and mortal soul is one of degree, not of kind; they both grasp the same things, the first clearly, the second obscurely; they both seek the same things, the first steadily, the second waveringly. Both reason and mortal soul are mixtures of the indivisible with the divisible, but, whereas in reason the two components are well integrated, and the indivisible firmly predominates, with the mortal soul it is otherwise. The analogy of mortal soul to reason is roughly like that of particular to universal. The particular embodies the universal, but in a distorted way. Hence the am-

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bivalence of passion, which is also encountered in all concrete things. We are told that a concrete thing is a striving toward the ideal; and we are also told that a concrete thing is a wandering motion, or a motion away from the forms. Similarly, the mortal soul is a dim apprehension of the good; also it is an indiscriminating search for pleasure; also it is an irrational force, opposing the good. Inasmuch as every concrete thing is a mixture of the limit with the unlimited, on different occasions Plato emphasizes the one or the other member of the duality, according as, presumably, the one or the other predominates in the mixture.

Appetites represent the dominance of the factor of the unlimited in the soul; they lack a specific nature, because they lack a clear object. Loosely speaking, pleasure is their object, but pleasure is nothing else than the satisfaction of appetite. Appetite perpetually revolves around the two poles of pain and its removal. It starts from pain, caused by deprivation, and moves toward the removal of pain, through repletion. The repletion gives pleasure only by contrast with the preceding pain; when the pain is forgotten, the pleasure disappears too. "At the same time, we cease both from thirst and from the pleasure of drinking" (*Gorgias* 497b). The cessation of pleasure being painful, dissatisfaction follows satisfaction and a new appetite sets in. Thus, the life of appetite is an endless flux from satisfaction to satisfaction. The man of pleasure lives in a world of illusion. When we are sick, we think that there is nothing sweeter than to be well, though we have no idea that it is the highest pleasure before we are ill. And when we get well, we are quite unconscious of any special pleasure at health. Since genuine satisfaction is absent, appetite is insatiable, ever running after an ever-receding goal, and feeding upon its own poverty.

Not all pleasures are deceptive, but only those of appetite; for example, the pleasures of smell are genuine. Plato must have found a special fascination in odors, for he refers to the integrity of their pleasure on a number of different occasions (*Republic* 584b, *Philebus* 51b, *Timæus* 65a). The pleasures of smell do not arise from pain; they suddenly attain an indescribable in-

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tensity, and in ceasing leave no pain. Plato explains this phenomenon as follows: "All those bodies which undergo losses of substance and emptyings which are gradual, but replenishings that are intense and abundant, become insensitive to the emptying but sensitive to the replenishings; consequently, they furnish no pains to the mortal part of the soul, but the greatest pleasures—a result which is obvious in the case of perfumes" (*Timæus* 65a). Similar to the pleasures of smells are those of sounds and shapes, and most important of all, the pleasures of knowledge. The desire of knowledge is not a craving, and it is not caused by pain; and knowledge which, having been achieved, is then forgotten, leaves no pain. Thus, its pleasure is pure, unmixed with pain. Roughly, then, there is the contrast between the desires which have no determinate end, and those which have, between motions which are undirected and those which are. Plato compares them to two kinds of jars—jars which are leaky and therefore are never filled, and sound jars with a definite capacity, definitely capable of being filled. In sum, there are desires which are unlimited and desires which are limited (*Gorgias* 493-4). And beyond the life of human reason is the life of the gods who feel neither joy nor pain (*Philebus* 33b).

Plato, although denying that appetites may be classified, does nevertheless classify them. He calls appetite the money-loving part of the soul, because money is the chief instrument for the gratification of appetite. He classifies appetite into hunger, thirst, and lust for the sowing of offspring. The first two develop earlier than lust; but lust, when it appears, is the most violent of the three. And in a sense, the first two are also forms of lust—lust of food and lust of drink (*Laws* 782d). A more important division of appetites is that into necessary and unnecessary. Examples of the first are hunger and thirst; they are necessary in the sense that we can ignore them only at the cost of death. Such desires center around self-preservation; the philosopher cannot exercise his reason in this life unless he pays heed to some extent to the needs of hunger and thirst (*Philebus* 35e, *Republic* 559b). These are the practical, utilitarian desires, including, over and above the immediate appetites for

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bodily nourishment, all the associated activities of work to earn a living. They correspond to the necessary cause which, according to the *Timæus*, God utilizes for the promotion of the principle of the best. They are good, because they serve the ends of reason, but their value is wholly derivative, and a life confined solely to satisfaction of these appetites misses its aim. As the necessary appetites are comparable to the working bees in a hive, so the unnecessary ones are like the drones. The former are thrifty and prudential; the latter are spendthrift. They serve no purpose; they have no relation to the good, and may be dispensed with. Plato calls them the consuming appetites in contrast with the others, which are productive. Yet, though luxuries, they must be looked after somehow, since they are part of human nature.

There are two kinds of drones, the stingless and those equipped with stings; likewise the unnecessary appetites are of two kinds, the useless but harmless and those that are harmful. The former are weak and timid, but gentle; the latter are aggressive and destructive. The person in whom the former are prominent is the kindly, unaggressive, and easily imposed upon type, always dependent on a leader; the latter predominate in the brutal and criminal kind of person, self-willed, knowing what he wants, imposing his will on the others. If we take now the three kinds of appetite together, we shall find that they represent three different tendencies in the *eros*. The useful appetites look upward to reason, the harmful ones downward and away from reason, and the harmless appetites wander in between.

Thus the human soul is divided into reason and the mortal nature; the latter is divided into spirit and appetite; appetite, in its turn, is divided into useful and useless; and this last is divided into harmless and harmful. Each part of the soul—reason, spirit, and appetite—is an *horme* or drive, an endeavor toward a thing and a striving toward its attainment (*Republic* 437b ff.). Reason, too, is a drive; it is true that Plato speaks of it as a negative principle, whose function it is to say “thou must not” (440b); but he is then thinking of the relation of reason to the desires. But essentially reason, too, is a manifesta-

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tion of the *eros*, an impulse to life (490b). Reason is a will and a wish (ἐθέλειν, βούλεσθαι, 437b), which issues into a decision, after first setting to itself a question, and then assenting. Will is something like practical reason; it deliberates, in the sense of having a conversation with itself, consents, then decides, and pursues. In *Republic X*, Plato speaks of the three parts of the soul as three types of appetite, comparing the lowest to a hydra-headed monster, spirit to a lion, and reason to man. Reason is not only a spectator of the truth, but a motion toward it, carrying the whole soul with it. Thus, the soul, in every one of its three parts, is an appetite.

Each part of the soul is really a complete soul, in the sense that it includes all the characteristic psychical functions. We have seen that the appetites and spirit, no less than reason, have a mental pole; correspondingly, reason is an appetite. We may say that each part is an appetite equipped (*a*) with wish (βούλησις, *Laws* 863b); (*b*) with an affective tone—thus, there are the pleasures of appetite, of spirit, and of reason; (*c*) with a cognitive aspect. Inasmuch as these three are but aspects of one single activity, the parts of the soul are, each of them, an integral soul—the difference between them being one of level of psychical functioning. “We have frequently asserted that there are housed within us in three regions three kinds of soul, and that each of these has its own motions; so now likewise we must repeat as briefly as possible that the kind which remains in idleness and stays with its own motions in repose necessarily becomes weakest, whereas the kind which exercises itself becomes strongest; wherefore care must be taken that they have their motions relatively to one another in due proportion” (*Timæus* 89e).

In a sense, then, man is rational throughout his nature. But at the same time and always, he carries a child with him, and an adolescent, and a man. The diversity in his nature arises from the diversity of these three stages of development; the child in him will never grow to be an adolescent, nor the adolescent ever be a man. If reason preponderates, he will be tender to the child and guide the adolescent; the appetites will be trained, and the spirited part execute the designs of reason.

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But for the most part it is the non-rational aspect which predominates; and then the individual is as foolish as a child, and as impetuous as an adolescent. As matters get worse, reason becomes wholly subservient to the other parts, and instead of directing it bolsters the ambitious designs of the youth with appropriate arguments. And though the child be not wicked, it is witless; and the man who abandons himself to the guidance of the child unquestioningly will destroy himself and the child as well. Yet the eternal youth in man is a source of strength; it is the impetuous horse in him, the angry lion, the brave soldier, without which the philosopher becomes enfeebled, effeminate, ineffectual. Most human beings are destined to remain in the stage of adolescence; and to leave them to their own resources, to ask them to govern themselves, is to ignore the facts. In them, reason, which is the regulating principle, is feeble; as they will forever be young in mind, they must entrust themselves to the hands of those few who are old and wise.

So far we have discussed the soul and its parts without reference to the body, assuming that the tripartite soul was constituted independently of its ingression into the body. Now it is clear that reason is wholly independent of the body, but it is not so clear that spirit and appetite are similarly independent. In fact, Plato is ambiguous on this point, not to say inconsistent, for he makes definite statements which contradict each other. "And when by virtue of necessity, they (the souls) should be implanted in bodies, . . . these results would necessarily follow—firstly, sensation which is innate and common to all, proceeding from violent affections; secondly, desire mingled with pleasure and pain; and besides these, fear and anger and all such emotions as are naturally allied thereto" (*Timæus* 42a, b). This passage definitely refers the existence of spirit and appetite to the implanting of the soul in the body. And in the *Phædo* (66c, 81b), hunger, lust, and fear are spoken of as bodily affections; and the separation of the soul from the body is described as a condition in which reason exists by itself, divorced from appetite.

On the other side, we have the myth of the *Phædrus* con-

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cerning the charioteer and the two horses, in which the soul, antecedently to its union with a body, and while still in heaven, is depicted as tripartite. In the *Philebus*, Plato is even more explicit. "Do you not regard anger, fear, yearning, mourning, love, jealousy, envy, and the like, as pains of the soul and the soul only? I do" (47e; see also *Laws* 863b, where spirit is referred to as belonging to the very nature of the soul). Not only spirit, but appetite, too, is a purely psychical functioning; in appetite, it is the soul itself which grasps an object through memory (*Philebus* 35c, d). In trying to resolve the contradiction, we must bear in mind that the problem is not fundamental, inasmuch as the difference between soul and body is one of degree only; in a sense, the soul is bodily in its nature, being a mixture of the indivisible with the divisible. It would seem that the mortal nature (spirit and appetite) is a part of the soul itself, but a part which is specially open to the stimuli from the body. In its original constitution, the mortal part of the soul is harmonious with reason; but the ingression of the soul into the body leads to a disturbance of this harmony; the body encourages the mortal nature to antagonize reason. In short, the body is not a cause of the existence of our mortal nature; it stimulates the tendency of our mortal nature to affirm its independence from reason.

We will now proceed to the causes of evil in the soul. There is only one form of virtue, while the forms of evil are infinite (*Republic* 445c). Yet there are certain root-evils which are the source of all the others. At various times, Plato speaks of one or another vice as the greatest of all. There is, of course, ignorance, the "belief and hope in what is not true." Ignorance, for Plato, is not a negative but a positive state; it is not absence of knowledge, but presence of false belief. Man's mind is filled with wrong values and with other falsehoods which he gets from his parents, early teachers, the community. These constitute the veritable lie—the lie in the soul. To deceive others is bad, but to be deceived oneself is infinitely worse, and out of this inner lie grow all other evils. Conversely, truth is at the head of all the virtues, both among men and among gods.

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Elsewhere, however (*Sophist* 228, *Timæus* 86), Plato speaks of dissension, internal strife, as the greatest of all evils, whereby the unity of the soul is broken, and each part looks after its own end, to the exclusion of the rest. Evil is the revolution of the part against the whole, the destruction of organic unity in the individual and in the state. Friendship is the root-virtue, as the excessive love of self is the cause of all sins. Yet it would seem that it is not so much strife as the result of strife which Plato abhors. Internal dissension is succeeded by a new and unnatural unity in the soul, in which the worse rules the better, and appetites are supreme over reason. The organic unity of the soul in which reason leads and passions follow is replaced by an artificial and unstable order in which the true hierarchy of things has been lost.²

It is important to notice that the causes of evil reduce to two, to ignorance on the one hand, and to strife, in its generalized sense, on the other, and that strife is distinct from ignorance. Strife is the rebellion of appetite against knowledge. While under the Socratic influence, Plato refers to ignorance as the root-evil, but, to the degree that he emancipates himself from this influence, he adds strife to the list. This is not a distinction between an earlier and a later Plato, for, even in the *Laws*, Plato accounts for evil by ignorance. The Socratic influence remained in Plato's mind throughout his life, along with his own contribution, and the two were not fused; consequently, we find Plato contradicting himself, ascribing all evil to ignorance, while also citing strife as a cause.

As an illustration of our point, we will consider the discussion in the *Meno* (77b ff.). An effective pursuit of virtue presupposes two things: desire and reason—love of the good and knowledge of it. Desire sets the aim, and reason directs the soul toward the aim. Knowledge without desire is ineffectual; and desire without knowledge is confused and wandering; the function of reason is to supply guidance to the energy of desire. Now, while all men are possessed with a love of the good, they are not all endowed with knowledge. Thus, evil arises from the failure of reason to do its duty by desire. All men always

²*Laws* 730c, 864b, *Republic* 462b, *Gorgias* 507e, *Republic* 431c, 444b.

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desire the good, and desire nothing else. True enough, we find men actually desiring evil, but not while recognizing it as such. Thus evil arises from a deception concerning values—our mistaking evil for good; and it may be remedied by instruction.

In the preceding account, there are several points worthy of special attention. Human nature is conceived in monistic terms; the soul moves in one direction, and there is no internal conflict. There is no problem of reconciling opposites, no warring against what is bad. The soul wants only one thing, and its problem is simply that of recognizing its object when it sees it. Secondly, human nature is conceived in optimistic terms. Men are good by nature; evil-doing is aiming at the good and missing it. A criminal is a frustrated saint. Different philosophers have affirmed human beings to be equal with respect to different traits. Descartes held that good sense is equally distributed among men; Plato, while maintaining that men are unequal with respect to intellectual capacity, held that they are alike in their attachment to the good. Finally, the knowledge which is relevant to virtue is moral, not technical; of ends, not of means. The ignorance from which men suffer is one concerning the nature of the good, not concerning the problem of how to bring about the good.

The implications of these points are considerably disturbing.

(a) Desire and reason are separate from each other. Now, Plato's general theory points to a fusion of desire with thought. Reason involves an element of desire; it is a passion for the truth, and reason is effective in conduct precisely because it is a passion. Conversely, desire entails a cognitive element; we can desire an object only provided we have an idea of it. The doctrine, then, which asserts that desire remains innocent while reason fails to function properly presupposes a disjunction of the two, which is at variance with Plato's theory.

(b) While love of the good is universally innate, knowledge of it is not. Yet in the very same dialogue (*Meno*), we are told that man—every man, including the slave-boy—has an innate knowledge of the ideas, and hence, it would seem in the last resort, of the good. In fact, Plato's doctrine of knowledge is that it is innate in all men. The real point, of course,

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is that the slave-boy has forgotten what he knows. But if birth entails the clouding of reason, so should it also mean the distortion of purpose. *Eros* and intelligence are diverse aspects of one unified activity, and whatever affects the one affects the other. The accident of the soul's ingress into a body, which is the cause of the soul's failure to realize its function, affects the soul throughout; as Plato says, there is ignorance, and there is madness (*Timæus* 86b). We must therefore proceed to a radically different approach to the whole problem. The soul is perfect by nature; it is endowed with a knowledge no less than with a love of the good. Or to be more exact, the soul possesses that union with the good which is at once a cognition of and an appetite for it. By virtue of its birth into a body, the soul is thrust into the sea of flux, and is thereby obstructed. The soul "forgets" its real essence throughout—its love as well as its knowledge of the good. The *entire* soul has turned from light to darkness, falling into the cave where it remains chained by ignorance and greed.

Let us return to the problem of evil from this new angle. For Plato, as for the judges, ignorance is no excuse. The question is not so much why this man has forgotten, but why he has not recovered what he has forgotten. Evil is not forgetfulness, but the failure to recollect. Now, men remain ignorant because they do not know that they do not know; thus the question is, what prevents men from attaining the conviction of ignorance; and the answer is pride. Men love themselves more than the truth (*Laws* 731e, 732b). In short, men cannot plead ignorance as an excuse, because, had they conquered pride, they would have remedied their errors. We are conceited because we are ignorant, and we are ignorant because we are conceited. This argument is circular obviously, but valid in the sense that it discloses the internal relatedness of desire and knowledge.

After instruction has brought about recollection, there is the problem of the preservation of recollection. Just as cloth often loses its color when washed in water, so many people lose their beliefs when they come into conflict with their environment. Right opinion has two enemies, fear and pleasure. Convictions

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may be dangerous to the person holding them, because they are opposed to those of society. Society, in its present condition, upholds wrong values, and it has a way of punishing any one who defends the truth. A timid person alters his convictions from fear of the consequences. But more effective than pain is the lure of pleasure—more effective because more subtle. Flattery is more to be feared than threats. When the public fawns upon and flatters the young man, how can we expect him not to get inflated, to be filled with unbounded hopes, to think himself capable of managing the affairs of all the world, both Greek and barbarian—especially if he be rich and well-born, handsome and tall? (*Republic* 494c). Love of wealth, lust, and all gratifications of the body cast a spell upon reason, softening its fiber; we believe what is pleasant rather than what is true, turning reason to the service of desire. Then there is the weariness of the mind, which has too often failed in its efforts to find the truth. Deceived repeatedly by argument, the mind turns misologist, and distrusts all reason. In such a mind there is a failure of nerve. In sum, the mind is confronted with a double problem; recollection of what has been forgotten, and preservation of what has been recollected. In the first it is inhibited by pride; in the second, by weakness.

The next question is: why should the soul be ignorant, conceited, and weak, since it is good and sound by nature? To answer this question, we must look to the forces outside the soul. These are twofold, social and physical. (a) The actual order of society (*κατάστασις πολιτείας*) is responsible for the turning away of the soul from the good. When society praises and blames the wrong things, the individual acquires an incorrect sense of values. The relevance of society to the individual is *via* instruction, which includes not only deliberate teaching, but the pervasive influence of social attitudes upon the individual. The seed cannot grow unless implanted in proper soil, and the individual cannot grow properly unless he is born into a well-functioning society. The equipment with which the individual is endowed innately remains imprisoned until it is released by some external force. Society provides the release, a field of action and a direction to the individual; it shapes his values.

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Plato makes the notable statement that vice and virtue issue from the same qualities in the individual. A weak soul is incapable of anything great, in respect either of virtue or of vice; greatness of soul is requisite for vice no less than for virtue; in fact vice arises from the perversion of great gifts. "The more vigorous a seed is, the more it falls short of its proper perfection when deprived of the season, the food, the place that suits it. For evil is more opposed to the good than to the not-good." So the best-endowed souls, when the conditions for nurture are unsuitable, will become worse than the average souls. The great man becomes the victim of his own qualities—of his wealth, beauty, and strength; even of his moral virtues—his courage and temperance. Society flatters him and he becomes vain and spoiled (*Republic* 491b). Plato insists that the blame for wickedness should be laid at the door of society, not of the individual, of "the begetter, not of the begotten" (*Timæus* 87b).

Evil in the individual is the reflection, not only of contemporaneous evil in the community, but also of evil long past. "My good man, the evil force that now moves you and prompts you to go temple-robbing is neither of human origin nor of divine, but it is some impulse bred of old in men from ancient wrongs unexpiated, which courses round, wreaking ruin" (*Laws* 854b). Thus, the individual is nothing by himself; he is constituted by the present order of society, and he also inherits the past. His present state comes to him from his ancestors; he has fallen because they have fallen. He and they are but one soul throughout many incarnations. The true meaning of the doctrine of transmigration is that life is continuous throughout the divisions of time.

The character of the physical environment counts in the development of virtuous habits. For example, it is not good for a city to be located near the sea. "For if the state was to be on the seacoast, and to have fine harbors, . . . in that case, it would need a mighty savior and divine lawgivers, if, with such a character, it was to avoid having a variety of luxurious and depraved habits. As things are, however, there is consolation in the fact of that eighty stades. Still, it lies unduly near the sea, and the more so because, as you say, its harbors are good;

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that, however, we must make the best of. For the sea is, in very truth, 'a right briny and bitter neighbor,' although there is sweetness in its proximity for the uses of daily life; for by filling the markets of the city with foreign merchandise and retail trading, and breeding in men's souls knavish and tricky ways, it renders the city faithless and loveless, not to itself only, but to the rest of the world as well" (*Laws* 704d-705a). The sea is a principle of unrest, destroying the self-contained character of the city, introducing new ways and habits without discrimination, and breeding petty interests in the citizens. This consideration leads us to our second point.

(*b*) To refer evil to the order of society, present or past, is not to give an ultimate explanation of evil. This individual is foolish because he has been instructed by a foolish teacher; wickedness in the individual comes from wickedness in the community. But we should like to know how evil arises in the collectivity—not in this or that soul, but in any soul. Plato's answer is that the cause of evil is to be found outside the soul—in the body.

It is agreed that excessive pleasures and pains are the greatest of the soul's diseases, for they obstruct both the senses and the reason, and thus inhibit correct opinion. Now, "whenever a man's seed grows to abundant volume in his marrow (brain), as it were a tree overladen beyond measure with fruit, he brings on himself time after time many pangs and many pleasures . . . and comes to be in a state of madness." Bodily humors and vapors, when too confined, break into the soul and disturb the regularity of its motions; penetrating into each of its three regions, they cause incontinence, rashness, and forgetfulness (*Timæus* 86c-87b). Thus the condition of the body accounts for evil in respect of appetite, spirit, and reason. But the trouble begins earlier—at birth, when the irregular motions of the body and the inrush of sensations overpower the soul, disturb the regularity of its motions, and set it off its course. Like a man standing on his head, to whom what is to the left seems to be to the right, the soul, when afflicted with a body, loses its bearings and confuses the unreal with the real. Reason is replaced by opinion, and the soul becomes irrational (*Timæus* 43 ff.). The

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soul is sick—mad or ignorant—because its functioning is checked by the body. The body is the gateway through which the world of chance rushes in upon the soul. Evil, then, arises from the impact of the soul with the world of circumstance, through the intermediation of the body.

On the one hand, we have the soul in its primordial state, on the other, the soul as with a body; the soul as perfect, and the soul as fallen; the soul as it is by itself, and the soul as it is immersed in the sea of circumstance. The difference in the condition of the soul before and after its fall accounts for the apparent inconsistency of Plato's doctrine of human nature. The soul before the fall is a relatively harmonious adjustment of parts; after its fall, it is a stage for conflict between reason and the irrational soul. When Plato is thinking of the former, he talks of the soul in optimistic terms; when of the latter, he is a pessimist. Since the soul as it really is, is good, Plato is fundamentally an optimist; since all we know is the soul as confined to a body, Plato is consistently a pessimist.

After the fall of the soul into a human body, come other falls to lower bodily structures. In a semi-humorous vein, Plato propounds a theory of the origin of species by a process of degeneration from man. The various animals represent further stages in the fall of man (*Timæus* 91e ff.; *Phædo* 81e-82a). The men who were cowardly and spent their time in wrong-doing in this life are punished by being transformed into women. Woman is the first step in the fall from man's estate. Lower than women are the birds. "The tribe of birds is derived by transformation, growing feathers in place of hair, from men who are harmless but light-minded—men, too, who, being students of the worlds above, suppose in their simplicity that the most solid proofs about such matters are obtained by the sense of sight." Birds are reincarnations of astronomers, for instance. Lower than the birds are the wild beasts which are transformations of men who have given no thought to the world above, but have followed the lead of anger and passion. Since in this life such men have turned their heads earthwards, they are transformed into four-footed and many-footed wild animals, and are given elongated heads "so that they might be dragged down still nearer to the

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earth." Those who have indulged in gluttony, violence and drunkenness will probably pass into the bodies of asses, while those who have chosen injustice, tyranny and robbery will pass into the bodies of wolves, hawks and kites. The worst of this kind are changed into worms that hug the earth. Fish are absolutely the lowest in the scale; they come from those men who were completely stupid and so wicked that they do not deserve to breathe the pure air. So they are thrust into water, there to respire its turgid depths in punishment for their extreme witlessness. We do not know how seriously Plato intends the above statements to be taken; but they contain one noteworthy point of general doctrine, namely, that the barrier between the several species is not irremovable, and that "both then and now, living creatures keep passing into one another in all these ways, as they undergo transformation by the loss or by the gain of reason and unreason."

We have not come to the end of our story yet. Why should the soul fall into the body in the first place? The soul falls because it is the *kind* of soul which can fall; it mingles with the body because it is attracted to it. Thus the soul acquires diseases from the body because it is already infected. We are told in the myth of the *Phaedrus* that the soul in heaven partakes of an unruly and evil nature which "weighs it down and tends toward the earth" (247b). The soul innately has a downward tendency; it feels the lure of earthly things. The causes of evil on this earth must be looked for in heaven. While in heaven, the soul which contains the unruly element is unable to see the upper regions, or, once having seen, it forgets and is filled with evil (248c). Ignorance, forgetfulness, evil appear in the soul before the intervention of the body, and are the cause of such intervention. We come back to the contribution of the receptacle. In its original composition in accordance with the divine plan, the soul consists of the indivisible and the divisible; thus, disorder is part of its nature. Ultimately, the fall which brought about evil was caused by the soul's own inherent disorder; and the cause of evil is internal to the soul. The receptacle as disclosed in the surrounding physical world finds its counterpart in the soul.

We are now led to a final question. Why did the demiourgos

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include the receptacle in the composition of the soul? The answer, suggested in the *Timæus* (41-2), is that the principle of perfection, construed as plenitude, requires the creation of creatures in all degrees of perfection. This does not mean that evil is part of perfection; it does mean, however, that the mixture of the divisible with the indivisible—and thus, liability to evil—is part of the divine plan.

To recapitulate, evil is due to ignorance and madness; all such evil in the individual arises from disorder in the city; disorder in the soul, whether in the individual or in the city, arises from the impact of the soul with the body, and, through the body, with disorder in nature at large. The fall of the soul into the bodily world comes about through the operation of the unruly horse—the principle of disorder—in the soul. Finally, the presence of disorder in the soul follows from the principle of perfection.

Our next point concerns the ways and means by which the soul undoes the evils of the fall. After the fall comes the rise. The mind is asleep and must be awakened; its knowledge is latent and must be rendered conscious. Recollection is Plato's term for what Aristotle later referred to as the conversion of potentiality into actuality. The myth of the cave is the most famous of all Plato's myths, if not the most famous in all philosophical literature; its theme is the condition of the fallen soul and its recovery. There is a subterranean cave in which men have been chained from childhood by neck and legs, so that they cannot move and can look in only one direction. When they look, they see only shadows thrown by a fire—itsself "the shadow of light"—of objects which are artificial. And since the men cannot turn around to look at one another, they see only shadows of themselves, and they hear only echoes of voices resounding in the cave. They live in a world of illusion, ignorant concerning both themselves and the world; and the chains which tie them down to this world are those of appetite. Being chained, they are condemned to immobility and inertia.

When the chains somehow break, the man stands up and turns around; the old rigidity is gone, and his soul recovers its

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power of movement. This is a radical transformation, the turning of the soul from darkness to light. After that, change is gradual; but the first act is revolutionary, consisting as it does in a complete break with the past, and a conversion into new habits and valuations. Now, in order to turn the eyes around, we must turn the whole body; so the turning around of the organ of knowledge entails a revolution of the entire soul. The conversion is not merely intellectual but moral, involving new loves as well as new beliefs. Once outside the cave, man must go up a steep hill; the re-education of the soul is an arduous and painful task. There is a critical moment when the soul, first seeing the light, is dazzled and confused. Having lived in the cave, it can find its way more easily among shadows than among realities. Some men recoil, refuse to go on, and turn back to the cave; they are those who, having achieved an insight into the truth, lack the courage to face it consistently, lack the energy to make new habits, and prefer to go back to the old established conventional and comfortable ways. But a few persist, and gradually become accustomed to their new surroundings. The process of re-education is a delicate art; sudden transitions must be avoided, and habituation must go slowly. After leaving the shadows of the cave, the soul first proceeds to observe divine shadows of real objects; then, real objects, and finally the good itself. Also from the light of the fire, it moves into the light of the night—the reflected light of the moon and the stars—until finally it contemplates objects in the light of the sun. Thus, there is a gradual ascent in respect both of level of object and level of intelligence. The advance of the soul consists both in an intensification of the *eros* and a generalization of knowledge. In the cave, men live private, enclosed lives, governed by bodily appetite; outside the cave, men love not bodies but souls, not individuals but cities, not actualities but ideals.

After the ascent comes the descent. The return to the cave is as arduous and painful as the escape from it. There is the crucial moment when the philosopher coming from light into darkness is dazzled; he fumbles and gropes; he loses his way in the darkness; he is laughed at, scorned, taken to be a fool by those long in the cave. In short, the transition from theory to

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practice is difficult, and the philosopher is apt to make a fool of himself at the start, when he sets out to be king. If, obeying his fear, the philosopher withdraws in order to settle permanently among the sunlit regions, he then has made a decision in favor of the monastic life. But we must carefully distinguish the two crises of confusion, that of the caveman and that of the philosopher; in the first case, confusion comes from the passage of the soul into light, in the second case, from its passage into darkness. Also, the philosopher habituates himself to the darkness, and from then on his knowledge is greater and his character firmer than the corresponding condition of the inmates of the cave. Naturally, the philosopher is loath to come back to the cave, yet return he must, and those who linger outside, absorbed in the contemplation of beauty, fail to do their duty by common humanity. The philosopher must serve as a guide to the benighted public, even if it be at the risk of being put to death by those he would serve.

The point is important—the ascent is to be followed by the descent; the knowledge of the good is an end in itself, and it is also a means for the illumination of perception and the ordering of daily life. Thus the ideal is a union of the abstract with the concrete vision. Or rather, the good life is not a condition but a movement up and down, and then up again—the rhythm of theory and practice, of abstraction from affairs and of immersion in them. Not the static vision of the good, but the passage to the good and thence the descent—in short, the movement itself between the two extremes of the scale—is the ideal for man.

What initiates the movement; what breaks the chains? Plato is not definite on this point. He simply speaks of the chains being broken. Is the internal force of the soul capable of overcoming the inertia imposed by the body? It would seem that external aid is necessary. Man is awakened by two types of stimuli. The first is experience, the very perplexities and contradictions of sense arousing the mind to action. The other stimulus is human; beyond the education offered by experience is that provided by man to man. There is the intervention of the wise man. Suppose we return to our figure of the soul as asleep. Now you cannot wake up somebody by gentle means, especially if

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his sleep is deep; you must shock him into wakefulness. Plato says that the individual stands up suddenly; thus, the change is abrupt. Education is by violence, so to speak. Inasmuch as the soul is inhibited by self-satisfaction with its own ignorance, the teacher must administer a blow to the pupil's pride. Initially, education is moral; it is a catharsis of intellectual conceit. By irony, by entangling them in contradictions, Socrates persistently endeavored to break down his pupils' pride.

The release from the chains is the recovery by the soul of its power of self-motion. Yet after the spell of pride is broken, the way is still difficult. Plato says that the guide must use force, and sometimes compel the soul to go up the steep hill. Recollection is not automatic, but comes only from strenuous exertion; there are the pangs of labor and the pains of learning; and always the assistance of the teacher is indispensable. The importance of the wise man in the emergence of reasonable individuals and civilized communities cannot be too much emphasized. Salvation of the individual is from without. But we seem committed to a regress. The soul is aroused by the wise man, who, in turn, has been awakened by another wise man, etc. The question is, what wakes up man in general? Plato leaves the problem in darkness. Probably he adheres to some doctrine of divine interposition, since on repeated occasions he refers to an intervention by the gods (*Republic* 492a, 493a). There is God's love of man, and the divine providence; there is the agency of the divine upon the human whereby man becomes conscious of the divine in him.

We are now in a position to review the course of the argument. The soul is created as a harmonious integration of reason with spirit and desire; its fall into the body destroys the integration and education is the effort to restore it. The problem confronting the soul now is how, while on this earth, to achieve its pristine perfection; how, in short, to be out of the body while in it. The function of the *eros* and of dialectic is to enable the soul to attain its divine condition while it is entangled in the realm of *anagke*—"to partake of immortality, as far as that is possible to man" (*Timæus* 90c). Philosophy is meditation upon death while the soul is alive; it is the achievement of eternity in time. Yet we must guard our statements properly. The soul

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aims to remove itself not so much from the body as from the domination of the body, to become independent of the body, but not to ignore it.

Finally, the recollection of our real selves achieved in this transient life can be no more than an image of the reality. The body is here to obstruct. Plato always guards his statements with qualifications, saying, for instance, that we partake of immortality *only so far as it is possible to man*. Moreover, the vision of the good, even if achieved, will be lost, since whatever is bound to a body is unstable. Even the best of states will somehow deteriorate. There is no enduring progress—only the cycle of gain and loss.

The question may now be raised whether, according to Plato, man has any freedom of choice. In tackling this problem we must be clearly aware that our discussion does not properly belong to an exposition of Plato's thought. Plato, in fact, did not raise the problem because, presumably, he was not aware of the issue. What we are therefore doing is to ask what Plato's doctrine means to us today.

Evil is due to the fall of man into a body. That man remains wicked is due to the present order of society and to further inroads from the body; but he becomes enlightened and virtuous if society provides him with enlightened teaching. Thus, whether man now is virtuous or not depends on causes outside himself. His character is the product of two determinants: his own past and the present order of society—or, as we would say, heredity and environment.

Yet the matter is not so simple. What society does is only to inhibit or to release the powers of the individual. The individual is what he is for himself; society only provides an occasion for the exercise of his powers or for their obstruction. And in so far as man's present condition is due to his fall, we must recall that his fall is due to his own choice. The past which determines him is, after all, his own past. His union with the body and, in fact, his entanglement with the present order of society are results brought about by the soul's own action. Let us distinguish between the empirical and the metaphysical self, the self as a

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member of the world of opinion, and the self in its primordial nature, as created by God. The empirical self is controlled by empirical circumstances, it is true; but the very existence of an empirical self and its exposure to empirical choices are results requiring explanation, and leading to the question of the nature of the metaphysical self. The soul, as created by God, fell. Was it free to fall? Is it free at all? We will begin by discussing its relation to God. Plato refers often to the human soul as a chattel, puppet, or property of the gods. Man is not free to commit suicide; he belongs to the gods and it is for them to decide when his life should end. God is a ruler over all creation, including the soul. Nevertheless, there is a restricted province in which the soul is self-determining. God appoints the general pattern of the soul, but its specific pattern "he left to the wills of each one of us men" (*Laws* 904b). The myth of Er strikingly depicts the position of the soul *vis à vis* God. Says the prophet to the soul confronted with the problem of making the choice of a life for this world: "Souls that live for a day, now is the beginning of another cycle of mortal generation where birth is the beginning of death. No divinity shall cast lots for you, but you shall choose your own demon. Let him to whom falls the first lot first select a life to which he shall cleave of necessity. . . . The blame is his who chooses: God is blameless" (*Republic* 617e).

The soul determines its fate, though, once the choice has been made, its fate is binding upon it. In this life, we are what we have chosen to be. After all, we have, in the above view, nothing more than the familiar doctrine of the soul as self-moving. Thus, the soul before its fall—that is to say, the soul as it really is—is self-determining, independent of God, and, *a fortiori*, of the body and of the order of society. But to deny that the soul is externally determined is not necessarily to say that the soul is free. The crux of the matter is the relation of the soul to its own nature; if our choice is determined by our nature, if, being the sort we are, we cannot help choosing what we do choose, then we cannot be said to be free. Perhaps it is all a matter of definition. If freedom be defined as self-determination (Spinoza's sense), then the soul is free for Plato too; but if freedom

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be defined as absence of *any* necessitation, then it is not. In returning to the passage just cited, we may notice that the souls in drawing their lots decide according to the degree of their knowledge and the kind of their appetites. One soul chooses without sufficient examination, impelled by folly and greed; and another, without philosophy, though in accordance with good habits. Thus choice is a function of knowledge and appetite.

The soul is composed of reason and passion, and its choices are determined by these. (a) The soul's acts are voluntary only in the sense that they proceed from knowledge. Given the knowledge, the act follows; the soul is determined by its reason; it cannot knowingly reject the good. But freedom which has any moral significance must include the ability to see the good and yet reject it. Moral philosophers have been concerned with demonstrating the independence of the soul from material forces. But the principle of the good may be no less necessitating than *anagke*; there is mechanistic determinism, and there is teleological determinism, according to which the soul by its very nature is compelled to love the good.

(b) Secondly, our choices are determined by our irrational nature. We partake of the factor of *anagke* in our very constitution. The principle of confusion is no less a part of our nature than the love of the good. Man is the confluence of the principle of perfection on the one hand, and of the receptacle on the other. These two may or may not co-operate, and sometimes the lure of the ideal is defeated by the love of pleasure. Human actions are determined by the interplay of reason and passion. Thus, the human soul is the seat of a dual determinism—mechanical and teleological—and there is no freedom of choice. More important still, action is devoid of moral significance. Moral action consists in the choice between reason and desire; but, according to Plato, the conflict between the two settles itself. The root of the matter is that Plato has no doctrine of the self. The motion of the soul follows from the motions of its parts; its unity is a resultant unity. But for action to be moral, the unity of the soul should be prior to its parts. A choice between reason and desire is possible only when there exists a self independent of both, and determining the relative place of each

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in conduct. In genuinely moral action, reason and desire are not agents but data for the self as acting. Consequently if, following Plato, Spinoza, and Kant, we identify the soul with reason or desire or both, we reduce the soul to the *objects* of choice and leave no place for an *agent* of choice. In concluding, we must repeat that Plato did not definitely reject the notion of freedom. It is one thing to face the problem and then reach the conclusion that there is no freedom, and another thing to be unaware of the issue itself.

From among the various components of Plato's theory of human nature, it is that of the complexity of the soul which has exerted the greatest influence on posterity. Human nature is both divine and earthly. This doctrine, whose roots must be ultimately religious, has made a profound impression on Christian thought, where it has been incorporated in the form of the conception of the duality of spirit and flesh in man. Yet Christianity has transformed what it has incorporated; it recognizes the possibility of sin in the sense of man's ability freely to reject the good, whereas, for Plato, there is no essentially evil desire. According to Plato—and even more, for his master, Socrates—reason is a controlling force in conduct. Virtue is knowledge. Says Socrates, "Come, my good Protagoras, uncover some more of your thoughts: how do you stand in regard to knowledge? Do you share the view that most people take of this, or have you some other? The opinion generally held of knowledge is something of this sort—that it is no strong or guiding or ruling principle; it is not regarded as anything of that kind, but people think that, while a man has often knowledge in him, he is not governed by it but by something else—now by spirit, now by pleasure, now by pain, at times by love, and often by fear; they think of knowledge as they do of a slave, that it may be dragged about by any other force. Now do you agree with this view of it, or do you believe that knowledge is something noble and able to rule man, and that, if he learns what is good and what is bad, he will never be swayed by anything to act otherwise than as knowledge bids, and that knowledge is a sufficient aid to mankind?" (*Protagoras* 352b, c). As against the classical

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doctrine of the power of reason, we have the modern doctrine of the impotence of reason. From Hume on, and even before, various philosophers have declared reason to be the tool of desire. On this point, however, Plato has anticipated later doctrines. Reason, according to Plato, is powerful, but not omnipotent. The orderly revolutions of reason may be disturbed by the irregular motions of the body; reason may become feeble and be overcome by desire. Thus Plato has laid the foundations for the enduring doctrine that the springs of human action are both rational and bodily.

CHAPTER XVII

DEGENERATION IN THE INDIVIDUAL AND IN SOCIETY

BEFORE we enter into the consideration of the ideal of reason, we will cast a glance at the patterns of life actually in operation among men. The eighth and ninth books of the *Republic* are expositions of the various forms of government, short of the perfect type. But to read them as political treatises alone is to miss what is most significant in them. They are primarily accounts of *patterns of conduct* among societies of men. The state is but the outward expression of the more intangible but more important and pervading webs of value in a society. Not the physical environment, not its economic condition, not its form of government, but its valuations determine the nature of the society. What men honor, that they practice (*Republic* 551a). Given the pattern of values we have the type of institution and also the type of individual that constitutes the society.

Society and the individual are reflections of each other; society is the individual writ large, and the individual is a microscopic society. In the later part of the *Republic*, Plato undertakes a sort of *ethology*, the reconstruction of types of individuals; and the significance of the account lies chiefly in its psychological insight and in the vivid evocation of character in action. It is the picture of a progression—or rather a retrogression—of the decline in human government, institutions, and ideals. This decline is inevitable; there is a fatal law of degeneration in human affairs. In the dramatic narrative of the retreat of man from a mythical golden age, there are moments of rest interrupted by movement. We are shown states of society in which a certain order or disorder has been achieved and is flourishing; and we are shown transitions and how they come about. There are four steps in the process of decline—the timo-

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cratic, the oligarchical, the democratic, and the tyrannical states and individuals, corresponding respectively to the four levels of psychical life below that of reason, namely, the spirited part, the utilitarian appetites, the harmless, and finally the destructive pleasures. Plato does not claim to give an exhaustive account of all the existing or even possible polities; he proposes to set forth the main types and to ignore their subdivisions (*Republic* 548d). In our description of the various levels of life, we shall venture to indulge in a certain amount of free interpretation which, we hope, will not be found inconsistent with the spirit of Plato's statements, and we will make applications to modern situations.

Plato was indeed fortunately placed; he was the citizen of a great state which, at its best, exhibited a novel and wonderful way of life to the world. Plato's philosophy, with its emphasis on the values of intellectual curiosity, of harmony, of enthusiasm and restraint at once, of hierarchical order and of organic unity, may be regarded as an elaboration on the theme of Athenian art, culture and life. The various strands of Greek civilization are modified, interwoven and unified in Plato's thought. And by formulating it, Plato adds a new perfection to Greek civilization. Athens and Greece in general were notably rich in the variety of their constitutional forms; they were a political laboratory in which experiments were continually being made. Plato had only to keep his eyes open in order to obtain whatever data he needed; his political and social theories sprang from immediate observation. He was at once the product and the critic of a uniquely endowed city which had attained grandeur and was now losing it. He knew its glories and sadly noted its fall. It is his special merit that he was able to extract, out of his observations of a particular city, principles which are universal in their scope and valid to this day.

A timocratic community prizes honor and valor above all, and cherishes the warlike virtues; it is comparable to a militaristic state. Essentially it represents a compromise between the values of aristocracy and plutocracy, its rulers being simple-minded and devoid of culture on the one hand, and yet ab-

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staining from the possession of wealth on the other. But a compromise is apt to produce an unstable condition. Spirit (*θυμός*), when it has abandoned the guidance of reason, succumbs to the calls of appetite; the high-minded timocrats are impelled by an unacknowledged love of wealth, but not being allowed to gratify it they amass treasures furtively. They are not sincere with themselves; in appearance, they are ruled by the spirited part, but the appetites pull the strings behind the scenes. Love of power degenerates into love of office. The timocratic city is a community of office-holders, in which merit is measured by rank, and pride of place predominates. There is no strength in them; in demeanor, they are haughty to their inferiors and servile to their superiors in position.

The timocratic individual is educated by force, not persuasion; he submits to the discipline of authority instead of reason. He prefers athletics to music, and hunting to discussion. A self-willed man, he is something of a barbarian, yet with a certain respect for philosophy, feeling honored by the attention of philosophers and artists. No orator, he likes to listen; though lacking culture, he seeks the company of cultivated men. He is impressed by reason and swept by desire. A society whose purpose is not clear easily falls prey to individuals who know what they want; and the timocratic state succumbs to the oligarchical polity.

The oligarchical state is founded on the principle of wealth; its great men are the rich men. It is an economic society controlled by the acquisitive motive; the right to vote depends on a property qualification. Since the economic motive is competitive, the oligarchic state is a divided body—divided into those who have and those who have not; thus it is a class society. Underneath the level of the privileged classes, there is the vast floating underworld of the disfranchised masses—ignored and deprived of human consideration. Of this public, those who are weak and timid become paupers, and the others who are aggressive become criminals. Thus, the oligarchical state, by virtue of the fact that its moral basis is rotten, breeds lawlessness and criminality. The plutocratic state is without a social conscience; the paupers and the criminals become resentful and

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then the rulers try to suppress them. So the oligarchical state is in a condition of civil warfare, afflicted with a sickness which grows by the treatment administered to it.

The oligarchical individual is the type of the "self-made" man. His father had belonged to the old order—with old-fashioned ideas of honesty; "perhaps he has been a general, or has held some other important office, and has then been dragged into court by mischievous sycophants and put to death or banished and has lost all his property" (553b). His son, by contrast, is a "realist"; abandoning his father's ideals as impractical he sets about to make money. He earns his money little by little and so has to work hard; he is stingy. His values are utilitarian and he prizes only that which can be measured in monetary terms. His timocratic father did have a set of values beyond those of private gain, but the oligarchical son recognizes only the ideal of profit. Yet he has a code of a sort; he attends to the utilitarian pleasures, that is to say, he believes in work and thrift. With an eye on the main chance, he has an inner integration which his father lacked. He is a sober, useful, successful, and respected member of society.

But there is nothing admirable or magnanimous about him. He has industriousness without humanity; he is mean and narrow, occupied with small things in a petty manner, and harsh in his judgment of human foibles and weaknesses. He achieves internal unity through self-repression; his strength is based on fear. For he is harsh toward himself too, sternly suppressing all the playful impulses. He regards self-enjoyment as vanity; he is a man starved. But these impulses, though repressed, do not die. They "burn within him like fires"; they get intenser in their subterranean fashion, until, in rebellion, they are liable to overthrow the whole man. Though outwardly in peace, such a man is really at war with himself; "the true virtue of a soul in unison and harmony with itself escapes him and dwells afar" (554e).

The oligarchical polity is based on the exploitation of the public; ultimately the public will rise and bring down its rulers. A community whose energies are concentrated on the acquisition of wealth loses its warlike virtues and becomes soft; the disfran-

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chised masses discover this weakness and overthrow it. Thus the oligarchical state is succeeded by the democratic state—the rule of the poor.

A democratic state prizes two things above all—freedom and equality. A democratic state cherishes freedom to the point of anarchy; the citizen is free to serve in war or not, according as he may choose; free to hold office or not; free to serve out his term in prison or not. He confuses obedience to law with servitude. It may be urged that this is a caricature of democracy; or that though it may be a true picture of Athenian democracy it does not correspond to its modern form. Democracy for us is not the absence of law, but the rule by the will of the whole, or at any rate of the majority. But we must remind ourselves that Plato is speaking of valuations and ideals rather than of governments, of *mores* and institutions rather than of written rules. Let us then concentrate our attention on the democratic society and its values.

Democracy as a form of government may be lawful, but as a form of society it is lawless, because it is without any fixed standards. In a democratic society any and every pattern of values is given free scope and is experimented upon. An impulse is valid in its own right; it does not have to justify itself before the tribunal of fixed principle. So is an individual his own justification; his work is valid in so far as it is the unfolding of his unique nature. Sincerity is prized above rightness; a man may speak, not because he has something worth while to say, but because he must express himself. We have the cult of individualism. Technique is decried as a check on spontaneity, and anyway it is tiresome; attention to rules is condemned as fussiness; and self-discipline is rejected as slavery to rules. Yet spontaneity without technique leads to diffuseness; in the democratic man there is a softening of fiber.

Without principles of criticism, there can be no selection; a democratic society is based on a universal toleration of ideas and movements. To Plato, toleration is a purely negative attitude; ideas are right or wrong; and a society which is critical is necessarily intolerant. A democratic society is a garden in which weeds grow alongside the flowers; full of fads and whims and vagaries.

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Or, to use Plato's figure, it is like a bazaar in which all varieties of goods are sold, or like a many-colored garment. Owing to this very variety, a democratic community is charmingly picturesque—but this is a meretricious charm, which the unthinking take as evidence of vitality, when it really arises from absence of critical control.

Where there are standards, there is bound to be a hierarchy—of the true and the false, of the good, the lesser good, and the least good. It is the absence of standards which gives rise to the second tenet of democracy—namely egalitarianism. Individuals are, in fact, unequal in ability, doctrines are unequal in respect of their merit, achievements are unequal. But if you abstract the standards of measurement, you have no way of determining differences, and everything appears to be on the same level. The vice of democracy is insolence—the insolence of a man who proclaims himself above standards; democracy lacks the quality of reverence due to the higher by the lower. There is a general levelling down of all things: teachers fawn on their pupils; the old accommodate themselves to the young, “for fear they may be thought disagreeable and authoritative.” All real differences are ignored and with them the values which come from contrast and distance. Even horses and asses walk on the pavement, “bumping into every one who meets them and who does not step aside.” So, in contemporary democracies, we find asses treated with the same respect as sages.

Reflecting the democratic society is the democratic individual. How does the democratic individual arise? It is the familiar story of puritanical father and prodigal son, the one extreme breeding its opposite. The oligarchical man had been industrious to the point of ignoring all play; as a father he had been stern, and prohibited his son from indulging himself or spending any money; by reaction, the boy, when once free, gives himself over to a good time. As the son of a dominating father the boy is weak; he has enthusiasms but no convictions. The father was integrated; the son is completely disintegrated, the prey of every chance impulse. He is ineffectual but not bad; in fact, he is very attractive because of his enthusiasm and the variety of his interests. He is friendly, good-natured, tolerant—

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all too tolerant, lacking the strength to reject. His pattern of life is sheer indiscriminating friendliness to all forms of impulse and people; he is the receptacle in man. He is indeed democratic in his tastes and no snob, treating every suggestion and every man alike. Yet his virtues are negative and only apparent. He is spontaneous and full of whimsies just because he will not concentrate and will not work. He is democratic, not from respect of others, but from absence of criteria of judgment.

The portrait of the democratic man is one of the most fascinating in all the Platonic dialogues. It is, in a measure, the portrait of every man: "day by day indulging the appetite of the day, now wine-bibbing and abandoning himself to the lascivious pleasure of the flute and again drinking only water and dieting; and at one time exercising his body, and sometimes idling and neglecting all things, and at another time seeming to occupy himself with philosophy. And frequently he goes in for politics and bounces up and says and does whatever enters his head. And, if military men excite his emulation, thither he rushes, and if moneyed men, to that he turns, and there is no order or compulsion in his existence, but he calls this life of his the life of pleasure and freedom and happiness" (*Republic* 561c, d).

Democratic government is the formal expression of the democratic pattern of living. In the oligarchical society, the few rule over the many; in the democratic society, the many control the few. Thus there is simply a reversal, without a change in principle. Democracy is mob rule. Both states are divided and both are selfish; the democratic government is a class society too, in which the erstwhile poor have all the rights and the rich are exploited. In every city there is possibly a small group of wise men fit to rule; they are the vehicles of its social values and the initiators of changes in its tradition. Without such an authoritative group, culture perishes and order as well. Democracy entrusts power to the masses; by establishing a universal equality of rights it violates the principle of the inherent hierarchy of things and men. The masses in the city correspond to the many desires within the individual soul; and desires are blind. Similarly, the public does not know what it wants and would not know how to get it, if it did. Plato does not deny that self-gov-

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ernment is good, but he holds that scientific government—that is to say, government based on a comprehension of the good of the state—is even better. The one important consideration is that government should promote the well-being of the state—whether with the willing consent of the citizens or without.

Democracy ignores the principle of qualification. If a man is sick, he does not say, I am a free citizen of a free country; I will diagnose my ill and write my prescription. No, he calls in the expert—namely the doctor—and places his case in his hands. Or if passengers on a ship are overtaken by a storm, they do not insist on taking their turns at the wheel; they leave the steering of the ship in the hands of the pilot. But when it comes to government, everybody regards himself an expert, or rather ignores the fact that government is an expert art. Perhaps this is the crucial point in the whole dispute—whether knowledge of ends is a matter of expert knowledge as is knowledge of means. The expert is a specialist who can tell us by what means a certain end may be achieved; but is there such a person as an expert concerning ends? Plato is convinced that there is; he is the wise man, the philosopher-king who, alone, can diagnose the sickness of society and prescribe for it.

As compared with some other polities, the merit of democracy is its inefficiency; it is incapable of achieving anything great—whether good or bad; it is too feeble to do important harm. In any community, the extremes are represented only by a minority; those who excel in wisdom are few, and so are those who excel in rascality (*Phædo* 90a, b). Democracy, as the control by the many, lies in between; it is the rule of the average men, among whom weakness of head is taken for kindness of heart (*Republic* 400e). Government by the ignorant masses is never democratic in the long run; the fools become the dupes of the knaves. The public is like a great beast, led by selfish individuals capable of humoring its moods and desires, who know “how it is to be approached and touched, when and by what things it is made most savage or gentle, yes, and the several sounds it is wont to utter on the occasion of each, and again what sounds uttered by another make it tame or fierce” (493a, b). These demagogues are the sophists, whose views of political wis-

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dom rise no farther than the technique of managing the wild beast. Yet the public cannot escape responsibility for its rulers; the public itself is the great sophist bringing forth the little ones.

When the situation becomes desperate, a self-styled champion of the masses appears from nowhere, hinting at reduction of debts and the partition of lands; and the public, in their distress, turn to him as their savior from their exploiters. He becomes the leader of the movement to oust the politicians and all others fattening on the public purse. Once in control, he does not "withhold his hands from the shedding of tribal blood, but by the usual unjust accusations brings a citizen into court and assassinates him, blotting out a human life." Having tasted blood, this protector of the honest public becomes transformed "from a man into a wolf." Perhaps he is driven into exile and, being restored in defiance of his enemies, returns a finished tyrant. He is always stirring up a war, with a view of entrenching his position as a leader, or in order so to drain the people's energies that they are unable to resist him, or in order to destroy the few free spirits who will not suffer his domination, by exposing them to the enemy. At home, he purges the city of the brave, the great-souled, the wise, and the rich. Unlike the doctor who destroys the worst in the body, leaving the best, the tyrant destroys the best, leaving the worst. Thus does the anarchy of mob rule breed dictatorship. In exchange for its excessive liberty, the public has received the most bitter servitude.

The tyrant has no friends—only flatterers. Among these are the poets and the tragedians; they hymn his praises, creating the myth of the tyrant as hero. The tyrant rules by force, without law. Force breeds force, and the city is infested with petty crimes. "They steal, break into houses, cut purses, strip men of their garments, plunder temples and kidnap." Fear, hatred and violence prevail; the tyrant cannot risk travelling outside the boundaries of the city; and, within, he is the prisoner of his body-guard. The tyrant is, of all men, the least free.

For the *ethos* of the tyrannical society we must refer the reader to the first book of the *Republic* and to the *Gorgias*, to the views of such sophists as Thrasymachus and Callicles. Life finds its fulfilment in utter self-assertion. The citizen is invited to re-

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turn to the state of nature in which the only right is might, to a predatory life of battle and victory, in which the strongest have all the spoils. In nature, not merely among animals but among the races of men, it is right for the able to take advantage of the weaker. Moralities are conventions (σύνθημα) with no basis in "nature"; the good life is one of complete freedom from restraint, not only from written laws but even more from unwritten rules—codes and standards. All checks, outer or inner, must be removed and man must live his natural life fully. Man should realize every one of his desires as intensively as possible. The ideal is vividness of life. Not so much satisfaction of desire as desire itself is the end. Final satisfaction would mean extinction of both sorrow and joy; the natural man perpetually moves from old desires to new.

In every society there is the battle between the strong and the weak. Morality and law arise from the banding of the weak to protect their interests against the strong. The many, being impotent or too timid to follow the clue of desire, make of their weakness a virtue and proclaim licentiousness as a disgrace; when, in fact, restraint itself is disgraceful because it inhibits the impetus of life. Similarly, the law of justice is an invention of the weak to get for themselves an undeserved equality with the strong. "It is with a view to themselves and their own interests that they make their laws and distribute their praises and censures; and to terrorize the stronger sort of folk who are able to get an advantage over *them*, they tell them that such aggrandizement is foul . . . for I expect they are well content to see themselves on an equality, when they are so inferior" (*Gorgias* 483b). The effect of morality is to reduce the strong to the level of the weak. "We mould the best and strongest of us, taking them from their infancy like young lions, and utterly enthrall them by our spells and witchcraft, telling them the while that they must have but their equal share, and that this is what is fair and just" (*Gorgias* 483e). A healthy community is one in which, these restrictions being removed, free scope is given to the full exercise of the pugnacious and predatory instincts, and the strong are given dominion over the weak.

Let us now consider the tyrannical individual. In the first

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place, how does he arise? Any enthusiasm, no matter how well-intentioned, if vague and ignorant, is liable to become the tool of an evil but determined desire. It is in this way that the democratic state plays into the hands of the tyrant. And so with the democratic man. We have seen that he is the weak son of a dominating father. He flits about from friend to friend until one day he meets a determined man whose slave he then becomes. From the one extreme of uncontrolled vivacity he settles down to the other extreme of humble docility. But the change is primarily within himself. His very inability to control his desires provides an opportunity for some violent impulse to establish itself in power over all the other appetites, driving especially the sober ones out.

And now the tyrannical man is born; he is the man with a master passion around which all the other weaker appetites revolve as satellites. Oligarchy is the rule of the few, democracy of the many; in tyranny, power is concentrated in the hands of one. The tyrannical man refuses to be led astray by chance distractions, and he does not waste effort on anything outside his main purpose. He is strong because unified. The philosopher and the tyrant lie at opposite extremes, yet they are very much alike. The tyrant is the tragic caricature of the philosopher. It takes a great man to be a villain, and the tyrant is a great man, strong like the philosopher, but with this difference that, whereas in the soul of the latter it is the best which rules, in the soul of the former it is the worst which is in charge. As we have seen¹ the very qualities that make up the philosophic nature in men are the cause of its backsliding, when the environment and nature are bad; and it is from such men, thus corrupted, that spring those who do the greatest harm to communities and to themselves (495a, b).

The tyrannical man is ruled by the savage, criminal passions of human nature; he lives by day the life we all live in the night. He is dominated by lust or drink or the love of power. The relation of the tyrant to other human beings is that of master and slave; he does not know the meaning of friendship, and is completely isolated from the world. And within himself this despot

¹P. 325.

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is a slave to his ruling passion. The average man, no matter how wicked, has some code of decency; for the tyrant there is only the law of self-assertion. He throws over all decencies, refrains from no atrocity, dares anything; he knows no loyalty and is capable of betraying his most intimate friends and relations when it is to his interest. He has the strength of one who will go to the limit, unrestrained by any norm. We have said that the tyrannical man is integrated; but there is an important limitation. He is ruled by passion, not reason; he has that coherence in his conduct which we associate with insanity. In the democratic man one appetite balances and moderates another; but in the tyrant's soul, the ruling passion is limited by nothing and therefore grows into a frenzy. The tyrant is a man obsessed and a maniac—a monomaniac—capable of shrewd calculation but fundamentally mad, because he cannot detach himself from his passion. Carrying all the Gadarene swine in creation within his soul, so to speak, he is swept over the abyss and destroyed.

It is interesting to note that in Plato's account of the rise of one polity from another, there is a certain alternation between strong and weak. The philosopher is internally co-ordinated, but the timocratic man lacks a definite bent; by reaction, his oligarchical son is strong, but the democratic man is at loose ends; finally, the tyrannical man is internally co-ordinated. The distance between philosopher and tyrant can be measured and formulated mathematically; "if one tries to express the extent of the interval between the (philosopher) king and the tyrant in respect of true pleasure, he will find on completion of the multiplication that he lives 729 times as happily and that the tyrant's life is more painful by the same distance" (*Republic* 587e). Thus speaks the inveterate mathematician.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE IDEAL OF REASON

I

WE WILL now study the nature of the perfect polity, in which philosophers are kings. Plato is careful to point out that he is describing an ideal which cannot be realized on the earth. "Perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it and so beholding it to constitute himself its citizen. But it makes no difference whether it exists now or ever will come into being" (*Republic* 592b). Why, then, discuss the ideal state at all? The study of the ideal state is part of the general investigation of the realm of forms. It is not necessary for the painter, portraying the pattern of the perfect man, to prove that it is actually possible for such a man to exist. It is enough that he has revealed this pattern. But also, Plato cherishes the insight into the ideal as supplying an impetus for its realization. We can never completely realize the ideal, but we can continually approach it. The ideal is a guide for action, forever beyond attainment, yet always moulding attainment. Thus, Plato proceeds to the practical question of how "most probably and in what respect the ideal can be most nearly realized." There is the first-best and the second-best; the ideal and the human approximation to it.

But before we take up this problem we must discuss the question of origins. How does the good state arise? For a state to become good, there must be a good leader. So we are led to a second question: how does the good leader—*i.e.*, the philosopher—arise? The answer is, by being born and bred in a good state. Thus the answer is circular. We will start with the second of the two questions, namely concerning the origin of the philosopher. Given the present order of society, it is hard to see how a phi-

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philosopher could arise; or having arisen how he could survive; or having survived how he could come into power. Society prizes what is base and dishonorable, and corrupts the individual; the only hope of salvation lies in his isolation from the community. A small remnant is saved in various ways. Some remain uncontaminated through being exiled from the city, or because, having been born in a small town, they stay aloof, scorning its parochial affairs, or because, on account of sickness—the “bridle of Theages”—they have been prevented from taking part in public affairs. Thus they are saved by misfortune. The philosopher grows in solitude—not that solitude is an end in itself but that it is necessary for the building up of principle. Only after a period of isolation—enforced or voluntary—is the philosopher ready to step into public affairs. Yet here he has the problem of survival in a corrupt social order. There is nothing sound in the actual city and there is no ally with whose aid the just man might escape destruction. Like a man fallen among wild beasts he would come to an untimely end without doing any good to himself or to others. “For all these reasons I say the philosopher remains quiet, minds his own affair, and, as it were, standing aside under shelter of a wall in a storm and blast of dust and sleet, . . . is content if in any way he may keep himself free from iniquity and unholy deeds through his life and take his departure with fair hope, serene, and well content when the end comes” (496d). The philosopher is useless, and he can survive only by staying away from politics. Is Plato giving an apology for his own practice with reference to Athenian politics?

There are, however, rare occasions when as by a miracle philosopher and public come together to constitute the perfect city. Modern political theorists dwell in detail on the strategy of bringing the good state about, on the technique of revolution, of preparation for the revolution, and the like. The reader will look in vain for similar information in Plato’s writings. Plato is concerned with ends and not with means. Politics is not the art of seizing power, and in fact there is no such art. Speaking in a parable Plato says: “The pilot must give his attention to the time of the year, the seasons, the sky, the winds, the stars and all that pertains to his art if he is to be a true ruler of his ship, *refus-*

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ing to believe that there is any art or science of seizing the helm with or without the consent of others, or any possibility of mastering this alleged art and the practice of it at the same time with the science of navigation" (*Republic* 488d, e). The problem is twofold: how to persuade the philosophers to rule (for they would rather contemplate eternal verities); and how to persuade the public to obey. And Plato seems to think that the problem is beyond human control. Yet it may be solved either (a) by chance, or (b) by divine interposition. Chance may constrain the philosophers to rule and the public to consent to their rule. There is here the appeal to necessity—*anagke*; Plato may possibly mean that the city from very desperation may turn to the philosophers as a last resort. Or, by some divine inspiration, a genuine passion for philosophy may take hold of the actual rulers or their sons. Chance and divine intervention are both factors which are unpredictable and uncontrollable. Yet what is beyond human control is not thereby to be considered improbable. Plato makes it clear that he is speaking seriously and not uttering day-dreams; what we are describing is difficult but not at all impossible. After all, it may have taken place in remotest times, or is actually transpiring in some unknown barbaric region.

And in one of those curious reversals of mood, so common in Plato and yet so surprising, he proceeds to say sweet words about the public. After having described it as a wild beast and as a corrupter, he now says: "My dear fellow, do not thus always condemn the multitude"—as though it was not he who had condemned it. Not the public, but its leaders are to be blamed. The public is not fundamentally antagonistic to philosophy, but turns against it because it is misled by the sophists, who are counterfeiters of philosophy. If we are patient with the public and explain to it the true nature and purpose of philosophy, the public will be persuaded. Plato once again insists that all this is not at all impossible. How refreshing to find Plato for once striking the note of hopefulness. "Will any one contend that there is no chance that the offspring of kings and rulers should be born with the philosophic nature?" "Not one," he said. "And can any one prove that if so born they must necessarily be corrupted? The difficulty of their salvation we too concede; but that in all

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the course of time not one of all could be saved, will any one maintain that?' 'How could he?' 'But surely,' said I, 'the occurrence of one such is enough, if he has a state which obeys him, to realize all that now seems incredible.' . . . 'Our present opinion, then, about this legislation is that our plan would be best if it could be realized and that this realization is difficult yet not impossible' " (*Republic* 502a).

The lawgiver should work out a comprehensive and consistent plan before he embarks on the task and details of execution (*Laws* 746c). This will be his pattern, which, like a sculptor, he will use in working on the plastic material of human nature. And his method should be radical; he is no half-hearted reformer but first wipes the slate clean. Sending all the inhabitants above the age of ten into the fields, he will take over the children and bring them up in the new customs and laws. The revolutionary philosopher does not expect much from the older generation; his hope lies in the new generation and in his system of education. "But this we must not forget, that in our former selection we chose old men, but in this one that will not do. For we must not take Solon's word for it that growing old a man is able to learn many things. He is less able to do that than to run a race. To the young belong all heavy and frequent labors" (*Republic* 536c). Plato is realist enough to admit that a minimum of concessions will have to be made to the public (*Republic* 493d); in all other respects, the statesman will make a completely fresh start and enforce an ideal polity. It is true that all great things are precarious; the philosophic state will not be certain to remain, once achieved, but the risk is worth taking.

II

The new state will concentrate itself on the task of educating the children, but it will make a special effort for the education of its rulers, training them in philosophy. Not any child will be chosen; only those with the proper endowments at birth, children who are keen and enterprising but also stable and steadfast in their studies, for education is a laborious process. Instruction should not be compulsory but by play. "Nothing learned under compulsion stays in the mind"; moreover, compulsion is

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not appropriate to a free soul. The older people must reverence the young, teaching them not so much by admonition as by plainly practising in their own lives what they would advise for the others (*Laws* 729c).

Plato is very sure and very keen about one point: that premature introduction to philosophy is bad; and perhaps the intensity of his conviction is a reflection of his experience as a teacher. Boys who get a taste of dialectic use it as a sport, becoming contentious, keener for victory in argument than for the truth. The effect of too early a turning of the young to philosophy is moral unsettlement, disillusionment, and cynicism. From the one extreme of conformity, the young simply move to the other extreme of rebellion; they have abandoned the old virtues which they learned from their parents before they are ready to submit themselves to the discipline of reason. Thus the way of education is long; it begins with gymnastics and music, gymnastics for the hardening of the body, and music—that is to say, literature and the fine arts—in order to give the children an insight into the good through myth. Fundamentally, both gymnastics and music are for the soul. Then the young will proceed to study the empirical sciences and mathematics, and, at twenty, they are introduced to the correlation of the various disciplines of knowledge. At thirty there is a further selection, those who survive it going on into dialectic for five years. At thirty-five they are sent back to the cave, to command in war and to hold offices, thus supplementing their intellectual instruction with practical experience. After fifteen years of this, at fifty, they are ready to gaze at the good, devoting themselves alternately to philosophy and to kingship.

Education, which is the taming of the savage beast, cannot be started too soon, because, owing to the force of habit, the whole character of man is determined in infancy (*Laws* 792e). "Of all wild creatures the child is the most intractable; for in so far as it, above all others, possesses a fount of reason that is as yet uncurbed, it is a treacherous, sly, and most insolent creature. Wherefore the child must be strapped up, as it were, with many bridles—first, when he leaves the care of nurse and mother, with tutors, to guide his childish ignorance, and after that with

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teachers of all sorts of subjects and lessons, treating him as becomes a freeborn child" (*Ibid.* 808d). The function of education is primarily moral, namely the inculcation of virtuous habits, though vocational education is not to be excluded. A man may be uncommonly well-trained as a peddler or skipper, he may even have considerable mental accomplishments and yet be uneducated; for the purpose of education is not to teach the student how to make money or to train him in a vocation, or to make his body strong, but to make him a perfect citizen, understanding how to rule and to be ruled rightly.

In the child, pleasure and pain are the chief motive forces, and education is the proper direction of these into concord with the right. The greatest ignorance is the discord of pleasure and pain with right reason, and the child should be habituated to take pleasure in the good and to be pained by evil. Virtuous habits will be formed with the aid of praise and blame and punishment, until what is administered from without gradually becomes a law within the soul. Play is one of the most important ways of teaching, and Plato is horrified that—as he says—in every state there should exist such complete ignorance about games. We must teach the children by play what they will practise when grown up. The man who is to make a good builder must, as a child, play at building toy houses, and to make a good farmer he must play at tilling land. "First and foremost, education, we say, consists in that right nurture which most strongly draws the soul of the child when at play to a love for that pursuit, of which, when he becomes a man, he must possess a perfect mastery" (643d). And in order to secure a community with a settled disposition, there should be fixed rules concerning games. Since the children, while in play, are forming their future characters, alterations in games are not matters of play but are causes of serious mischief. Children who innovate in their games grow up into men different from their fathers and seek a different mode of life. "For when the program of games is prescribed and secures that the same children always play the same games and delight in the same toys in the same way and under the same conditions, it allows the real and serious laws also to remain undisturbed; but when these games vary and suffer innovations,

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amongst other constant innovations the children are always shifting their fancy from one game to another, so that neither in respect of their own bodily gestures nor in respect of their equipment have they any fixed and acknowledged standard of propriety and impropriety" (797b). Tell me what kind of games your children play, what music they enjoy, what dances they dance, and I will tell you what kind of laws your state has—thus we might well imagine Plato speaking.

Character cannot be built up in a vacuum. One of the advantages of play is that it exposes the child to evil without serious damage; and for this reason Plato would extend the opportunity to play into adolescence and adulthood. The development of virtue entails an acquaintance with evil which is not an actual practise of it. A doctor can and indeed should experience all diseases in himself in order to be well-educated in medicine. But it is otherwise in matters moral—to do evil is to distort the very instrument of reason which discriminates between good and bad, to destroy moral sensitiveness, and ultimately to render man depraved. We must have knowledge of evil without habituating ourselves to it. That is why Plato advises travel outside the confines of the good state, "for a state that is without experience of bad men and good would never be able (owing to its isolation) to become fully civilized and perfect, nor would it be able to safeguard its laws unless it grasped them, not by habit only, but by conviction" (951b).

But mere observation is not enough; the young must be tested and disciplined by actual confrontation with temptation, trained to become fearless by being drawn into fear, and to become fearful (of what they ought to fear) by being pitted against shamelessness and fighting against pleasure. "Or shall we say that, whereas in the case of courage it is only by fighting and conquering his innate cowardice that a man can become perfect . . . —in the case of temperance, on the other hand, a man may attain perfection without a stubborn fight against hordes of pleasures and lusts which entice towards shamelessness and wrong-doing, and without conquering them by the aid of speech and act and skill, alike in play and at work—and, in fact, without undergoing any of these experiences?" (647d).

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Wine-drinking festivals are important educational factors for adults. These convivial gatherings should be presided over by a master of ceremonies who remains sober, and attended by guests who get drunk. By learning how to win victory over the wine-cup, how to keep their heads while drunk, they will be trained to withstand the intoxicating effects of pleasure and glory in real life. Wine-bibbing induces the moods of hopefulness, power, and conceit, both excessive fearlessness and fear; in fact, it releases all the appetites which tempt man, such as anger, lust, insolence, ignorance, covetousness, and extravagance, thus affording reason an inexpensive way of testing its strength and training it for the actual uses of life.

III

What is the pattern of the ideal state? In answering this question we must not take the all too easy path of fitting Plato into some conventional rubric. Is his state aristocratic? Considering the fact that authority will reside in the select few the answer might seem to be yes. But if aristocracy it be, it is of the benevolent kind. The rulers will not exploit the masses but will guide them to the fullest realization of their possibilities. The state will be democratic in that the energies of the state will be used for the service of the interests, not of the few, but of all. There will be both a discrimination of individuals from each other according to their capacities and also a recognition of the worth of men as men; the principle of inequality in authority will be maintained along with that of equality of consideration. And in this sense, Plato's ideal state combines the features both of aristocracy and of what we know as democracy.

Again, the ideal state will form an organic unity in which the nature of the individual will depend on his place in the whole. As every act of the individual must submit to the scrutiny, if not the judgment, of the state, one might plausibly compare Plato's ideal with the modern totalitarian state. Yet the unity of the whole arises from the interplay of the parts; the individual reflects the city in which he is born and bred, but it is no less true that the character of the city is determined by that of its individual members, especially of its rulers (*Republic* 544d). The

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state is not an absolute but a functional fact; its end is to promote the interests of its members, and its authority resides in that function. In Plato's ideal state the features of organism are combined with those of individualism. But we must proceed from dogmatic assertion to an analytical account.

There are two principles of order in the state, the one horizontal and the other vertical. Society constitutes an organism and a hierarchy; on the one hand it is a multiplicity of parts in internal relation and, on the other, it is a graded and stratified whole with higher and lower classes. We shall start with a consideration of the first. Two characteristics stand out in an organism: the unity of the parts, the diversification of the parts. Society consists of members each of whom performs a specific function with reference to the whole. Plato compares the ideal city to the human body; when a finger is injured, the whole body suffers, and not the finger alone. In short, there is no such thing as the pain in the finger alone. Similarly, in the ideal city, there is no individualization of feeling; the city is held together by a community of pleasure and pain whereby the citizens rejoice and grieve together at the same things. The citizens feel as one. There is nothing which is private in the lives of the rulers except their bodies; all their activities are public functions invested with the sanction of the public good. There is no private good, no private institution. The family is a divisive factor, obstructing the loyalty to the state, and must be abolished. In marrying, man should aim to benefit the state, not to please himself. In fact, marriage and along with it both the breeding and the rearing of children will be regulated by the state. Houses and meals will be in common, and this common life will induce sexual union, by the necessity "not of geometry but of love, which is perhaps keener and more potent than the other." The women should be common to all men, the children should be kept in common, and no parent should know his offspring, nor any child its parent. The state, and only the state, will be the common parent to all the children. All children born in the period in which their fathers and mothers were procreating will regard one another as brothers and sisters.

Not the least important part of Plato's doctrine in this con-

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nection is his view that women should have all the rights and duties of citizenship. There is the fact that all the activities of an individual are of a public character; and there is also the fact that every individual (barring the slaves) is a member of the body politic. We grant the biological difference between the sexes: women bear and men beget; but that is no more relevant to the question of citizenship than that one man is long-handed, or another bald. In short, the differences between men and women are no more significant than the differences between men and men. Some men are physicians and other men are carpenters, and thus are diverse in nature; on the other hand, both a woman and a man may be physicians and thus have the same nature. The principle of diversification in the state is based on nature, not sex. The same offices will be open to women as to men, even that of being a philosopher-king; they will engage in athletics during which they must strip, with virtue as their only garment; they will engage in war, and in the other duties of civic guardianship. "But in these very duties lighter duties must be assigned to the women than to the men because of their weakness as a class." Finally, women are rational beings, no less than men. Inasmuch as the women will partake of the same tasks as the men, education will be the same for both sexes. The fact that it took over two thousand years for Plato's views on the emancipation of women to be accepted and enforced should prove encouraging to reformers whose doctrines elicit opposition from the public.

There is no difference of kind between the two sexes, but there is one of degree. Men can do everything that women can do—save the bearing of children—and can do it far better. I know of nothing practised by mankind, says Plato, in which the masculine sex does not surpass the female. It is true that many women are superior to many men, but, broadly speaking, the masculine sex is superior to the feminine. But, he repeats, "the natural capacities are distributed alike among both creatures and women naturally share in all pursuits."

Plato would have the human race bred scientifically. Mating should be controlled by reason, not sentiment; or rather, reason should so control conditions that sentiment may develop at the

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right times between the right people. After all; hunting-dogs, pedigree-cocks, and horses are not bred indiscriminately but selectively. So the best men should mate with the best women on as many occasions as possible, and the worst with the worst, as infrequently as possible. Plato is unsentimental, severe, or perhaps simply scientific in the matter of the prolongation of life. The fit should be allowed to survive, but the children of unfit parents not. It is a question of maintaining and improving the human stock, and the attitude of discrimination should be extended not only to infants but to adults. For example, medicine should not aim to save everybody, but only those who give promise of becoming useful to the city. Plato believes that the Athenian public, and especially the rich, are getting soft, imagining headaches and dizziness, fancying themselves sick and spending their time doctoring themselves. A citizen has no leisure to be sick, for he has a task to perform. "A carpenter, when he is sick, expects his physician to give him a drug which will operate as an emetic on the disease, or to get rid of it by purging or the use of cautery or the knife. But if any one prescribes for him a long course of treatment with swathings about the head and their accompaniments, he hastily says that he has no leisure to be sick, and that such a life of preoccupation with illness and neglect of the work that lies before him isn't worth living. And thereupon he bids farewell to that kind of physician, enters upon his customary way of life, regains his health, and lives attending to his affairs—or, if his body is not equal to the strain, he dies and is freed from all his troubles" (*Republic* 406d). The value of a man's life depends on his ability to perform his work. Plato invokes the example of Asclepius, the father of all doctors, who, if a man were diseased throughout and so incapable of living in the established round and order of life, did not attempt to prolong his life but refused to give him treatment, since such a man is of no use either to himself or to the state. Plato makes the striking statement that the doctor should be a statesman. Medicine is not a private relation between doctor and patient; the doctor's obligation is to the state and not to the individual.

This severity of regimen is to be applied to the healthy as well as to the sick. Athletes are apt to get pampered, nourishing

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themselves on a prescribed diet from which if they depart ever so little, they are liable to fall into violent diseases. Yet we desire our youth to be fit for war, and therefore capable of undergoing sudden changes in their diet and privation. The aim of athletic training is not individual victory but the securing of healthy citizens in the community. One of the worst manifestations of slothfulness is excessive sleep. It is not only the pampered athletes who sleep away their lives, but people generally who like to indulge themselves. Sleep is an enemy to thought; while asleep, we are not rational, we do not exist as human beings. "That any citizen, indeed, should spend the whole of any night in sleep, instead of setting an example to his household by being himself always the first to awaken and rise—such a practice must be counted by all a shameful one, unworthy of a free man, whether it be called a custom or a law. For when asleep no man is worth anything, any more than if he were dead: on the contrary, every one of us who cares most greatly for life and thought keeps awake as long as possible, only reserving so much time for sleep as his health requires—and that is but little, once the habit is well formed" (*Laws* 808a, b). Those who suffer from insomnia may derive some comfort from the reflection that what they lose in sleep they gain in reason.

Thus, the state is operated according to the principles of organic unity, of scientific management, and of purposiveness throughout. The result seems to be one of extreme regimentation, in which all free play of impulse is suppressed. The state is governed by rational forethought. Those who rule it have one single aim in life to which all their actions, public and private, are directed—the aim of the public good. The statesman, seated at the helm of the city, steers the whole, commands the whole, makes the whole useful (*Euthydemus* 291d). True civic art cares not for private interest; and it is to the benefit of both public and private interests, when the public, rather than the private, interest is enacted. Plato's city is not a *laissez-faire* state in which the good of the whole is promoted by the interplay of private interests. All workers are servants of the community. Individual interest sets people against each other, establishing the principle of competition in the city. But the functional atti-

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tude joins people together; the musician does not regard another musician as his rival, *qua* musician. The shepherd serves the interests of his flock, and not his own; the doctor of his patients and ultimately of the community; the statesman, of the public. All workers, it is true, receive wages, but that is in so far as they exercise a separate art, which is the art of earning wages. Thus, all work, as far as possible, is to be conducted on the basis of what today we regard as professional standards.

It is a curious fact and not easy to explain, that modern socialism has made so much of Hegel and so little of Plato. In the doctrine of socialism, we may distinguish principles from the mechanism of their application. The principle of socialism that no function is strictly private is a Platonic doctrine; and the same may be said of the principle that social activity in all its spheres should be rationally directed. For Plato, both art and education are to be controlled by the state for public uses. As to means, we have, in Plato, the doctrine of the abolition of private property. The rulers should live and spend in common, having nothing which they may call "mine" or "thine." True enough, the abolition of private property is a principle to be applied only to the ruling class, but the reason for this restriction does not seem to be one of general doctrine but rather because Plato thinks that the masses are not ready to accept it. There are, however, certain important differences between Plato's ideal city and the modern socialist state which may be noted; and whether what Plato omits is fundamental to socialism we will leave it to the reader to decide. In Plato, there is no doctrine of class-war; in the ideal city, all classes are friendly to each other. There is no essential opposition between the rulers, the warriors, the artisans, and husbandmen; the city is a single organism. Secondly, government is to be in the hands not of the working-class but of the philosophers. Since government is a science, it is the scientists, *i.e.*, the wise men, who should rule. This point is more important than might appear at first sight.

According to socialist doctrine—at least of an important branch of it—the economic impulse dominates all other impulses and determines the course of social history. According to Plato, social activity is determined by social valuations; and in fact, the eco-

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conomic motive is determining only because the public happens to value economic wealth above all. Thus, the ills of society can be cured only by the application of a treatment which goes much beyond a reconstruction of the economic order; the disease of society is moral and the cure can come only from a change of social values. It is assumed today by many reformers that when poverty is abolished, when sickness is diminished, when wealth has been equally distributed among all classes of people, when production has been increased and comfort has been secured, the problem of society will have been solved. For Plato, the root of the matter lies in the "inner city" and in the relationships of human beings to each other. There is the problem of the relation of reason to the passions, and human happiness depends on the adequate adjustment of the two. The conflict of reason with passion is eternal; whatever the economic form of society, whatever the degree of its technological improvement, the passions of jealousy, ambition, malice, pride, love and hatred will remain to trouble man. Moreover, no institutions will serve their purpose adequately or even survive, unless the passions are tamed. Ignorance and the warlike propensities in man will ruin any human contrivance no matter how perfect, while greed and ambition will distract politics from their proper uses. And as the passions are essentially intractable, the problem of their control will never be finally solved. The warfare between the gods and evil is undying, says Plato. Man's task on this earth of conquering the inner city will never end. In saying all this, we are not ignoring the other aspect of the matter—that the inner city will not thrive unless the outer city is well-ordered.

At the time of Plato, Greece was divided into several independent cities, much as the Europe of today is divided into a number of independent states. Plato affirms the unity of the Greeks against the barbarians. While the Greeks and the barbarians are mutual enemies by nature, the Greeks are friends with the Greeks by nature. Whenever one Greek city is at war with another, Hellas itself is sick. If Greeks quarrel among themselves, it must be with a view to their eventual reconciliation. Thus Plato carries the organic principle beyond the confines of the city so as to extend its application to the entire Greek

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race. And although he excludes the barbarians from the society of men, it is no mean merit that he should have proclaimed the unity of the civilized world of his day.

Nonetheless the hand of the state lies heavy on the individual. In the *Laws* Plato goes to ridiculous lengths in specifying statutes concerning the details of life. Thus, he states and repeats (745c, 746d) that the city along with the surrounding country must be divided into five thousand and forty allotments; also that the citizen must take as his share two dwellings, one near the center of the city and one in the country. But Plato does not always talk in this vein. Against such passages must be set others in which Plato is emphatic that details must be left out of legislation—for example, concerning business-matters, transactions in the agora, actions for foul language and assault—for “it would not be fitting to legislate on such matters to good and honorable men.” He makes some very sound remarks concerning all petty legislation. When the fundamental laws are wrong, no detailed legislation will help. There are people who are sick on account of intemperate habits and, because they are unwilling to change their unwholesome regimen, have recourse to palliatives and panaceas, tinkering their systems with various drugs, the truth being that “until they stop their drinking and gorging and wenching and idling, neither drug, nor cautery, nor the knife will be of any avail.” And similarly with cities—the more resolutely they refuse to change their fundamental laws when these are wrong, the more they multiply petty laws, which are as useless as trying to cut off Hydra’s heads. In fact, legislation of this kind is useless both in an ill-governed and a well-governed state—in the first, because it is not fundamental enough, in the second, because such matters are adjusted spontaneously.

Nevertheless, the fundamental laws remain and, with them, the problem of freedom of the individual in the state. With reference to the latter, the following considerations are relevant. (a) The social system is a differentiated organism in which each individual has a specific and unique function. There is a measure of homogeneity in the state which, however, is never carried to such a degree as to interfere with the diversification of the parts. Justice, as the ruling virtue of the state, is the principle that no

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class and no individual is to meddle in another's function; justice is the negative form of individuality. The virtue of the citizen is not to conform but to perform his specific function. Thus the state will be rich with a variety of types of character, and its strength will depend on the fact that it is a harmony of diversities and contrasts.

(*b*) The nature of the individual is not exhausted by his ingreience in the social structure. The soul has a life apart from, as well as a life with, the state. The dwelling-place of reason is in the realm of the eternal forms; it is an alien in the world of the body and of the circumstances of this world. Thus, by virtue of its affinity with the timeless and universal forms, the soul is released from its bondage to the state; *qua* spectator of the heavenly realities, the soul is constituted independently of its membership in the city. We can therefore speak of the city as derivative from the interrelations of the individuals. The nature of the political constitution springs from the character of the citizens; the laws of the city can prevail only so long as the individuals order their own individual lives according to reason. "Unless private affairs are rightly managed it is vain to suppose that any stable code of laws can exist for public affairs" (*Laws* 790b).

(*c*) Thus, the state is not an end in itself, but is a means for the promotion of the good life. Plato describes the state as originating from the efforts of human beings to solve the problem of the division of labor. But its final end is moral—"designed for all virtue." Plato's state is not authoritarian and is not absolute; it derives its sanction from reason. Law is not valid as law but because it is right. Laws are imitations of the truth; they are the second-best, mind being the first-best. There is then something above the state, namely the realm of fixed and universal standards, from which the state derives its authority. Rational knowledge is "more powerful than any law"; there is the constant need to test the actual laws by the ideal laws, and when the former have outlived their usefulness, they must be changed (*Politicus* 299c, ff). Human beings have a habit of going to extremes: either to the extreme of democracy, in which the duty to obey law is denied, or to that of authoritarianism in

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which law is respected as law. The unity of society is a moral unity, of which the state with its written laws is only an inadequate image; society and the state are to be measured by their conformity to the unwritten laws.

(*d*) Finally, there is a stage in which humanity dispenses with all laws whatever. Society then becomes an organism held together only by the bond of consent, without any coercion. Human beings will form a society, but not a state, if by state is meant a body of written general rules along with the instrumentalities of their enforcement. When they rise to this stage, men will have thrown off the copy and achieved the very ideal itself; which is the moral union of freely-consenting individuals. But more of this point below.

IV

We shall now consider the vertical type of order in a society. The city should be a hierarchy of three classes in the following order according to rank: rulers, warriors, workers, the first symbolized by gold, the second by silver and the third by iron and bronze; below the last, presumably, is the class of the slaves. The city will be an aristocracy neither of wealth nor of power, but of virtue. And each man's position will depend on his ability and not on the family into which he is born. It may happen that a golden father begets a silver son, or that both the upper classes beget sons with an admixture of iron and bronze; in such an eventuality, there will be no pity, only justice, and the sons will be thrust into the class to which they belong. And conversely, the lower classes, whether bronze or silver, may beget golden sons, who then will be honored and assigned offices proportionate to their ability. Thus, rigidity is to be avoided, and there will be constant movement from above below, and from below above; ability will not be ignored merely because it appears on a lower stratum, nor will incompetence be cherished merely because it bears the name of a great family. Every man will be treated strictly according to his nature, and there will be equal opportunity for all—opportunity to ascend and opportunity to descend.

The salvation of our cities lies in the enthronement of the

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philosophers as kings, and in the union of the greatest power with the greatest wisdom. Now, self-government is better than government of one person by another; whenever possible, it is better that a man should govern himself by the indwelling principle of reason; but the fact is that in most people the best part is naturally weak and unable to control the brood of beasts within. And inasmuch as the paramount consideration is that *all should be governed by the divine principle*, the wise course is for the average man to follow the lead of the philosophers who, themselves, are governed by the divine principle. We do not give children freedom until we have established a constitutional government within their souls; only after fostering their reason, and only then, do we let go the reins over them (*Republic* 591a). But most men are destined never to rise beyond the level of childhood. Thus, it is by virtue of its smallest class and minutest part that a city becomes wise.

The class of philosopher-kings will be a group including women; they will not all rule at once but in turn, each ruler alternating between the occupation of contemplating the realm of forms and governing the cave. Plato makes it a point that the rulers will be unwilling to rule, submitting to the onerous task of government as a necessary evil. Government, whenever made attractive, draws demagogues seeking their own advantage; but the philosophers will be covetous neither of wealth nor of honor. They will be constrained to take part in government by a compulsion which they themselves recognize, and which consists in the fact that unless they take part in government, they will be governed by some one worse than they are.

The basis of the aristocratic state is justice, conceived not as arithmetical equality but as proportion, whereby to each is given his due according to his nature—greater honors to those greater in virtue and smaller honors and rank to those less good. There will be no dead level of equality but the contrast of higher and lower. This contrast must not be construed as separateness; the rulers and ruled are held together by friendliness; there will be, on the one hand, inequality of authority, on the other, friendship among unequals. Friendship in the aristocratic state has two poles; on behalf of those ruled it

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means reverence (*αἰδῶ*), toward the rulers, the respect due from the lower to the higher, a respect ultimately due to standards. The mistake of democracy lies in its rejection of respect as inconsistent with self-respect, and the parade of insolence as a virtue. The other pole of friendship is the concern of the rulers for the ruled. Appetites are selfish; the oligarchical rulers exploit the masses. But reason is a principle of self-giving. Just as in the human body, the head, which leads, is a servant of the whole organism, so will the philosophers work for the good of the whole. The king fosters the life of his subjects; he promotes the interests of the good, and allows even the bad to live, reconciling all together and securing permanent friendliness among them (*Laws* 627e). Here Plato anticipates Christianity; he approaches, without quite reaching, the doctrine of the value of man through his essential humanity, arising from the fact that in every man there is the latent possibility of the divine.

Respect and concern join together to form the single virtue of sobriety (*σωφροσύνη*), which holds the city in unison. Plato does not propose to abolish slavery, but he insists that slaves should be treated with consideration, "and that not only for their sakes but still more for the sake of ourselves" (777d). No violence must be used toward slaves and they may be hurt even less than equals. For the test of a man's sense of justice is found in his dealings with people whom it is easy for him to wrong.

Consider now the function of law in the good state from the viewpoint (*a*) of the ruler (*b*) of the ruled. (*a*) No human being is capable of having irresponsible control over human affairs without being filled with pride and injustice (713c). Law is a necessary check upon the ruler, to prevent him from degenerating into a tyrant; in the good state law is a lord over the magistrates, and the magistrates are servants of the law (715d). Law is a check on human appetite; further, it is a corrective to human ignorance. Laws have been evolved after consideration of all relevant details; they represent the massive experience of humanity in its struggle with its environment; they are superior to the ignorance of individual men.

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Once the state has established the right laws, it must steadfastly oppose any change. Plato is a conservative, with no love of change for its own sake, for there is nothing better than the truth. Xenophon depicts Socrates as making fun of the sophists who from their penchant for novelty never say the same thing twice, one day maintaining that twice five is ten and another day supplying a different answer (*Memorabilia*, Bk. IV, Chap. IV). What is sound must seem correct not only a moment ago but also now and hereafter (*Meno* 89c). The sign of intelligence in any given operation is uniformity. The stars always do the same thing, not changing their circuits from time immemorial; and for most men this is a proof that they have no soul, when in fact it shows that they are inhabited by divinity. Intelligence acts always in the same respects, in the same way and for the same reasons (*Epinomis* 982d, e). And in the *Laws* (797d) Plato says: "Nothing, as we shall find, is more perilous than change in respect of everything, save only what is bad—in respect of seasons, winds, bodily diet, mental disposition, everything in short with the solitary exception, as I just said now, of the bad. . . . For if there exist laws under which men have been reared up and which (by the blessing of Heaven) have remained unaltered for many centuries . . . then the whole soul is forbidden by reverence and fear to alter any of the things established of old."

(b) From the point of view of the subjects, laws are useful in a double sense: for the instruction of the good and for the correction of the bad. But force should be tempered with persuasion, and punishment should be resorted to only when persuasion has failed. Legislators should preface their laws with preludes in which they take the trouble to explain their laws and justify them. There are doctors for the freeborn and doctor's-assistants for the slaves. Not one of the latter gives any account to the patient of his ailments but prescribes for each on the basis of empirical knowledge. But the former kind analyzes the disease and explains its nature to the patient, giving no prescription until he has gained the patient's consent. Yet since the important thing is the improvement of the patient's health, if the latter is intractable, then the prescription must

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be enforced against his will. So should the rulers explain to their subjects the nature of the laws imposed upon them. The reason for this requirement is that government is a relation of free rulers to free subjects—"the natural rule of law without force over willing subjects" (*Laws* 690c, *Politicus* 276e); government is by consent, in which the rulers obtain their authority through the good-will of their subjects (*Laws* 723a). "Are we to conceive that the written laws in our states should resemble persons moved by love and wisdom, such as a father or a mother, or that they should order and threaten, like some tyrant and despot, who writes his decree on the wall, and there is an end to it?" (*Ibid* 859a). The ruler is like the householder of a large family, patient, loving, and persuasive. Thus, too, does the divine demiourgos hold sway in the universe, persuading the unruly forces of the receptacle to submit willingly to order by holding before them the lure of the ideal.

In the final resort then, the ideal city is ruled without law, and Plato's pattern comes close to being one of philosophical anarchy. There are two marks of law, force and generality. We have already seen that the good state will dispense with the first, and we will now show how it will dispense with the second. Written laws—and, for that matter, custom too—are gross and simple, but human nature is complex and circumstances vary. Laws are massive formulations, collective regulations for everybody, but each citizen is different. Laws are fixed, but circumstances alter with times. Laws are rigid, unable to answer questions on specific matters. No intelligent doctor would prescribe the same diet for all people, no science would offer a single rule for all and for all times, yet that is precisely what law undertakes to do. Laws are rules of opinion, not of knowledge, and the ideal king of the ideal city decides each case according to its merits, unhampered by general rules. How, then, does the philosopher-king differ from the tyrant? Plato says that the best thing is not that the laws should be in power, but that the man who is wise and of kingly nature be a ruler (*Politicus* 294a). There is no merit in merely having laws, and the implication of the above passage seems to be that government should be by man, not by law. But there is an

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important difference. Both philosopher and tyrant rule without law, but whereas tyranny is personal government, according to desire and from ignorance, aristocracy is the rule of reason. For although the philosopher rules without law he nevertheless rules according to principle. Justice, temperance and the like are not uniform prescriptions but principles which vary in their application according to individual cases, just as the principles of diet, though fixed and objective, in their application entail different kinds of nourishment for different people. And this is the sketch of Plato's heavenly city—a society of free persons freely co-operating for the interests of the whole, unequal in rank and authority, but in which the kings rule according to impersonal and fixed standards and the subjects consent through persuasion.

Such a city exists only in heaven. On this earth, at present, there exist nowhere wise men, "except in small degree; wherefore we must choose what is second best, namely ordinance and law, which see and discern the general principle, but are unable to see every instance in detail" (*Laws* 875d). As the case stands, no king is produced by our states who is, like the ruler of the bees in their hives, pre-eminently fitted from the beginning in body and mind; no man is by nature both able to perceive the civic good, and perceiving it, is alike able and willing to enforce it. Thus, our states must become organized as *copies* of the ideal city, ordering themselves by written law and custom. Where knowledge fails, right opinion must take its place, and the experience crystallized in law is preferable to the uncertain reasoning of man as we find him. Thus, for the actual states in this life, Plato prescribes government by law, force, and custom. There are the two levels of good government; the first-best, which we may term philosophical anarchy, and the second-best, which is government by law (*Laws* 874d, *Politicus* 301a-e).

v

In summing up Plato's ideal of reason in the state, we note that he is against democracy conceived as the rule of freedom through absolute negation of standards, that he is against tyranny conceived as the rule of force, that, in eliminating the

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poets, he is against the rule of fanatical, ultimately ruthless passion, that he is against oligarchy conceived as the rule of wealth and selfish interest; and is in favor of the aristocratic state, conceived as a socialized, rationalized graded state, based on consent, in which the rulers are trustees of the public good. We will now consider the ideal of reason as an ideal for the individual.

In the first place, though we strive for the ideal we must not expect more than man is capable of. Men have definite limitations and the perfect philosopher is a rare growth among human beings. Even more, it is doubtful whether any man has the capacity to become a perfect philosopher in this life. In setting forth the ideal of reason, Plato is not constructing a practical program, but is depicting the ends which should guide such a construction. Yet we must not think of Plato as some Calvin before his time, preaching pre-destined damnation. If human nature is not wholly good neither is it wholly bad. It is true that Plato speaks of incurable wickedness, but he is speaking there as a doctor might of a patient whose disease had progressed to an extent which made cure hopeless. Men are not incurably bad (or good) *initially*; but they may so corrupt their souls in the course of time that the disease becomes ineradicable.

What is meant by reason? Certainly not just technical intellectual ability, quickness of grasp, tenacity of memory, cleverness, though these are parts of reason. Essentially reason is appreciation of values, the comprehension of the good. But neither does comprehension of values as such constitute wisdom. Rationality is a form of life, in which reason is harmoniously adjusted with the passions; it is the penetration of true belief into the whole of man; the application of knowledge to human nature whereby sound habits are formed.

(a) The good comprehended by reason is superpersonal; it is neither my good nor yours, but *the* good, and thus universal; and being universal, it includes your good and mine; reason aims both at public and at private good (*Timæus* 71a).

(b) The ideal of reason is one of wholeness. The philosopher is a total man combining the virtue of intelligence with those of magnanimity and temperance. Reason is comparable to a

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gardener tending his plants, cultivating the healthy ones and checking or destroying the weeds. In the philosophic life, appetites find their best fruition and truest pleasures. Appetites are hostile to each other; reason establishes friendship among them. Appetites are witless; reason guides them to their aim. Left to themselves, appetites would be destroyed; reason saves them. Thus, a philosopher is a man in whom the appetitive life is fuller than in a merely appetitive man. Reason then is not opposed to pleasure; in the rational man there is an excess of joy and a deficiency of pain (*Laws* 733a).

(c) The ideal of reason is that of a union of opposites. Laziness drives us to seek uniformity; but the ideal is richness of character through contrast. We should aim at the difficult task of achieving a combination in the same man of the intellectual type—quick, keen, enterprising—with the spirited type, which is steadfast and firm. Each requires each; the intellectual type is apt to be nervous and changeable; the soldierly type, sluggish and inert. We must combine firmness with adventurousness. On the one hand, we have the values of self-restraint, gentleness, and decorum; on the other the values of aggressiveness and energy. The former make for the kind of man who is retiring, minding his own business, and conservative. “We are always saying ‘How quiet!’ and ‘How restrained!’ when we are admiring the workings of the mind, and again we speak of actions as slow and gentle, of the voice as smooth and deep, and of every rhythmic motion and of music in general as having appropriate slowness; and we apply to them all the term which signifies, not courage, but decorum.”²

On the other hand, we admire the values of initiative, boldness and acuteness. By educating the guardians through both music and gymnastic, we should try to foster both kinds of value in our rulers. But we must take care to avoid excess in our emphasis whether on music or on gymnastics. Music may here be taken as equivalent to all cultural education. Too much music has the effect of softening the fiber, making the high-spirited man merely irritable, so that he is liable to be provoked by slight stimuli and to subside quickly. We have here

²*Politicus* 307a; cf. with Aristotle's portrait of the great-minded man.

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the portrait of the man, naturally of high spirits, who, because he is repressed, becomes peevish and childish. In the end, he loses his warlike quality, lapses into inertia, and becomes craven. Too much gymnastics has the contrary effect. It overstimulates high spirits, making man violent, brutish, graceless, turning him into a troublemaker who, in the end, destroys himself and his country. Perhaps Plato was thinking of Alcibiades in this connection. There is thus a polarity between opposites; gentleness isolated from its opposite, turns into sluggishness and stupidity; whereas boldness without its opposite turns into ruthlessness and frenzy. But, when joined, the two opposites have a moderating effect upon each other.

It should be noted that the virtue of courage includes fear along with bravery; it is the combination of the greatest fearlessness with the greatest fear. Courage is not to be confused with brazenness; that man is strong who knows what to fear. It is fear and shame which keep us from doing evil. A man should be at once confident in his fight against evil, and fearful of disgrace and cowardice. Plato does not regard fighting as something good in itself. Victory is not among the highest values; it is a necessary evil. Those who urge fighting evil as a worthwhile activity for its own sake are as foolish as the man who supposes that his body was best off when sick and purged by physic, while never giving thought to the condition of a body that is healthy and never needs any physic (*Laws* 629b). Wrath is appropriate toward men who are completely perverse; but it should be tempered with gentleness, because no man is voluntarily wicked.

Secondly, it may be remarked that courage is fundamentally a quality of the mind. The natural aggressiveness of beasts in the field is not courage, nor are head-strongness and rashness courage. Courage is rather the ability to use one's head in the presence of danger. Thus courage is the effectiveness of reason in action—especially action within the "inner city." Man is assailed by pain or the fear of it, but even more by the lure of pleasure and desire "with their dangerous enticements which melt men's hearts like wax—even men most respected in their own conceit" (*Laws* 633d). Courage is the self-maintenance

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of reason in the midst of appetite; it is the steady attachment to true belief in the face of fear and pleasure. Plato had seen too many young men, disciples of Socrates perhaps, who having been educated in philosophy, were tempted away from it by the lures of office and power.

(d) The ideal of reason is one of moderation. There should be proper symmetry between body and soul. Whenever an inferior and weak type of body is the vehicle of a soul that is strong, or whenever the converse is true, the result is anything but fair. "A body which is too long in the legs, or otherwise disproportioned owing to some excess, is not only ugly, but, when joint effort is required, it is also the source of much fatigue and many sprains and falls by reason of its clumsy motion, whereby it causes itself countless evils. So likewise we conceive of the compound of soul and body which we call the 'living creature.' Whenever the soul within it is stronger than the body and is in a very passionate state, it shakes up the whole body from within and fills it with maladies; and whenever the soul ardently pursues some study or investigation, it wastes the body; and again, when the soul engages, in public or in private, in teachings and battles of words carried on with controversy and contention, it makes the body inflamed and shakes it to pieces, and induces catarrhs; and thereby it deceives the majority of so-called physicians and makes them ascribe the malady to the wrong cause" (*Timæus* 87e). So, many ills of the body have the mind as their source and must be treated through the mind; also, the wise man cannot afford to neglect the care of his body if he is to remain wise, and Plato advises the mathematicians to take plenty of exercise (88c).

Then there is moderation within the soul, with reference to appetite. Reason neither gorges nor stints desire; so does the good city shun excess both in wealth and in poverty. The temperate life consists in the enjoyment of gentle, mild pleasures, and of desires without frenzy, whereas intemperance affords violent and maddening pleasures. Excessively intense pleasures are to be found only in diseased constitutions. In Plato we find the doctrine of the mean. The right is the fit, the timely, the just. Fitness is the mutual concrescence of a variety of par-

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ticular factors under the mode of harmony; it is a particular harmony of particular factors at a particular time and place.

In this connection, two points are worthy of special emphasis. Among the appetites, even the savage and lawless instincts must be somehow cherished, though this point is not wholly clear. Plato sometimes speaks of taming the primitive passions, sometimes of eliminating them, sometimes of indulging them in moderation. But in any case he does not regard them as a source of strength in human nature; they have to be cared for, if at all, because they are there. Secondly, there is no room for excess in Plato's scheme; and the reader may demur that no great civilization can be attained without excess. Is not moderation altogether a negative ideal? Yet we have already seen that decorum is only one half of a whole whose other half is enterprisingness. Above all, we must remind ourselves that Plato, in talking of mildness, gentleness and moderation, is referring to what is proper for the life of appetite. It is another story when we come to the life of contemplative reason, which Plato describes as a state of frenzy with its own rapture and ecstasy. There is the frenzy of appetite which is bad, and the frenzy of reason which is good. In the *Phædrus*, Plato not only propounds the doctrine of divine madness, but also propounds it in an inspired, frenzied fashion.

Several general considerations arise from our study of the ideal of reason in the life of the individual. The rational life is not the monastic life, though there is a monastic aspect to it, which later schools tended to emphasize exclusively. The philosopher should be self-sufficient but not separate. He does not live in detachment from affairs; he is a member of the organism of society, with a peculiar social function to perform. The question, however, remains whether the philosopher's concern with affairs arises from his philosophic nature, or merely from the external pressure of the social organism upon him. Plato says that the philosopher takes on public office unwillingly. But that is as it should be; if the rulers were lovers of rule, the city would be filled with rivalries and civil strife. Only when we prefer the other life do we rule this one well. The question is rather whether the philosopher enters the

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general *life* of the city willingly. We are told that he would prefer to stay outside the cave; but we are also told that all soul has the care of all that which is soulless. The soul is moved by a concern for other things;⁸ and there is something like a divine providence. Ultimately the question is why God enters the world and why he creates it, when he was complete in his isolation. God, having no jealousy, wants everything to be as good as possible; goodness imparts itself. God works upon the receptacle and co-operates with the wandering cause; and so, we might suppose, the philosopher who lives in the imitation of God abandons his isolation and participates in the activities of the world. God's concern with the primordial chaos, the philosopher's concern for the inchoate world of affairs, are both expressions of the aboriginal polarity between the ideal and the actual.

Reason has been wrongly construed as antithetical to desire. Reason is itself a desire. Plato says that desire is a stronger bond than compulsion in keeping a living being to one place, and suggests that the strongest desire of all is the love of the good (*Cratylus* 403c). Reason is the most powerful of desires, integrating the weaker ones. Upon appetite reason imposes measure, and by saving it from excess saves it from self-destruction. Upon appetite reason imposes unity, doing away with discord. Upon appetite reason imposes an order of rank, seeing that each appetite obtains its proper satisfaction in its proper place. The life of reason is of graded plenitude.

Reason does not "impose" anything upon desire. The mode in which reason functions is persuasion, and not coercion. There is the friendliness of reason with desire, a friendliness of unequals in which the higher principle governs, but a friendliness nevertheless whereby reason explains and justifies its point of view to desire, and whereby obedience is secured through the consent of the lower principle. Reason is a gentle force. But Plato does not believe that always all desires will consent to reason. Persuasion is to be used as far as possible; but when persuasion is impossible, reason must arm itself with force.

Reason and sophistry are utterly opposed to each other.

⁸See pp. 86 ff.

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Sophistry is disputation for the sake of victory and not of the truth; the sophist proves both sides of the question and thus proves nothing. Part of the decline of the faith in reason in the present day may be traced to the fact that the ordinary man, unable to distinguish sophistry from reason, blames the latter for the sins of the former, and gives up any hope of getting at the truth through rational processes. But man cannot live without conviction; and if he cannot secure it by the aid of reason, he will look elsewhere—to blind instinct perhaps, or to mysticism. Plato offers reason as a source of conviction. To those who object that reason sails without ever reaching port, Plato's answer would be that the intellectual voyage must be managed with a skill acquired from discipline and long years of training. We fail because we want quick results and will not submit to the rigors of discipline. The sophist makes the path to truth look easy, but the wise man knows that it is hard. The perception of absolute truth cannot be obtained at once, but only after a thorough examination of alternatives, of comparison of alternative with alternative, of transition from hypothesis to hypothesis, until the mind reaches the hypothesis that is true. But after deliberation there is decision; movement is followed by rest. There are those who would study one hypothesis after another, contemplating them all as equal possibilities, without ever making a choice. They derive an esthetic satisfaction from the mere entertainment of theories, much as a person would, visiting a gallery and moving from one picture to another. There is the sheer joy of intellectual pursuit. But the final end of inquiry is belief.

In the present day, reason is construed by many and has in fact operated as a disintegrating factor. The doctrine of the Reformation which affirms the right of private judgment has gradually changed into the view that each nation, each place, each epoch, each individual, have their private truths. The modern world is broken up into a multiplicity of sects. This is not reason but the chaos in the receptacle. For Plato, the good is super-individual and universal. By the free exercise of reason, individuals are led to a good which is the same for all and for all times; and the multitude of men is integrated into a

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universal community whose purpose lies beyond mere existence. Plato did not himself attain the vision of a universal community; he excluded the barbarians and included the slaves. Nevertheless, the ideal is implicit in his doctrine.

CHAPTER XIX

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THROUGHOUT the foregoing chapters we have tacitly assumed that Plato's primary preoccupation is with knowledge and that his philosophy is an objective outlook upon the world. But Plato is no less concerned with living; to know, but also to be—or rather to know in order to be. The investigation of the universe is an end in itself, and also a phase in the development of the man conducting the investigation. The inescapable fact for man is man himself and his function; how to realize that function, how to *be*, genuinely and fully, is his dominant concern. Reflection, whether upon nature or upon man, is one aspect of human functioning and also an enhancement of all human functionings. We are apt to think of philosophy as a separate intellectual pursuit whose specialty is universal problems. But for Plato a philosopher is a certain sort of man, who is recognized not so much from the topics he discusses as from the manner in which he discusses them: from his complete unaffectedness in discussion, his leisureliness in argument, the wholeheartedness of his attack, his respect for his opponent's point of view. It is not so much that he thinks about truth as that he *embodies* it and is honest through and through; not so much that he studies universals as that his personal attitude is tinged with universality and is untainted by pettiness. And philosophizing, as an intellectual activity, is an unfolding of the whole man. Only a sound man can have a sound philosophy; there must be a sympathy between the thinker and what he is thinking about. Thought issues from the man and also makes the man; philosophy is what a man does with himself. The duty of inquiry is a moral duty; I will do battle, says Socrates, for the view that inquiry after what we do not know will make us braver and better and less helpless than if we gave up all hope of discovering what we do not know (*Meno*, 86b, c).

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In a sense, we might even say that man as an actual entity sets the problem for thought. Consider the relation of Plato the thinker, to Socrates the man. Plato was a pupil of Socrates. As a young man, Plato had unthinkingly entered into the conventional pursuits of his class; Socrates pulled him out of the rut by directing him to philosophy and thus providing a conscious purpose for his life. To Plato, then, Socrates was more than a teacher; he was a noble friend, even a savior. Perhaps, Socrates in his early days had a similar feeling about Parmenides, for he called the latter "father." And indeed, in the dialogue by the same name, Parmenides' manner toward Socrates is gently paternal. "You are young," says Parmenides to Socrates—"and philosophy has not yet taken hold of you, as I think it will later. Then you will not despise mean and ugly things, but now you still are influenced by conventional attitudes, because of your youth." Parmenides himself did not despise youth; he urges his pupils to take part in the argument along with their elders because "the youngest is the most likely to utter what he thinks." And in his modesty, Parmenides begs to be excused from participating in the debate on account of his old age; yet, in the end, he yields in words so gracious that we must quote them in full. "I must perforce do as you ask," he says. "And yet I feel very much like the horse in the poem of Ibycus—an old race-horse who was entered for a chariot race and was trembling with fear of what was before him because he knew it by experience. . . . So I am filled by terror when I remember through what a fearful ocean of words I must swim, old man that I am. However, I will do it, for I must be obliging." When Socrates grew older, he felt compelled to oppose his "father's" philosophy, though it took courage to do so; but he continued to speak of him as one to be venerated and as awe-inspiring.¹

But at the moment we are concerned with the personal relationship of Plato to Socrates. In his own young life, Plato was

¹*Sophist* 242a; *Parmenides* 130c-e, 137a; *Theatetus* 183e. However, it is the Eleatic stranger in the *Sophist*, and not Socrates, who refers to Parmenides as his father.

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subjected to the tremendous impact of Socrates the man, Socrates a physical fact, a psychological fact, primarily a moral fact, both in his life and in his death. And Plato's entire philosophy may be construed as an effort to explain and justify Socrates the man. How is it possible for such a man to have come to such an end, what stupid forces in the universe there must be to thwart such a life, even more what limitless resources nature must contain to be able to bring forth such a man—these are some of the questions with which Plato's thought must have taken its start. It would not be straining the argument too much to think of Plato's doctrine of absolute values as an elucidation of the upright personality of Socrates, of the conception of the receptacle as brought in to account for the thwarting of these absolute values, of the idea of the *eros* as a generalized interpretation of Socrates' passionate devotion to ideals.

The most important question we can ask about a man is whether he be genuine or not. Is he authentic, does he ring true? The function of thought in life is to impart truth of character to man. Such terms as authentic, true, genuine, real, are not vaguely eloquent for Plato; they are definite and technical terms. Let us recall our discussion of images from a previous chapter.² Some images are likenesses and some are semblances. And so some people's lives are a sham, while others make of themselves true images. The philosopher hates the inner lie above everything else. The outer lie is the falsehood in words, arising out of the inner lie, and is not an altogether unmixed falsehood. But the inner is the veritable falsehood entering into the most vital parts of the soul; it consists of ignorance or rather the belief that we know when we do not. Self-deceit is the greatest of sins, and the man who accepts the inner lie wallows insensitively in the mud of ignorance like a pig (*Republic* 535e). The philosopher is characterized not only by inward candor but by reality as well; he is a true image of the really real. By consorting with true being he achieves a real life; he is sound, substantial and strong. Truth, by itself, is not enough. Your average man—take the democratic man as an example—is honest after his fashion; the trouble is that

²P. 204.

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what he imitates lacks substance; he reflects all the trivialities of his social environment. And yet, in the last resort, candor brings substance too. The democratic man lacks inner truth in the fundamental sense that he is deceived about his personal condition; remove conceit from a man and you have put him on the road to imitating realities instead of shadows.

Philosophy is the cleansing of the inner parts of the soul, the elimination of the inward lie, the achievement of genuineness in man. Thus, its object is moral, we might even say religious. Purification comes under the genus of division, which is the discrimination of species according to genera; but division, in its particular character as purification, is the effective separation of the good from the bad in man. Philosophy is the medicine of the soul, and words are its drugs. Now the treatment is not successful unless it reaches beyond the symptoms to the cause of the disease. That is the point at which parents so often go wrong; they press advice upon their children as if the symptoms could be removed while the disease remained; they even get angry with their children, as though wickedness were involuntary. "Just as physicians know that the body cannot derive benefit from any food offered to it until all obstructions are removed" so the wise man learns that the pupil cannot be benefited until the obstruction of ignorance has been removed. Ignorance is a unique condition in that the prisoner is the chief assistant in his own imprisonment; he remains in ignorance because he is the prisoner of desire—in this case of selfish conceit.

The nature of the disease prescribes the course of the treatment. Socrates' treatment was that of cross-examination, whereby he reduced a man to shame (*αἰσχύνη*). For Socrates, debate was of course an attempt to solve a problem, but even more, it was a way to bring a desired personal condition about. He went about button-holing people in the marketplace, while they were at work or at leisure, and putting questions to them. The trouble with these people was that, because they knew their jobs, they thought they were wise in all things. Socrates would open by humbly asking a simple question; the other person, flattered by Socrates' manner, would thereupon proceed

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to answer in a patronizing way and at some length. Soon Socrates would interrupt begging that a certain point in the answer be explained to him, while apologizing for his own stupidity at not understanding it. The other man, unaware of the traps laid all around him, would now rush headlong in his speech tripping himself over contradictions, until he found himself eventually lying flat on his back and begging for mercy. The effect of the Socratic irony upon his partners in discourse was devastating indeed. "I believe"—says one of them—"that you are extremely like the torpedo fish; for it benumbs any one who approaches and touches it, and you have done something of the sort to me now. For in truth I feel my soul and my tongue quite benumbed, and I am at a loss what answer to give you" (*Meno* 80a, b). Candor with oneself is based on humility, and before learning can begin, pride has to be crushed.

The method of the teacher is to array together the unorganized opinions of the mind, putting them side by side so that the person holding them may see how they contradict each other. Bring a man's intellectual sins to the foreground of his consciousness and you thereby cure him. The result is that now the man is no longer scornful of the others; he is angry with himself and gentle toward the public. The treatment he has received at once affords the greatest pleasure to the onlookers and the most enduring benefit to himself. It is understood, of course, that reduction to perplexity is ineffective unless we may presume in the man a desire to reach the truth (*Meno* 84c). Moreover, doubt is not enough. Along with doubt of oneself there must be a faith in the soundness of reason. There is a system of propositions which is true and sure and can be learned (*Phædo* 90c). Young men who are inexperienced in discussion are apt to accept a doctrine uncritically and then to reject it uncritically, too; this may happen again and again until they come to believe that there is nothing sound in any argument. They become misologists—haters of reason, holding that no truth is stable for any length of time. Their scepticism is founded on conceit; they think they know all about the limits of reason; and in their conceit, they blame the method of reasoning instead of being vexed with themselves, with their in-

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tellectual instability, their facile enthusiasms and disillusionments (*Phædo* 90b-91a).

It may be remarked that what the individual is undergoing during cross-examination is no less a personal than an intellectual experience. Intellectual inconsistency is a personal conflict; to resolve the contradiction is to establish a harmony in the soul. By cross-examination, we test both the truth and ourselves (*Protagoras* 348a). In the Socratic method we encounter a technique analogous to that of religious salvation; questioning results in a conviction of intellectual sin and learning is self-purification. Plato differs from Christianity by virtue of his emphasis on knowledge. Pride is pride of intellect; sin is ignorance; salvation is recollection.

Learning may also be described as a process of giving birth, with the teacher functioning as a midwife. A midwife is old and sterile; so is the teacher an old man, wise but sterile intellectually. The point of the analogy is that the teacher does not convey any knowledge to the student; the less he teaches the better a teacher he is. Socrates was a prophet with no message; he only stimulated the student to think for himself and to realize what was latent in his nature. Now, the prospective mother is often unaware that she is pregnant; the midwife diagnoses her pregnancy. So is a student often unaware that he has an idea; a good teacher calls his attention to the fact, rescuing the idea from the scrap-heap and restoring it to the student. After the delivery, the teacher turns critic. The greatest and noblest part of the midwife's function is to distinguish whether the mother's offspring is a wind-egg or a real child; the task of the teacher is to distinguish whether the ideas of the pupil are truths or *eidola*. Should the intellectual offspring come under the latter category, the teacher quietly puts them away. Of course, the student dislikes having his ideas demolished and sometimes bites or slaps the midwife; but the teacher is only performing his duty, which is to save what is true and destroy what is false (*Theætetus* 149b-151e).

The relation of teacher to student is of a personal nature. Unlike the orator, the philosopher addresses himself to a particular man and not to a crowd; also, he uses speech and dis-

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penses with books. Books are addressed to nobody in particular; they may be read by one who is unprepared for the truth as well as by one who is. Books do not select their readers and do not establish a contact of mind with mind. The question of prestige comes in; the reader does not consider whether the contents of the book are true but who the writer is and where he comes from. And if he fixes his attention on the contents, he finds, there, not thought but a caricature of it. Thought is movement, but books are quiescent; they are silent, unable to help themselves, and if reviled they need their fathers' help. "Writing, Phædrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say one and the same thing" (*Phædrus* 275d). Nothing that is written can be adequate to the thought it purports to express; therefore nothing that is written can be taken seriously. But writing is not for that reason to be abandoned. Books have their place as pastimes, "to treasure up reminders for oneself, when one comes to the forgetfulness of old age, and for others who follow the same path" (276d).

The true teacher selects his students carefully, teaching only those who are fitted to learn, weeding out those who are luxurious and incapable of enduring labor. He points out to the pupil "what the subject is as a whole, and what its character, and how many preliminary subjects it entails and how much labor" (*Epistles* 340c). The student should not undertake the study of philosophy unless he has been trained in the sciences and has received the necessary mental discipline. Even more, the student must have a personal affinity with philosophy; he must be of a fine nature, like his subject; for if his nature be bad, then nobody can make him see. Ability to think and memory are of no avail if the state of the mind is alien to the subject; for there is hardly a true doctrine which does not seem absurd to the vulgar (*Epistles* 344a, 314a). The tools of the teacher are *spoken* words, the "legitimate brothers of the bas-

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tard ones." They are able to defend themselves and their father, knowing to whom to speak and before whom to remain silent.

The relation of teacher to pupil is founded on friendship—it is a relation of lover to beloved. Conversation is engendered by love leading toward the betterment of the beloved. There must be a kinship of ideals between teacher and pupil. Every man has his own god whom he worships; the lover seeks a beloved whose nature accords with that of the god; and love is born out of the discovery of the reflection of the god in the beloved. Teaching is the effort of the lover to fashion the beloved into the image of the god; and influence is exerted by example as well as by words. The teacher leads the beloved to the nature of the god not only by means of persuasion but through the fact that he *imitates the god himself* (*Phædrus* 253b). The teacher not only gives; he also receives, in that he gains a clearer insight into the god by seeing his image in the pupil.

The direct contact of teacher with student through persuasion is an exhibition of the universal character of dynamic inter-relatedness among actual things. The teacher plants a seed in the soul of the pupil which grows and sustains itself, producing new seeds of its own for new soil. The pupil eventually becomes his own teacher, proceeding on his path unassisted; once mature, he too becomes a teacher of others. Thus, learning is a thing which reproduces itself forever, and sustains itself from generation to generation. Many students are only superficially tinged by belief, like men whose bodies are sunburnt on the surface (*Episiles* 340d); but what has been really learned becomes part of oneself. Memory is more than intellectual retention; "there is no fear lest any one should forget the truth if once he grasps it *with his soul*" (344e). The deficiencies of writing become once more apparent. I have heard, says Socrates, that at Naucratis of Egypt dwelt one of the ancient gods of the country, and his name was Theuth. He invented many things, but his greatest invention by far was that of letters. So he came to Thamus, the king of Egypt, with his invention urging that it be imparted to his subjects; and he said: "This invention will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their

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memories." But Thamus replied: "Most ingenious Theuth, you are very resourceful but you are a bad judge of the usefulness of your invention. It will produce less and not greater wisdom. The habit of writing will produce forgetfulness and people will cease using their memory. By trusting writing produced by characters *which are no part of themselves*, people will learn less. You have invented an elixir not of memory but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not wisdom itself, for they will read many things without instruction, and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant" (*Phædrus* 274c-275b).

"The unexamined life is not worth living." Man is a creature of habit, mirroring the codes and practices of his city; his values are not his own. By the process of self-examination, man sifts and tests these values, and then what he adopts is truly his possession. As a creature of habit, man is mechanized; as reflective he is self-moving. Reflection is self-searching and restlessness; it is the inner force of growth. Knowledge is not to be regarded as a separate mental state to be added alongside the other states of the soul; rather it is a *way* in which the soul possesses its states. Only after I have understood that I am and what I am can I say that I really am. Insight is a quality infused throughout all the mental states, activities and passions, heightening their tone and investing them with worth. "In man all other things depend upon the soul while the things of the soul herself depend upon wisdom, if they are to be good" (*Meno* 88e). The activities of the soul are mere brute facts which come alive and become significant only when infused with intelligence. By understanding my special aptitude—for example, my ability to play a particular musical instrument—by becoming conscious of the rules according to which I have been proceeding, and especially by seeing its ultimate purpose, I raise it to the human level and give it importance. That is true not only of our enterprises and undergoings but of our so-called goods as well. Goods, in themselves, have no value whatever; unless knowledge shows the way, we derive no advantage from the possession of such things as wealth, health or beauty. And if a man lack wisdom, the more he has of these and the more

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he does with them, the more unhappiness he stores for himself. By knowledge in this connection we mean knowledge not of how to acquire but of how to use. Should I acquire immortality without the knowledge of how to use it, I would be no better off than I was before. Now, the arts of acquisition are separate from the arts of use. The ability to make a harp does not entail the ability to play it; and the generals who have captured a city must turn it over to the politicians for exploitation. Yet the common arts of use supply only technique and no information about the uses of goods for the soul. Thus, wisdom is different from the knowledge of the crafts; it is knowledge of final value; and the wise being knows nothing about shoemaking or carpentry (*Euthedymus* 281a-292e). The outcome of our discussion is to show that wisdom is not merely the capacity to apprehend truth, but a quality pervading the whole personality as well.

Virtues are not things to be taken over from one person and given to another. Pericles gave his children an excellent training in the subjects for which he found professional teachers, but in those subjects of which he was a master, he neither trained them himself nor did he commit them to another's guidance; "and so they go about grazing at will like sacred oxen, on the chance of their picking up excellence here or there for themselves" (*Protagoras* 320a). Skills may be transmitted but virtue may not. Take Themistocles; "have you never heard how Themistocles had his son Cleophantus taught to be a good horseman? Why, he could keep his balance standing upright on horseback, and hurl the javelin while so standing, and perform many other wonderful feats in which his father had had him trained." And yet no one claims that the son had the same moral excellence as the father (*Meno* 93d). Now, the sophists arrogate to themselves the power of making others good; they offer to teach virtue for a fee. But we often hear of sophists who accuse their pupils of cheating them of their fees; and how absurd the sophists are in doing so. They demand the fee because they have made another man good; yet, since he cheats them, he has remained wicked, while having been made good. If a youth is taught running or riding by a trainer, we hope

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he will pay his trainer but it is not surprising if he does not. The skill of running fast does not bring with it the virtue of justice. But if a youth is taught justice by his teacher, then the teacher should have no fear of being treated unjustly by his pupil in return. The teaching of virtue is the only kind of service which makes the one served desire to give service in return. So if the sophists, teachers of virtue, accuse their pupils of cheating, they are disclosing themselves as failures in their job (*Gorgias* 519c-520e). Of course, the point that Plato is really making is that virtue is a personal trait which cannot be passed across the counter, so to speak, from salesman to consumer, and the sophists are therefore cheats themselves in professing to teach virtue.

The sophist is the foil to the philosopher, whose nature we will understand all the better by juxtaposing him with the sophist. Plato defines the sophist as an artist who produces in his own self the semblance of virtue, while knowing that he is a humbug. And as a teacher, he is further an artist at producing semblances of virtue in his pupils. But there is no meeting of minds between sophist and pupil; discussion is a combat in which the sophist fights all comers, resorting to all possible holds in order to down his opponent. He employs tricks, particularly the ambiguities of words, in order to trip up and overturn the others, very much like "those who slyly pull stools away from persons about to sit down, and then laugh when they see one sprawling on one's back." Both the sophist and the philosopher produce perplexity in the student, but the sophist will confute an argument if it be true as readily as if it be false. In the course of the discussion, the sophist is not averse to contradicting what he has said before in order to win his point; and if the listener protests, the sophist reproaches him for being such a dotard as to linger over the past. He is resourceful without scruple, "sending forth, like a Hydra, many heads of argument in place of each one that was cut off."

The sophist claims to be a *πάνσοφος*—an all-knower, offering to answer any question asked by any person on any subject. But, in reality, the sophist's skill consists in dodging issues. On being asked a question, he launches into a long harangue, beat-

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ing off the argument, laughing off the objections, going on at such length that by the time he has finished, the listeners have forgotten what the point to be answered was. Socrates implores Protagoras to be brief in his replies. "I am a forgetful kind of person, and if any one addresses me at any length, I forget the subject on which he is talking. If I were deaf, you would think fit to speak louder to me than to the rest; so please remember that I am forgetful and cut up your answers into shorter pieces" (*Protagoras* 334c, d). If the sophist is the interlocutor, he cannot even then refrain from haranguing. "Are you asking a question, or starting a speech?" Socrates plaintively remarks to the sophist, on one occasion (*Gorgias* 466b). But the sophist is obliged to resort to long speeches in order to cloak his ignorance. Like books, the orators are incapable of either answering or putting a question of their own; or they are like the poets who know not what they are saying. "If you question even a small point of what has been said, just as brazen vessels ring a long time after they have been struck and prolong the note unless you put your hand on them, so these orators, too, on being asked a little question, extend their speech over a full-length course" (*Protagoras* 329a).

The sophist resorts to spells and incantations by which to bewitch his audience. He is a magician in language, creating an atmosphere by his eloquence and hypnotizing the audience into agreement with him. But "if they (the sophists) are willing to stand their ground for a while and do not run away like cowards, . . . their rhetoric withers away, so that they seem no better than children" (*Theaetetus* 177b). Or the sophist resorts to a show of force. Thrasymachus is represented as "gathering himself like a wild beast and hurling himself upon us as if he would tear us to pieces." The sophist uses invective, and takes an objection as a personal affront motivated by jealousy. Lengthiness of speech, ridicule of the opponent, the art of the magician, violence—these are the methods of the sophist in argument. The root of the matter is that the sophist is concerned with himself, and self-display and conceit are his dominating motives. He is enclosed in himself, and has no personal relation to any one else. *At no point does he make any contact*

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with anything, whether with the point at issue or with the man raising the question. He does not converse; he makes orations. He is a monad, untouched by the dynamic interrelations of actual life. He addresses the multitude, not particular individuals. The external situation normally acts as a principle of control; and the sophist, deprived of this control, expands indefinitely, and arrogates to himself the rank of a god. So he spins out long speeches, letting out the sail before the breeze, with the result that "he escapes into the ocean of speech, leaving the land nowhere in sight" (*Protagoras* 338a).

Two kinds of villain appear on the stage of Plato's works, the tyrant and the sophist. In the obvious sense, the tyrant is the man of greater effectiveness; he is in supreme charge over the city, owning its citizens for his nefarious purposes, even hiring the sophists as his sycophants.⁸ But the sophist is in reality the one to be more feared; his power is over the inner city. The tyrant operates by the use of force; he is ferocious and brutal. The sophist is more subtle, insidious, and in the long run more effective; his weapons are words and he attacks characters and beliefs. The tyrant's rule is over the body, but the sophist's is over the soul. The sophist is the greater villain of the two.

While the sophist is an artist in semblances, the philosopher makes true images of the good out of himself and of the persons of his pupils. And by virtue of the fact that he contemplates the whole of time and the whole of essence, he has grandeur of mind. Knowing how small man is in relation to the universe, the philosopher is released from the fear of death. For his aim in life embraces something greater than living; his purpose is not to preserve himself in life as long as possible, but to pursue justice; and he regards living ill as worse than not living at all. Witness the bearing of Socrates in prison, where, on the very eve of death, he spent his remaining hours discoursing on immortality.

In speaking of the philosopher's grandeur of mind, we mean not merely an intellectual attitude but magnanimity of spirit. The philosopher respects his opponents and even their opinions,

⁸In *Phaedrus* 248e, the sophist is ranked higher than the tyrant.

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in so far as they are genuine. His outlook includes the whole of humanity, whose capacities, no matter how small, he regards it his task to bring to fruition. But his respect for persons is qualified by his respect for the truth; for truth is more to be honored than man (*Republic* 595c). In his activity as a teacher, the philosopher is without self-display. Glad to refute others when they are wrong, he is no less glad to be refuted if he be wrong. He does not force himself upon his listeners. "If any man, young or old, wishes to hear me speak, I do not object; I offer myself alike to rich or poor; I ask questions and whoever wishes may answer and hear what I say" (*Apology* 33a). He is completely unpretentious; and in questioning others, he is questioning himself. It is not because he is certain that he cross-examines others; he creates perplexities in the minds of his hearers because he, more than all, is perplexed. "It is for my own sake chiefly, that I ask questions," says Socrates; and his power upon others comes from the fact that both his doubts and beliefs are genuinely felt. Always he penetrates beneath appearances to the core.

The philosopher is characterized by intensity, ardor, zeal; he loves the truth with passion, pursuing the argument with a scent as keen as a Laconian hound's. Ordinarily, those men whose interests are universal are apt to spread themselves thin, while those who have intensity are liable to suffer from a limitation of outlook. The philosopher joins in his person intensity with magnanimity. Furthermore, people who are resolute in temper are often hardened in their convictions and lack the power of self-criticism. In Socrates we find both toughness of fiber and intellectual doubt, both breadth of outlook and vividness of personality. In Plato, on the other hand, intensity struggles with and sometimes overcomes the balanced quality of mind. Plato is apt to be possessed by the insights which he possesses; he is absorbed completely in the insight of the moment, and then completely forgets it just when another insight comes along to overwhelm him. There is coherence in Plato's works, but more insight than coherence.

Intensity is not to be confused with nervousness. In the philosopher there is no haste; he pursues the argument whither-

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soever it leads him in a leisurely manner, and with many digressions; but the worldly man must hurry in his business, else he will lose his profit. Haste is not simply a bodily habit; it is the manifestation of an intellectual outlook; it is the sign of a man's slavery to time and to the things of time. The worldly man becomes tense, stunted and bitter; the philosopher has inner repose, for time means nothing to him.

Inner truth, magnificence, passion, hardihood, repose—all these traits of the philosopher are a gift from the gods. The philosopher is not only an image of the gods; he is their companion. The philosopher is δαίμόνιος—demoniac, divinely possessed; there is something supernatural about him, bewitching, shocking, and magnetizing the people about him. Like the sophist, he, too, is a magician, but his magical power comes from different sources and is utilized for different ends. Thus the foundations of his character are religious. The philosopher is imbued with the consciousness of the divine; Socrates, as we know, heard a divine voice which commanded him what not to do. Not only is it true that the philosopher has an intellectual *apprehension* of the divine, but there is actual *communication* of divine energy, in turn transmitted by the philosopher to his public. The philosopher confronts the world with a transcendent spiritual authority; he is a force among men. It is true that from a superficial point of view, the philosopher is impotent in affairs; but in a real crisis he is undaunted. The environment is essentially indeterminate and wayward, and he cannot hope completely to bend it to his will. Nevertheless, he remains firm and undefeated.

For our portrait of the philosopher we will quote what the sophist says about him, what the philosopher, and lastly what one who is neither sophist nor philosopher but an unspoiled child of nature says about him. According to the sophist, the philosopher escapes into abstractions because he cannot deal with the realities of this world. The sophist believes that philosophy is a charming pastime for youth, but bound to ruin man if made into a life-long avocation. Philosophy is unworldliness and innocence; the philosopher knows nothing of making love, he is cheated in business transactions, and he is generally

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ignorant of the ways of the world and of whatever makes a thorough gentleman. The philosopher is a babe in arms, who would not know what to do if some one boxed him on the ear. "If any one should seize you," says Callicles addressing himself to Socrates, "and drag you off to prison accusing you of a wrong you have never done, you would be at a loss and without a word to say; and when you come up in court, though your accuser might be ever so paltry a rascal, you would have to die if he chose to demand death for your penalty" (*Gorgias* 485b-486d).

With some exaggeration we might say that Socrates answers by pleading guilty to the charges. The philosopher, he admits, is impractical, unskilled with his hands, incapable of even tying up his bed-clothes into a neat bundle. His clumsiness makes him the laughing-stock of the multitude, and he becomes all the more ridiculous because, in his innocence, he joins in their laughter at himself. He cannot follow what the public is saying. When they praise a nobleman for his seven wealthy ancestors, he is puzzled, reflecting that every man must have had countless ancestors, among them rich and poor, kings and slaves, barbarians and Greeks. Nor can he understand why some one owning ten thousand acres should be regarded as amazingly rich, accustomed as he is to thinking in terms of the whole earth of which the man's possessions are so small a part.

The philosopher is maladroit and, given the values of this world, he is clearly a fool. But if it be true that the values of the world are false, then the philosopher's folly is wisdom. Shrewdness is the outlook of a narrow man who, while intent on means, loses hold of the ends; the philosopher is unable to see what is close at hand because he contemplates the universal, roaming below the earth, or along its wide surfaces and even above the sky. The philosopher turns the tables on the sophist as soon as both are drawn to the investigation of universal matters. The philosopher knows his way about the universe, though he may lose his way in the streets; but the sophist wanders about aimlessly and becomes ridiculous once he is taken into the province of abstract things. Then his sharp, pettifogging mind gets dizzy from the new experience of being suspended at such a height;

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and now it is the sophist who is clumsy, innocent, and incompetent (*Theætetus* 172c-176a).

We must treat with some reserve the picture which Socrates paints of the philosopher. The world is devious and deceitful; and in order to emphasize the philosopher's forthrightness, Socrates represents him as unworldly. But there is a right way of dealing with the world, which is not shrewdness; there is practical wisdom which is the application of principles to particular facts. The philosopher is versed in both worlds: the greater, and the smaller too. In fact, the quality of the philosopher, like that of God, is that he cares for the least as well as for the greatest, that he is at home both with the noble and with the common things. Socrates, the philosopher, intent on universal things, was nonetheless fully aware of his place in and his duties to the city which his body inhabited. He was a law-abiding citizen. He had made a contract with the city in which he had promised obedience to its laws in return for the security which the city offered. This contract he was determined to execute no matter what the laws of the state; and he refused to violate his contract even when he had to pay for compliance with his life.

We will now consider the picture of the philosopher as painted by Alcibiades, the natural man, the man of action, the child of impulse. Alcibiades is unreflective and internally uncoordinated, impetuous and quick-tempered, amorous and fond of his wine. Utterly the creature of impulse, he is drawn to the philosopher, the image of reason. Alcibiades is conscious of the mysterious attraction of Socrates; he adores him and yet is afraid of him. But of one thing he is quite sure—that Socrates is right. The confrontation of Alcibiades with Socrates in the last part of the *Symposium* is one of the most vivid pieces of writing in the whole Platonic literature. Socrates had been spending the evening at a banquet with his friends; Alcibiades breaks into this scene accompanied with a boisterous crowd. He is drunk and is crowned with a wreath of ivy and violets; upon seeing Socrates he is taken aback, not having expected to find him there. After some banter, he launches into a rambling, incoherent, but nevertheless honest, and revealing harangue.

This man, Socrates, is a mystery to me, says Alcibiades in so

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many words, and his hold on me is a mystery too. Of all men, he alone can make me feel ashamed. I wish he would vanish from the world; and yet, should this befall, I would be more distressed than any one else. His words, like a snake, bite me to the very heart. There he is—my conscience from which I would like to run away, and yet without which I would not know what to do. Others ravish the crowd with tunes and with musical instruments; Socrates ravishes me with words of simple prose. His speech is crude; he talks of pack-asses, smiths, cobblers, and tanners. And yet when I hear him I become worse than a maniac. I have listened to Pericles and to many other famous orators, but their eloquent speeches are nothing to his common words. "My heart leaps and tears run out of my eyes at the sound of his speech; and I see great numbers of other people having the same experience."

He is really a hypocrite, appearing other than he is. [Note the similarity to the sophist.] He is like the ugly statues of Silenus, which when their two halves are open are found to contain images of the gods. He too is homely looking (you cannot deny that, Socrates) and his speech is common. But one day I caught him in a serious moment and saw the images inside; they were golden and divine, perfectly fair and wondrous. His speeches seem so foolish "but when they are opened and you obtain a fresh view of them by getting inside, first of all, you will discover that they are the only speeches with any sense in them, and secondly, that none are so divine, so rich in images of virtue." One feels the quality of divinity in this man.

You would be surprised to find what a man of action, what a brave soldier this garrulous philosopher is. During the campaigns he surpassed all of us in the capacity to endure hardships; whenever the army was cut off, compelled to go without food, he was far ahead of us in endurance. In one of the battles, the troops retreated in utter disorder. I was mounted but Socrates was not; yet there he stepped along just as if he were in the streets of Athens, calmly looking at friend and foe alike, and giving everybody to understand that if he were attacked, he would give a stout defence of himself. Yet even during the campaigns he indulged in his queer tantrums and trances. One day

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he got immersed in some problem at dawn and stood at the same spot considering it; finding it difficult to solve, he stood there trying. As the time drew on to midday, the troops began to notice. Toward evening, some of them, after they had supper, brought out their mattresses and rugs and took their sleep in the cool, waiting to see if he would go on standing all night as well. True enough he stood till dawn came and the sun rose; then he walked away, after offering a prayer to the sun.

No, I cannot make this man out—homely and yet beautiful; his nonsense is full of sense; a mystic who talks coherently; a philosopher but also a fine soldier; mingling with men and yet somehow apart from us all. Though disinclined to drink, if overruled, he can outdrink us all; and most surprising of all, no man has ever yet seen Socrates drunk.

And in fact, Plato recounts how after Alcibiades had finished his speech the party went on far into the night. Some left while others went on drinking and talking. This combination of high thinking with high drinking continued until only a few remained awake, drinking out of a large vessel, and arguing. The talk was about the drama, with Socrates insisting that the same man could write both tragedy and comedy well. The others listened feebly and then began to nod, until they all fell asleep. "When Socrates had seen them comfortable, he rose and went away . . . ; on arriving at the Lyceum, he washed himself, and then spent the day in his ordinary fashion; and so, when the day was done, he went home for the evening and reposed" (*Symposium* 212d-223d).

Alcibiades, in his very incoherence, manages to convey the complexity of the philosopher's nature: his common humanity, his extraordinary divinity, his strength and his genuineness. It would be wrong to regard the episode of the entry of Alcibiades into the banquet-scene as a digression introduced in order to afford relief. In fact, the episode continues the argument; what had been first exhibited in speech is now displayed in action. The topic of the *Symposium* is the nature of love; and the conclusion is reached that the *eros* is an intermediary between the mortal and the immortal, interpreting gods and men to each other. By the dramatic episode which follows the argument,

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Plato exhibits the *eros* in actual operation, as the love of Alcibiades, earthly and inarticulate, for Socrates, the philosopher concerned with eternal things; and as the love of Socrates for Alcibiades.

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