

THE FORMS, THE FORM OF THE GOOD,
AND THE DESIRE FOR GOOD,
IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

I. INTRODUCTION: THE PARADEIGMATIST,
SELF-PREDICTIONAL VIEW OF THE FORMS

It can be very tempting indeed to suppose that Plato, in the *Republic*, wanted us to see the Form of the Good

a) as an awe-inspiring object of metaphysical grandeur and indeed perfection, by contrast with the imperfect, ever-changing objects we encounter in the perceptible world;

b) as an object in another world beyond this world—where we do well to escape from this world in order to consort as far as possible with entities in a better world beyond it;¹

c) as an object to aspire to, and imitate;

d) as an object that draws us from our petty selfish concerns for our own good, to the apprehension of it as not just a transcendent good, but also as a good which is not good for me, good for you, or good for the state, but *just* good—that is,

– *perfectly* good (not just deficiently good by being *approximately* good),

– *absolutely* good (not just deficiently good by being *relationally* good, i.e., good in relation to one thing, not in relation to another, good in some circumstances, not good in others),

and even

– *impersonally* good (not just good for me, good for you, good for another);

and, what is more,

– *eternally* good (not just deficiently good by being only sometimes good).

Following this tempting line of thought, one may go on to ask: Are such suppositions not of a piece with the high-flown Analogy of the Sun, where Plato has Socrates argue that

in just the way in which

e1) the Sun in the perceptible world both gives to perceptibles the

[epistemological] power to be seen, and also gives them the [physical] power of coming-to-be, growing, and being nourished, though the Sun is not [itself] becoming;

so too,

e2) the Good, in the world of things that are known (the world of Forms), both gives to things known (the Forms) the (epistemological) power to be known, and also the (metaphysical) power of existence and being (*to einai te kai tēn ousian*), though the good is not [itself] being, but something that is beyond being (*epekeina tēs ousias*) in dignity and power.

As Jerry Santas observes,² we tend to agree when Glaucon, highly amused (*mala geloiōs*) responds, “By Apollo, that’s a heck of a hyperbole!” (*daimonias huperbolēs*). In particular, the breathtaking suggestion that the Form of the Good is the cause both of the knowledge of the other Forms and of their existence, and that it is “beyond being” does seem to be just what one would expect of a Form of the Good that is itself perfectly good (the best of all goods), impersonally good, and non-relationally good—a Form floating free in metaphysical space.

Now I have no problem with attributing to Plato the references to being awe-inspiring, to perfection by contrast with the imperfection of the sensibles, to aspiration and imitation, to drawing us away from petty, selfish concerns, or even to the Form of the Good as being the cause both of the other Forms *being known* as well as of their *existing*, while perceptibles are all in one way or other deficient.³ On the other hand, some of the claims made above, especially those under (d)—though they are only small transformations of what Plato actually says about deficiency of perceptibles relative to the Forms—seem to me to get quite the wrong end of the stick about Platonic metaphysics. I am thinking here particularly of the claims to the effect that the Form of the Good is itself perfectly good, impersonally good, and non-relationally good. These claims belong to a view of all of the Forms—not just the Form of the Good—which I shall call the “Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational” (PSP) View of the Forms. This view has been espoused by many of our best workers in Plato exegesis over the past fifty years or so—all inspired in one degree or other by the work of Gregory Vlastos and G.E.L. Owen. The view has also led, in the first generation after Vlastos and Owen (Irwin, White, Cooper, Annas), to a remarkable and original suggestion (some of it perhaps inspired by the writings of Rawls) as to how we are to understand the desire for good in Platonic ethics, once the Form has been assigned the character of an absolute (perfect, non-relational, impersonal) good.

On this Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View (PSP) of the Forms, the Form of the Good is itself the perfect sample—and in that way “paradigm”⁴—of goodness, being itself perfectly good (self-predication), while sensible good things are only deficiently good (that is, merely approximately, relationally, or non-eternally good).⁵ By the same token, the Forms of Beauty, Equality,

Largeness, Likeness, Thickness, and so forth, are the perfect examples of beauty, equality, largeness, likeness, thickness, and so forth—beauty being perfectly beautiful, Largeness perfectly large, and so forth—while perceptible examples of beauty, equality, largeness, likeness, thickness, and so forth, are merely approximately or relationally or merely temporarily beautiful, equal, large, like, thick, and so forth.⁶

The talk of self-*predication*, when we say that Beauty is perfectly beautiful, Largeness perfectly large, and so forth, brings out the importance of the modern notion of predication that is central to the PSP View of the Form. This modern notion is descended from a simplification of the Aristotelian notion of predication that we find in virtually all of Aristotle's works—one exception being the assertoric syllogistic of the *Prior Analytics*. (The modern notion obliterates, in its base logic, the distinction between the only two kinds of predication in most of Aristotle's works, namely, the mutually exclusive kinds *accidental predication* and *essential predication*—though in modern extensions of the base logic, as in modal logic, something like this distinction is recoverable.) The way in which this modern notion of predication—and its logically more basic cousin, the notion of membership in the set which is the extension of the predicate—is used in interpreting Plato should already make us a little suspicious if we have any suspicions of this modern notion. And I do. In its simplest form, the modern notion of predication has it that in any application of any well-formed predicate to a name, there is a property predicated of the subject named (or an extension of the predicate of which extension the subject named is a member), so that there is a property (or a set) corresponding to each well-formed grammatical predicate. As is well known, this assumption leads directly to the Russell paradox (notoriously so for sets, but just as surely for properties). Of the ways of avoiding the Russell paradox, only those of the intuitionists have a philosophical motivation—but at the cost of making every property whatever be constructed at a certain point in time.⁷ This constructivism is obviously entirely unsatisfactory for giving an account of the views of Plato on Forms and of Aristotle on universals. Other ways of avoiding the paradoxes are all more or less ad hoc. Hence, we moderns should be suspicious indeed of a theory of what *Plato* says that is negotiated by means of a theory of predication that is (a) not in *Plato*, and (b) only saved from paradox by more or less ad hoc maneuvers.⁸ By contrast, we shall see that the view of the Forms I propose makes no use of the modern notion of predication—leaving unspecified (in strictly Platonic fashion: cf *Phaedo* 100d4-8, cf *Parmenides* 134e9-135c2) what exactly the relation is between the references of subjects and the references of predicates. (This is if there *are* such references in a particular case. Thus “is a bar-

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barian” corresponds to no kind according to *Statesman* 262c ff, as “non-being” and “not beautiful” are shown to correspond to no kind in the *Sophist*. [So much for the generation of “all Boolean combinations,” Plato would surely say, in the implicitly constructivist methodology so distinctive of the allegedly classical—and supposedly *non*-constructivist—persona presented by modern classical logic and modern philosophy generally.]

To me, this Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational theory is a metaphysical disaster, and should be attributed to Plato only as a last resort.⁹ How could largeness be perfectly or non-relationally large, or length be perfectly or non-relationally long without itself being a spatial object (which I suppose no Form could be)?

II. A SUPPOSED ETHICAL ADVANTAGE TO THE PARADEIGMATIST, SELF-PREDICATIONAL VIEW

But some of the most impressive of the proponents of PSP are not deterred. For there is an ethical payoff. The Form of the Good being absolutely good, according to PSP—and therefore not

good for me,
good for you, or
good for the state, or
in any way relationally good

—assures (contrary to my n. 3 above) that when we come to understand the *Republic*’s rational desires for the good in the Rational part of our soul, *that* desire for good will not be—what it has seemed to some (including Irwin and myself) to be in the Socratic parts of the stylometrically early Platonic dialogues—a desire for the agent’s *own* good. Rather, the *Republic*’s desire for good will be (or allow for) a desire for a purely formal (impersonal—or, as modern interpreters like to say, agent-neutral) good—a desire for the good *period*. So too, if the *Republic* were to speak of a desire for happiness, or a desire for benefit, that would not, by this account, be desire for *one’s own* happiness or *one’s own* benefit, but rather desire for an impersonal happiness or perhaps a happiness without any reference to people at all (and an impersonal benefit that is of no benefit to any person). The ethics of the *Republic* is thus made safe for morality.

In sum, the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View makes of the Forms

(a) a metaphysically extravagant, and probably absurd, theory of how it is that all Forms are perfect and all perceptibles deficient,¹⁰

which theory nevertheless

(b) saves the *Republic* from its apparent—one might even say blatantly obvious—recommendation of justice simply by way of appeal to the agent’s self-interest.

It saves us from essential reference to self-interest, by giving us, as the goal Plato recommends to us, an utterly *impersonal* (or *general* or *impartial*) good. (Irwin

300, with 388, n. 3, interestingly cites the kind of contrast employed by Morris 1933, 138, to the effect that “the philosopher is moved by the knowledge of the Idea of the good, not by desire for his own good”—desire of his own good being what Irwin, like myself, attributes to Socrates.)

Thus the high price of absurdity for the metaphysics of the Forms turns out to be worth paying for those who are hostile to even a larger self-interest as a basis for ethics.¹¹ Ethical victory has been snatched from the jaws of metaphysical defeat.

In Irwin’s version of the ethics of the *Republic*, this impersonal good contains morality (= justice as construed by Irwin) as a “component” or “part” of a certain supposed true happiness. This supposed true happiness I myself refuse to call happiness, though I would allow its proponents to call it “morality-happiness.” As I see this morality-happiness which Irwin employs, it has morality (= justice as construed by Irwin) built into the very meaning of happiness.¹² This general sort of approach to the Form of the Good in the *Republic*, wresting the good away from the agent’s own good to an impersonal good, is in some ways put even more strongly in other impressive writers of the 1970s and 1980s, such as Cooper, White, and Annas, who do not attempt Irwin’s doubtful compromise with Eudaemonism, but rather have Plato rejecting Eudaemonism altogether, at least in significant parts of the *Republic*.¹³

III. AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF THE FORMS, AND A NATURALIST VIEW OF ETHICS

I shall pit against this Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View of the Forms (PSP) with its moralizing reading of Platonic good, a quite different suggestion as to what the Forms are that I shall call the “Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature” View of the Forms (ANLN). This alternative view of the Forms is described and briefly argued for in the section after next. This view also gives a different ethical reading of the *Republic*. For this reading takes at face value the *Republic*’s claim that justice makes each of us happier, and sees no reason for denying that for Plato in the *Republic*, as for Socrates, the good person is the person good at getting his or her own happiness. No morality over and above the search for one’s own happiness. And no deployment of the intrinsic vs instrumental distinction.

It might be thought, in support of the presence of an “intrinsic” good in Plato’s dialogues—even the Socratic parts of the stylometrically early dialogues—that even Socrates uses the expression “good in itself,” e.g., at *Euthydemus* 281d4-5, and that talk of what is “good in itself” suggests the “intrinsically good”, which in turn suggests the *moral* good. But since how it is that health and wealth are *not* good in themselves is because they are *not always* good

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(but only good when wisely used), it is surely likely that the way in which wisdom is good in itself in the *Euthydemus* must be by *its* being *always* good. It is, after all, offered (278e3-279a5) as good only as a means to happiness—hence certainly not as what modern philosophers would call an “intrinsic good,”—where happiness is presumably also always good. It is true that Socrates says that wisdom is the only thing good in itself, so that it might seem that he could not also say that happiness is good in itself. But the answer to this surely lies within the context: Wisdom is being said to be the only good whose relation to happiness is that it *always* contributes to happiness. It is the only *means* to the happiness that is, itself, in this way “good in itself,” i.e., always good, always desired. It is surely altogether too strenuous to try to get some sort of “intrinsic” or *moral* good out of these references to being good in itself.¹⁴

The rest of the paper, then, is devoted to the two themes announced above: first, the nature of the Forms, and in particular the question of what exactly the deficiency is that each of the sensibles has by comparison with a relevant Form; and, second, the question (to which I have been suggesting the nature of the Forms and of deficiency is closely connected) whether, if

1. desire for the real good is desire for the agent’s own real good in Socrates—my desire being for my own real good, your desire being for your own real good, and so forth—

then (as is maintained by the second generation Vlastos/Owen approach)

- 2a. the Platonic pursuit of the good is rather a desire for a certain impersonal good, not too distant from a purely moral good (as per the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View),

or whether (as I shall maintain)

- 2b. the Platonic pursuit of the real good (the Form of the Good) is *also* the desire for the agent’s own good—my desire for my own good, yours for your own good, and so forth (as per the Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature view).

As Richard Kraut’s response at St. Louis showed me, I cannot hope in a single paper to demonstrate conclusively to devotees of the PSP View the superiority of the ANLN View over the PSP View as a reading of the *Republic*. Nor can I show—after decades of sheer assertion of the contrary, even despite Prichard’s well-founded worries—that Plato, in the *Republic*, really did think the good person to be the person who (by virtue of a certain well-adjusted psychic state which makes possible the knowledge of where his or her real good resides), is good at *getting* his or her own good, by such means as Justice, Temperance, Courage, and above all the Wisdom those other virtues enable. Nonetheless, I hope I can at least present a clear alternative, a few bits of evidence, and some indications of other sorts of evidence that can also be developed to the credit of the ANLN View over the PSP View.¹⁵

IV. FIRST THEME: AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF FORMS— THE ANTI-NOMINALIST, LAWS-OF-NATURE VIEW

I have sketched above how on the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View of the Forms, the Forms of Good, Beauty, Largeness, and the like are themselves taken to be respectively perfectly and self-predicatively good, beautiful, and large. This also makes it clear how it is that Forms are “looked to” by people in this world who seek perfect examples of goodness, beauty, and largeness for them to “imitate.” And it also makes clear, in the fact that these Forms are “never changing”, that they are “be-ers” and not “becomers.”

I shall take it that most readers of the great commentators of the past fifty years or so (commentators such as Vlastos, Owen, Irwin, White, Cooper, Annas, Malcolm, and Santas) are already sufficiently familiar with the way in which Platonic texts are read to yield these results—with beauty and largeness being perfectly predicated of Beauty and Largeness, but only deficiently predicated of beautiful and large things. (In an appendix below, I give an illustration of how one text, *Symposium* 210-212, is read so as to yield the Paradeigmatist Self-Predicational View.)

If this is right, then what I need to do now is to explain what sort of account of the Platonic Forms we find in the Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature View, and how on that view the notions of deficiency, perfection and imitation work. I shall illustrate this view by means of three principal passages, along with several others which I will treat in less detail.

In my *Ascent from Nominalism: Some Existence Arguments in Plato's Middle Dialogues* (1987), I suggested that if you want to know what Plato's Forms are, you should look at how Plato argues for them. In that book, I suggested that we can see Plato making his way into the Theory of Forms by two different routes—first, via the probably Pythagorean-inspired notion of recollection from a previous life, and, second, via the Socratic-inspired notion of finding objective entities of a sort that would ensure the objectivity Socrates attributed to genuine sciences—as opposed to such pseudo-sciences (as we would call them) as rhetoric à la Gorgias, literary interpretation à la Ion, the science of exploiting others as per Thrasymachus' first (positivistic) shot at characterizing justice as the interest of the stronger, and perhaps also sophistic à la Protagoras (if the attack on this sophistic in the *Theaetetus* owes anything to the Socratic concern with the objectivity of the sciences). This belief in the objectivity of the sciences is, of all Socratic beliefs, one of the most fundamental.¹⁶ In the present treatment, I shall largely ignore all considerations of “recollection,” which I regard as indefensible and fortunately not much pursued after the *Phaedo* (bar the mythical parts of the

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Phaedrus). I shall concentrate upon those arguments that seek to establish the Forms as objectively existing abstract objects that, by their existence, will underwrite the fundamental Socratic belief in the objectivity of the sciences. These arguments, I shall say, all in one way or other fall under what Aristotle (according to Alexander) spoke of as Plato's "Arguments from the Sciences."

If we look at the Forms argued for in this way, I claim, we get what I have been calling an "Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature" view of the Forms. Consider the following (I hope sufficiently harmless) simplification of the way in which Alexander (*In Met.* 79.3-80.7) reports Aristotle's account of what Aristotle calls Plato's "Argument from the Sciences":

Take the [nominalist] position that all there is to health and sickness is perceptible healthy and sick people, perceptible healthy and sick events, conditions, and so forth. Then there would be no point in coming to Madison from Manitowoc to study medicine in order to return to practice medicine in Manitowoc. For then all one would be studying in Madison is the healthy and sick people, events, and conditions of Madison, where the whole point of one's study was to be able to deal with the healthy and sick people, events, and conditions of Manitowoc. So one would have studied the wrong thing. But if, contrary to nominalism, there were more to health and sickness than just these healthy and sick people, events, and conditions—say, something in common to the healthy people (etc.) in Madison and the healthy people (etc.) of Manitowoc—then there might be a point to coming to Madison to study medicine to practice in Manitowoc. But such a common element is not identifiable either with some or all of the many healthy people, events, and conditions, which are all quite particular. So there is *more to* health than just healthy people, events, conditions, and the like. Call that something more (which Plato and Aristotle both suppose, without argument, was not made up by us, but discovered by us)¹⁷ the Form of Health.

This an anti-nominalist argument because it shows that the attempt to reduce health to simply healthy individuals, states, conditions, and so forth *fails* when we try to say the things we want to say about the study of medicine.

Notice that this establishing that there are antecedently existing entities, merely by showing the failure of what we nowadays call nominalism to explain what we want to say about the science of medicine, is completely endorsed by Aristotle (79.17-18)—at least if we are to trust Alexander's report. Aristotle's only objection (79.18-20) is that the antecedently existing entity we discover to exist in this argument cannot be so much as a Form. It can only be a universal. (In the terminology of the *Posterior Analytics* I.11, the something in question can't be a universal *para* the particulars—which would make something be simultaneously an attribute and a thing, a *such* and a *this*—it can only be a universal *kata* or *epi* the particulars—which allows the universal to be a mere *such*. I shall not here discuss

Aristotle's distinction between *this-es* and *such-es*—a distinction I have elsewhere argued is deeply flawed.)¹⁸

From this argument we should hardly expect what the Paradeigmatist Self-Predicational View invites us to find in a Form of Health—that it is a sublimely healthy object (no doubt with tremendous aerobic capacity). We should only expect the Form of Health to be the sort of objective object of study for doctors which underwrites the existence of an objective science such as medicine.

The Argument from the Sciences introduces the suggestion that Plato establishes the existence of the Forms “anti-nominalistically.” What about my reference to laws of nature?

Think of the laws of physics as connecting various quantitative attributes by various functional relationships, usually of a mathematical nature, as in differential equations concerning such quantitative attributes as mass, distance, and the like with respect to time. A simplified version of such laws, easier to co-ordinate with ancient thinking about what *we* call “laws of nature”, might employ the slightly anti-empiricist notion of “necessary connection” that we find in Hume. This would speak of pairs of attributes related via constant conjunction (e.g. “Man is mortal”, connecting the attribute of being a human being with the attribute of being mortal, telling us that wherever the first attribute is instantiated, the second is as well). The idea is anti-empiricist, of course, because, as Donald Davidson has pointed out, individual events cannot be constantly conjoined since each of them occurs only once. Hence it is only *kinds* that can be constantly conjoined. The Forms are then just such attributes or kinds. (I prefer the expression “real natures” to the expressions “attributes,” “kinds,” or “universals,” since the latter expressions may suggest entities [“*such-es*”] of a different logical type from individuals.)

My suggestion is, then, that a modern way of seeing how Plato thought of the Form of Health that underwrites the science of medicine is to think of it as the sort of real nature that is constantly conjoined with other real natures in Laws of Nature. Such real natures give us the structures in terms of which perceptibles behave in the ways they do in the perceptible world. There are not two worlds, the world of perceptibles and a separate world of Forms, but at best two sub-worlds of a single world. Better still, just a single world with a single structure—the structure moderns will tend to describe in terms of laws of nature, while Plato will speak in terms of Forms. The non-structural elements, including spatio-temporal individuals (organisms, artifacts, events) are the things that “become” (*gignomena*), while the structural elements—which are, of course, not themselves spatio-temporally located—are what Aristotle calls universals, and Plato calls Forms or “beings” (*onta*). The picture of Plato's Forms that I am suggesting here in

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terms of Forms and perceptibles differs only in mode of presentation from the modern picture in terms of laws and initial conditions. The Forms give the structure of the universe by standing in the kind of relation Hume expressed in terms of “constant conjunction.” It goes without saying that any turning from “the world of becoming” to “the world of being” is not, on this view, an escape from one world to another world beyond this world. It is rather an analogue to the turning of one’s attention-to-this-world from an attention to the initial conditions, or boundary conditions, of this world to the changeless laws of nature that structure this world.

V. ILLUSTRATION: A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PLATONIST WHO (IN EFFECT) ALSO EMBRACES SOMETHING LIKE THE ANTI-NOMINALIST, LAWS-OF-NATURE VIEW OF THE FORMS

That this picture of Forms as abstract structures explaining the way the perceptible world behaves indeed represents a Platonic way of thinking of the Forms is strikingly illustrated by the use to which the Forms are put by the seventeenth century Cambridge Platonist, Ralph Cudworth, one of the most insightful of all Platonists after Plato, in his wonderful refutation—derived from deep reflection on such dialogues as the *Euthyphro* and the *Theaetetus*—of the conventionalist position on moral obligations to political authorities or to keeping contracts which Cudworth understood Hobbes to be holding in the *Leviathan*.¹⁹ Cudworth argues as follows:

...[M]oral good and evil, just and unjust, honest and dishonest (if they be not mere names without any signification, or names for nothing else, but willed and commanded, but have a reality in respect of the persons obliged to do and avoid them), cannot possibly be arbitrary things, made by will without nature; because it is universally true, that things are what they are, not by will but by nature. As for example, things are white by whiteness, and black by blackness, triangular by triangularity, and round by rotundity, like by likeness, and equal by equality,²⁰ that is, by such certain natures of their own. Neither can Omnipotence itself (to speak with reverence) by mere will make a thing white or black without whiteness or blackness; that is without such certain natures, whether we consider them as qualities in the object without us according to the Peripatetical philosophy, or as certain dispositions of parts in respect of magnitude, figure, site, and motion, which beget those sensations or phantasms of white and black in us. Or, to instance in geometrical figures, Omnipotence itself cannot by mere will make a body triangular, without having the nature of a triangle in it; that is, without having three angles equal to two right ones,... *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, Bk. I, ch. ii, sec. i, para. 1.

The point here is that while God himself can make anything he likes triangular (whether it be originally square, round, or of whatever shape), what he cannot do

is to make a body triangular without having its internal angles add up to two right angles. (While he can make something triangular which was originally rectangular, he cannot make it triangular while keeping its internal angles adding up to four right angles.) That is to say that what God himself cannot do is *violate a geometrical law*. He cannot do anything that violates the constant conjunction between the following two real natures: the real nature of triangularity and the real nature *having one's internal angles add up to two right angles*. (Even more surprisingly, when we come to whiteness and blackness, we find that God cannot violate laws of physics.)²¹ The pay-off for moral philosophy here—quite different from the sort of moral pay-off we see in the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational view of the Forms—comes when Cudworth goes on to argue, in effect, that God himself cannot violate certain laws of morality. While God can put anyone he likes in political authority, or make any human action be a promise, what he cannot do is put some person in political authority in a political community without that making that person's commands impose an obligation to obedience on the community; nor can he make any human action a promise without also making that action impose an obligation to obedience on the promisor. So the Forms here give us laws of obligation (a) for political authority and (b) for promising. These are laws connecting (a) the nature of authority with the nature of obedience, and (b) the nature of promising with the nature of performing—laws of obligation to which God himself must conform (I.ii.2-4). (Cudworth of course held that such real natures are really *part* of God: I.ii.5.) Such obligatoriness, Cudworth is saying, you *cannot* have without such real natures as that of political authority and promising. If you want there to be obligations to keep promises, you will have to grant the existence of such eternal and immutable real natures, along with the corresponding laws.

The idea here, I am maintaining, is pretty close to being exactly what Plato has in mind with his Forms: real natures that give the structure in accordance with which perceptible things behave—as with the real nature of health which is what doctors study.

The point is *not* that the real nature of promising is itself a perfect promise.

VI. THE REPUBLIC'S ARGUMENT AGAINST THE LOVERS OF SIGHTS AND SOUNDS AS ALSO SUPPORTING THE ANTI-NOMINALIST, LAWS-OF-NATURE VIEW OF THE FORMS

The treatment of the Argument from the Sciences in sec. IV above shows, I think, how both Plato and Aristotle saw the failure of what we nowadays call “nominalism” to account for the objectivity of the sciences. It also shows how

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both Plato and Aristotle inferred the existence of abstract objects to be the objects of the sciences that underwrite that objectivity. (The only difference between them is that Plato thought the additional abstract objects were *this*-es—since he thought that anything that existed at all was a *this*²²—while Aristotle thought the additional abstract objects were *such*-es.) The treatment also suggests that the belief in such objects is akin to the need, in Humean accounts of what we call natural necessity (or laws of nature) for abstract objects that are constantly conjoined in those laws. (Once more, these abstract objects constantly conjoined will be attributes at most for Aristotle or for reluctant Humeans, real natures for Plato.)

These suggestions can be confirmed from other passages which also deserve the appellation “anti-nominalist.” For example consider the justly celebrated—and much misread—passage at the end of Book V of the *Republic* (475e-480b), in which Plato has Socrates tell us what we should say to that good fellow,

who holds that there is no beautiful itself, no Idea of beauty which is eternally the same (*aei men kata t’auta hōsautōs echousan*), but does believe in (*nomizeî*) the many beautifuls [or does believe that the beautiful is many]—that sight-lover [that we have been speaking of: 476a9-d6] who will in no way tolerate it if someone says that the beautiful, the just, and so forth are [each] one (478e7-479a5).

Who is this sight-lover?

3. The sight-lover is the “dreamer” who (476c2-4) “believes in beautiful things, but neither believes in beauty, nor is able to follow if someone [tries to] lead him to the knowledge of it.”

We now discover (c4-7) that

4a. *dreaming*, whether one is awake or asleep, is holding that what is merely like something [else], is *not* like it, but rather *is* [*sc.* is identical with] the thing it is like

The dreamer says to himself if ‘ $a = b$ ’; in fact, $a \neq b$, a merely resembles b

—as when one supposes that one’s dream-experience *is* [*sc.* is identical with] an experience of falling off the cliff *when it is merely LIKE an experience of falling off the cliff*. (The gloss of the two occurrences of the emphasized “is” in the preceding sentence as *is identical with* is assured by the presence of a singular term on either side of the “is.”) Thus, we have that

4b. dreaming is holding that $a = b$, when the truth is that a merely resembles b .

Substituting in the values of “ a ” and “ b ” that are obvious from the context, we get that

5. The sight-lover (the lover of sights and sounds)²³ holds that the many beautiful sights and sounds are *identical* with beauty, when they are merely *like* beauty.

Plato contrasts with the lovers of sights and sounds the true philosopher, who is awake, and whose state of waking amounts to this:

6. the true philosopher holds that there is a beautiful itself and is able to see both it and the things that partake in it, and neither holds that the things that so partake are [identical with] *it*, nor that *it* is [identical with] the things that partake. (c9-d3)

Thus we have here, quite unequivocally, that

7. To be a lover of sights and sounds is to believe the many beautiful sights and sounds are identical with beauty itself, while to be a true philosopher is to believe that the many beautiful sights and sounds are *not* identical with beauty itself.

I have argued elsewhere that the only reasonable reading of (7) is that

8. to deny the existence of Forms is to identify beauty itself with the many beautiful sights and sounds—that is, to say that *all there is* to this so-called beauty of which Plato is always talking, is the many beautiful sights and sounds (nominalism)—while to affirm the existence of the Form of beauty is to deny the nominalistic reduction that says that all there is to beauty is the many beautiful sights and sounds.²⁴

On this reading, we get the following very important conclusion:

9. the believer in Forms and the nominalist lover of sights and sounds are identifiable by their different answers to the question “What is beauty?”—the one in giving a nominalist reduction of beauty to mere beautiful particular sights and sounds,²⁵ the other identifying it as something existing additionally to the many beautiful sights and sounds.²⁶

This is of course exactly parallel to the conclusion we got from the Argument from the Sciences. Notice: so far *absolutely nothing about predication*. The issue is entirely one of answering the question

Q1. What is beauty?

The issue is not, as it must be (and is) on readings of the sort given by proponents of the paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View to this passage, answering the question

Q2. What things are beautiful?²⁷

Connected with this last point is the following: that the contrast between knowledge and belief (not *true* belief, by the way, though that is sometimes read into this passage—just belief) at 476d5-478e6 is *not*

A. a contrast between *knowing that a is F*, and *believing that a is F*—which makes the objects of knowledge propositional truths and indeed *predications*, and makes the contrast between knowing and believing a contrast between answers to the question “What things are beautiful?”—but rather

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B. a contrast between conflicting answers to the question “What is beauty?”—the contrast between dreamers and wakers (476d5-6 with c2-d4).

The object of the knowledge (as to what beauty is) which the wakers have, is the Form. The object of mere belief (as to what beauty is) which the dreamers have is the many beautiful sights and sounds. By contrast, if the objects of belief had been such objects as *that a is F*, as they are on the PSP View, we would have to have made the distinction between true belief and false belief. But this Plato does not do.

Let us now draw together some of what we learn from this passage. The question, “What shall we say to this good fellow?” is the question “What shall we say to non-believers in the Forms?” And the answer is that since there is more to beauty than just beautiful sights and sounds (and what that something is exists antecedently to our thought about it), we may infer that there are Forms. The Forms are precisely the abstract objects that are the objects of the objective sciences which Socrates thought it so important to mark off from such pseudo-sciences as Gorgias’ rhetoric, Ion’s science of interpreting Homer, Thrasymachus’ first (positivistic) study of getting the better of others, and Protagoras’ sophistic.

VII. FURTHER SUPPORT FOR THE ANTI-NOMINALIST LAWS-OF-NATURE CONCEPTION IN THE PICTURE OF PERCEPTION THE NOMINALIST IN THE REPUBLIC’S FINGER PASSAGE

Consider now the epistemological passage which has led many a proponent of the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View to speak of perceptible things being both thick and thin, whereas Thickness itself is perfectly thick—as though the question in this passage were “What things are thick?”

The passage says that for purposes of drawing the soul away from [the world of] becoming to [the world of] being, some perceptibles do not invite thought to inquiry, since they are sufficiently well judged by perception, while other perceptibles positively command us to inquiry, since perception reveals nothing sound about them (523a10-b4). Those which do not invite us to inquiry are those that don’t simultaneously [while being one thing] pass into the opposite perception, e.g., fingers; while those which *do* simultaneously pass into the opposite do invite us to inquiry, since perception no more exhibits [the thing in question] than it does its opposite (b9-c6). A finger is always the same [always *a finger*, always has the nature of a finger], whichever of the four it is in the hand, whether it is black or white, large or small, thick or thin. Sight never indicates to thought that a given finger is no more a finger than not a finger, and so does not awaken thought to inquiry (c11-e1). Sight grasps sufficiently what is before it when it sees *a finger*. But sight does *not* see sufficiently the largeness or smallness of a finger, nor does touch feel sufficiently the softness or hardness of a finger regardless of what other

fingers it stands beside. The ring finger being (a) hard by comparison with one finger, and (b) soft by comparison with another finger, perception of the ring finger announces to the soul that (a) the hard and (b) the soft are the same thing. Such [an identifying of the hard with the soft] must bring the soul to reflection—must bring the soul to ask “What in the world is the hard?” and “What in the world is the soft?”

Now this passage has been taken, by predication-obsessed proponents of the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View to say that

*P1. No perceptible is anything but imperfectly hard (or soft); only the Form of Hardness is perfectly hard, and only the Form of Softness perfectly soft,

and also that

*P2. There is no Form of the Finger, while there are Forms of opposites such as Hard and Soft, Large and Soft.

The claim (*P1) acts as if the question being asked by the passage were

Q2a. What things are hard? (What things are fingers?)

with the answer being that perceptible hard things are both hard and soft and so imperfectly soft, and the Form of Hardness is perfectly hard. But in fact Plato makes it abundantly clear—no fewer than four times in this short passage—that the question to which Forms and perceptibles provide rival answers is rather the question

Qf. What is hardness? (What is a finger?)

First, at 523c11-e1, discussed just above, Plato has Socrates say that it doesn't matter where a finger appears, in the middle of the hand, or at either end, or whether it is black or white, large or small, thick or thin: in all these cases the soul of the many is never led to ask

Qf1. what in the world is a finger?

Second, after Plato has Socrates examine the parallel question of perception judging the hardness and softness of these fingers, he says that in this case, the soul is driven to perplexity (*aporein*) as to

Qf2. what in the world is perception signifying the hard to be?

at least given that perception signifies the hard also to be soft; and, third, the same for

Qf3. what are the light and the heavy?

if perception signifies that the heavy is light and the light heavy (524a6-10). [This is where the soul first wonders whether the hard and the soft could simply be one; or whether, after all, they *are* two entities completely separated from each other in thought. As far as perception is concerned, the heavy and the light are not perceived in separation but as something all confused together (*sugkechumenon ti*),

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while thought with its clarity, is led to see large and small as distinct and not at all confused together, the one the opposite to the other. (See n. 26 above: the “Forms of opposites” *are* the opposites.)] Fourth, Plato has Socrates say that, whereas with the perceptions that indicate sufficiently the one [viz., the one thing in question: in this case, *what the finger is*], the soul is not dragged towards being, when we turn to those things where one thing is seen as its own opposite, so that it appears no more the one [thing] than its opposite, the soul that is trying to judge this will be forced to perplexity and to the search for

Qf4. what in the world is this one itself? (524d9-525a2),

that is, the one thing, largeness itself, the one thing smallness itself, and so on. Thus sight makes the same thing to be simultaneously one and infinitely many in number.

Incidentally, the point of speaking of the one itself in the present passage, as in (Qf4), instead of speaking of the large itself or the thick itself, is of course to *segue* into the slightly different discussion, at 525a3-526c7, of mathematical numbers (Forms of numbers, the nature of the mathematical unit within a number). It is equally plain that this passage on the numbers is equally concerned not with such questions as “What things are one?” or with the Form of One being itself one (though in this case it happens to be), but with perceptible magnitudes being inadequate entities with which to identify numbers and mathematical units (the inadequacy of nominalism).

All of the above is clear if

10a. Perception is a sort of nominalist whose answers to the questions “What is largeness?”, “What is smallness?”, “what is thickness?”, “what is thinness?”, “what is heaviness?”, “What is lightness?”, and “What is the [number] one?”, can only be, respectively, large perceptibles, small perceptibles, thick perceptibles, thin perceptibles, heavy perceptibles, light perceptibles, and single perceptibles, answers which can only confuse the opposites all together—even though Perception’s answer to such questions as “What is a finger?” is “adequate.” For perception there is nothing more to [that one topic of discussion] largeness than the many large perceptibles (which are also, in a slightly different context, many small perceptibles).

By contrast,

10b. Thought, once aroused, is the Platonist who sees that there is more to largeness than just large perceptibles, and more to smallness than small perceptibles; and that largeness and smallness are each one, and together two—by being two opposites.

The idea that one might somehow get out of this passage, as Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicationists do, the claim that largeness is itself a perfectly large object, or thickness a perfectly thick object, surely cannot be made out.

Incidentally, as to the claim that we often find in proponents of the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View, the present passage is often taken to say that

*P2. there is no Form of the Finger.

This seems to me indefensible. The question “What in the world is a finger?” is just as good a question deserving of an objective answer as the question “What in the world is largeness?” There is no reason to deny that there is a Form of Finger, even though we get an “adequate” conception of what that Form is just by way of perception. If there were no Form of the Finger, there would surely be no Form of the Bed in *Republic X*, and no Form of the Shuttle in the *Cratylus*. Attempts to blink these Forms seem to me counsels of desperation. If such artifacts as the bed and the shuttle have quite specific functions which are correlated with the kind of artifact in question, why wouldn’t natural functional organs such as eyes, ears, and fingers not also have real natures constantly conjoined with those functions?²⁸

There are many more passages supporting this Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature conception of the Forms that I would like to have introduced here. But tight publication deadlines make this impossible. I note, however, that these passages include *Phaedo* 74a9-c5 (another identity denied between a Form and the many perceptibles); *Parmenides* 128e-129e (no surprise if likes are unlikes, but it would be surprising if likeness were unlikeness [as it *would* be on the nominalist view of so-called Forms]); a whole series of arguments in the *Sophist* (e.g., 243d-e, 244b-d, 246e-247b, 247de, 251dff), strongly suggestive of the Quinean notion of ontological commitment, though without the “opacity” of that notion; and above all the three weighty Sun, Line, and Cave passages from the *Republic*. The Sun passage is discussed in a little detail in sec. XI below, where I argue that it too is anti-nominalist in purport. The Line and The Cave can also, I believe, be shown very clearly to be anti-nominalist in character. But showing this would in any case have taken an entire paper. Such a paper is on my current agenda.

VIII. SECOND THEME: THE [SINGLE] UNIVERSAL (OR REAL NATURE), GOOD, AT WHICH ALL THINGS AIM IN ARISTOTLE AND PLATO

My strategy here is to show how such claims as the Socratic claim (*Gorgias* 466a-468e, *Meno* 77a-78a, *Lysis* 216c-221d) that

11. All desire productive of voluntary action is desire for the real good,
or the Platonic claim (*Republic* 505d10-506a2) that

12. All deliberated (non-akratic) desire productive of voluntary action is
desire for the real good,
or the Aristotelian claim (*Nicomachean Ethics* I.1-2, 7) that

13. All non-akratic, non-akolastic desire productive of voluntary action
is desire for the real good

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have something to say both about

(A1) each particular voluntary action one does as a result of such desires for the good,

together with

(A2) each particular resulting states of affairs to which the actions are means,

and also about

(B) the real nature of the good quite generally.

Since my account will seem rather implausible to many, I will need to take a little time to introduce the idea.

I begin with the point that Socrates makes at *Meno* 78b4-6, that

11a. Good people do not differ from bad people in what they desire, since all desire [one and the same thing], the good.

The good, here—which I shall understand as the *human* good—is what Aristotle would call a “universal.” (Since I have metaphysical objections to Aristotle’s universals, as opposed to real natures or Forms, I shall use the word in quotes to indicate a term that is for the moment to be taken as neutral between Platonic Forms or real natures, and Aristotelian universals.) The “universal” in question has the following structure (whether or not people who use the word realize it—and most will not):

14. (a) when particular actions are good,²⁹ this is because there is a particular end (particular situation, condition, product, further action) which gives us what is *good* about the action, and to which the action is a means; where
- (b) that particular end (that particular good) may itself be a means to a further end; in which case
- (c) the further end is better than the original end, and than the original action; hence also,
- (d) if the above account is perfectly general for all agents, then any particular subordinate or superordinate good is an instance of the “universal” *good*³⁰—that one thing which every agent desires in every action (1094a1-3);
- (e) if there is some “final” particular end, an end not itself desired for the sake of a further end, and for the sake of which all *other* ends of the agent’s actions are means, and which is what is (ultimately) desired in *all* this agent’s actions, then that is the agent’s *best* end, and his or her particular final good; and finally
- (f) the particular final good which every agent ultimately seeks in all of his or her actions (in my case one good life, in your case another) is an instance of the “universal” *the final good*, which everyone ultimately desires.

(I derive this account of the structure of the good from the hierarchical account of desire for the good which we find in many Socratic places, e.g., *Gorgias* 466a-

468e, *Meno* 77a-78b, *Lysis* 216c-221d, *Euthydemus* 278e-282d, *Protagoras* 354e-357e, as also—in slightly more systematic form, and extended to the political good—in the first two chapters of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. I leave aside here the political good which Aristotle adds to these Socratic considerations. I am not saying that every use of “good” in a Socratic or Aristotelian argument makes explicit reference to this entire structure, since plainly in some places the philosophers in question are trying to convince others of such added structure. I am just saying that this is the conclusion that both Socrates and Aristotle want to argue for.)

The “universal” *the good*, having been in this way introduced into considerations of the good desired in every voluntary action (or every deliberated or every non-akratic, non-akolastic action), I shall say that in a particular voluntary action of the appropriate sort that we undertake, we desire both a particular good (and even many particular goods superordinate to the action) and a universal good.³¹ This gets us the following, as it were, law of nature,

15. (A) The real nature of desire productive of the appropriate sort of voluntary action is constantly conjoined with the real nature of the good, so that (B) whatever partakes in the real nature of such desire also partakes in the real nature of good.

Clause (A) refers to the universal *good*, clause (B) to particular goods. Thus there are two kinds of objects of desire in every case of an appropriate desire: the particular action, or particular resulting situations, and the “universal” good which is also the object desired in the case of all other appropriate actions. That is,

- 16a. in every action, the agent desires [to do] (a1) the quite particular voluntary action, and desires to do so because he or she desires [to get] (a2) at least one further quite particular further end;

and, in addition,

- 16b. the agent desires that real good which everyone else, in all of their particular voluntary actions, desires.

Not to see that both of (16a) and (16b) are true is not to see that there is, as it were, a law of nature constantly conjoining the real nature of the appropriate desire with the real nature of the good, and that it is by virtue of that, as it were, law of nature, that, in a particular case, a particular agent desires to do the particular action in question and to get the particular further goods in question.

The situation here, in which desire is both for particular goods and for a “universal” good that everyone else also desires is parallel to the following more trivial-looking situation, in which

- 17a. everyone in this room owns a TV set (I own mine, you own your larger one, James owns his, and so forth—perhaps a different one in each case)

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generates the further conclusion that

17b. there is something everyone in this room owns—a *TV set*,
i.e.,

17c. everyone in this room owns something everyone else in the room
owns, a *TV set*.

Here, once more, a *TV set* in (17b) and (17c) is a universal.³² I am myself prepared to infer, without there being any ambiguity in the word “owns,” that

17d. there are two things James owns—a TV set all his own, and what
everyone else in the room also owns—a *TV set*.

Thus we have that

18. what it is for everyone in the room to own a TV set
= for me to own my TV set, for you to own your larger TV set, for
James to own his TV set—perhaps a different one in each case
= for there to be something we all own, a *TV set*.

Applying this suggestion to desire for the good as it shows up in the Socratic, Platonic, and Aristotelian formulations above, we get, without any ambiguity in “aim at,” or “good,”

19. what it is for every appropriate particular action to aim at the good
= for me to aim at my own particular good, you at your own
particular good, James at his own particular good—perhaps
different particular goods in each case.³³
= for all of us to aim at the same good, the “universal” the good.

I am now in a position to bring out a little more clearly my thesis about the Form of the Good. I want to argue, in connection with the Platonic thesis that

12. All deliberated (non-akratic) desire productive of voluntary action is
desire for the real good,

that

20. the “universal” good, which we can now see (12) tells us we all aim at
= the Form of the Good,

with the result that

21. the Form of the Good is the good we desire in *this* world, not some
object in a world beyond this world here from which we are trying
to escape.

In the next section I look briefly at three important passages in Aristotle which I believe suggest that Aristotle himself saw the universals *aim at* and *wanting* (*boulēsis*) as constantly conjoined with the *good* in something like what we call a “law of nature;” and that Aristotle himself thought of what Plato was doing with the Forms as the same as what he was doing with his own universals, *mutatis mutandis*. In the section after next, I try to show briefly that several other very important passages in Plato support the view that Aristotle has it right, and that Plato uses the Form of the Good in much the way, *mutatis mutandis*, that Aristotle used his universals, to explain voluntary actions by something like a law of nature.

IX. THREE ARISTOTELIAN PASSAGES SUGGESTIVE OF A CONSTANT CONJUNCTION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSALS *WANTING* AND *GOOD*

In the first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says that since every art and every inquiry, and every [rational] action and choice is thought to aim at some good [presumably a different one in each case], the good [now a single thing] has been rightly declared (*kalōs apephēnanto*) to be that at which all things aim. Modern interpreters have almost always taken this good at which all things aim, being singular, to be the supreme good at which everything is thought to aim. This would be the good for the sake of which we seek victory in war, victory being that for the sake of which we seek generalship, generalship being that for the sake of which we seek the science of horse-riding, the science of horse-riding being that for the sake of which we seek the science of bridle-making, and so forth. This identification of “the good at which all things aim” as the supreme architectonic good cannot, however, be right. For the latter architectonic good does not appear till the first sentence of the following chapter, after such chains as that from bridle-making to horse-riding to generalship, and so forth have been introduced—later in the chapter than this first sentence which we are currently interpreting. No, the good at which all things aim, is the “universal” good, as in (21) above, and in clause (d) of (14) above—and again, compare the universal *a TV set* in (17b). Thus my suggestion here is that the way this first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics* goes is to begin with the idea of every individual action aiming at some good or end (possibly different in each case) to which the action is a means. From that Aristotle infers that there is something *being a good* or *being an end* which every individual action has (in the way in which there is something, *a TV set* which everyone in the room owns) or to which the action is means.

To confirm that this reading of the opening sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is correct, consider the two sentences that follow immediately after in this opening chapter:

But a certain difference appears among ends, since some are activities (*energeiai*), while others are products (*erga*) beyond the activities. And where there are ends beyond the actions, the products are by nature better than the activities.

Once you have the universal *being a good*, or *being an end* from “that at which all things aim” in the second clause of the first sentence, you can make the point that sometimes what is *an end* itself leads to another end beyond it, in which case the higher end is *better than* the former. Thus the universal *the good* has been further described by showing us one particular way to get *better than* from *good*. This

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prepares the way for the next sentences of the chapter, which show how these sequences of means to further ends can extend all the way up, possibly to a single supreme end, broached at the beginning of the next chapter—which end will be not just better than all ends lower than it in the architectonic, but the best. The result is that the good sought in a rational life plan (in a non-akratic, non-akolastic action) is—or might well be—articulated into an architectonic, with a single good, the best thing, at the apex of this architectonic. (Thus the account of *good* and of *better than* has now been elaborated to show the possibility of *best*, which will then become the basis on which all other goods are desired when they are desired.)

But within these first chapters, the single good we get at the beginning of the second chapter is not the good at which the first sentence says every action aims. In the *beginning sentence*, no architectonic has yet been built, let alone a step from good to better to best.³⁴

Thus the opening chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics* establishes, in effect, a constant conjunction between, on the one hand the kinds (universals) *art*, *inquiry*, *action*, and *choice* and, on the other hand, the kind (the universal) *good*. Once more we have the kind of analogue to a law of nature that I have been attributing to Socrates and Plato:

22. The universals *art*, *inquiry*, *action* and *choice* (at any rate within contexts of deliberation) are constantly conjoined with the universal *good*.

To repeat a point made above, to say that

23a. My action here aims at the good, and so does your action there,
is not to deny that

- 23b. I will have aimed at *my good* in my circumstances, and you at *your good* in your circumstances, those being, as a matter of course, different things.

(23b) is what it is for each to aim at the same thing, the good. (That is, each aims and his or her own good.) We might have given (23b) a preface making this explicit, as in

- 23c. as a consequence of the law, in (22) and (23a), that, in the case of each action, conjoins the nature of desire with the nature of good, I will have aimed at *my good* in my circumstances, and you at *your good* in your circumstances, those being, as a matter of course, different things.

The result is that while

24. it is the “universal” good at which it is said that every action aims, nevertheless, what that says is that I aim at my good, you aim at your good, and a third person aims at that third person’s good.

To think otherwise is, in my opinion, not to understand how the “universals” in laws of nature work, nor is to understand the structure of the good laid out in (14)

above, involving both particular goods and the universal good.³⁵

A second passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics* confirms this account of the opening sentence. In III.4, Aristotle is considering the question whether *wanting* (*boulēsis*: rational desire) is for the good or for the apparent good. We need not concern ourselves overly with the details of the passage. The upshot is that, because some people wrongly want some things, we have to admit that it is not the case that all wanting is of the good; we can only say that all wanting is of the apparent good. That is, in our present terms,

25. the universals *wanting* and the *good* are not constantly conjoined, though the universals *wanting* and the *apparent good* in fact are constantly conjoined.³⁶

The only difference with our reading (in the preceding section) of the opening sentence of the *Nic. Eth.* is that here Aristotle is speaking to *all* rational wanting (including that of the *akolastos*), not just to that rational wanting that goes into a life plan. Otherwise the claims are the same, and involve the same constant conjunction of Aristotelian universals.

“Very well,” it might be conceded, “perhaps Aristotle’s universal generalizations are structurally similar or even identical with Humean constant conjunctions. But where do you get off suggesting that anything like that applies to Plato?”

The concession is just what I need to show that if Aristotle’s universal generalizations as to *wanting* and *the good* (or the *apparent good*) give us something like the constant conjunctions of laws of nature, then, *even for Aristotle*, so will Plato’s accounts of *wanting* and *the good*—as they might show up, say, in answers to the question, “What in the world is *wanting*?”

This claim is made firm not only by the way in which Aristotle represents the parallel between his own treatment of the universal health and Plato’s treatment of the Form of Health in the Arguments from the Sciences already discussed above—there is no difference whatever between the anti-nominalisms of Aristotle and Plato, in which health is taken to be the abstract object underwriting the objectivity of the science of medicine—but also by an all too seldom discussed passage at *Topics* VI.8.136b36-147a11.

Here Aristotle is offering advice as to how to refute believers in the Theory of Forms. For this passage shows Aristotle employing exactly the kind of one-to-one correspondence between his universals and Plato’s Forms that I have been promoting—each being the kind of entities that for their author could function in statements of constant conjunction. Aristotle’s brief argument may be paraphrased as follows. “Ask the Platonists to define *wanting* (*boulēsis*). What you’ll find is that they’ll have to specify what the *object* of wanting is. And now you

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have them. For what that *object* of wanting will have to be is *the good*. That's of course false, because when unwise people want things, what they want is what is merely the *apparent* good, and not the real good at all."

Now one might wonder why Platonists cannot refer to the apparent good. Aristotle's answer is that *for Platonists there is no Form of the apparent anything, let alone a Form of the apparent good*.

"Well, so what?" one might wonder. "Why does Plato's thinking there is no *Form* of the apparent good stop him from talking of the object of wanting as the apparent good?"

This last question is one to which there is no good answer on the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View. For proponents of that view, what people desire in this world is totally different from what there is in the world of Forms beyond.

But there is a perfectly good answer from the point of view of proponents of the Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature View. This is that for Aristotle, as we have already said,

25. the universals *wanting* and *the good* are not constantly conjoined, though the universals *wanting* and the *apparent good* in fact are constantly conjoined;

so that if Platonists wanted to speak of a constant conjunction between *wanting* and the *apparent good*, just *that* would be sufficient to commit them to the existence of a Form of the Apparent Good. But that is just what the Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature View predicts. In other words, the position attributed by Aristotle to Plato in this passage is that

26. the Form of the Good is the object of *wanting*, so that the Form of *wanting* is constantly conjoined with the Form of the Good.

I conclude that Aristotle would agree that the Form of the Good is, for Plato, just the "universal" *good* connected to the "universal" *wanting* in a fundamental law of psychology—a law concerning *all* voluntary action in Socrates, and all rational actions in Plato. But in either case, just a "universal." Not some sublimed super-object in another world.

But let us turn now to some passages in the *Republic*, beginning with the central passage of the *Republic* concerning desire for the Form of the Good.

X. THE FORM OF THE GOOD IN THE *REPUBLIC*

In *Republic* VI, 503e1-509c4, arguably the coping-stone of Plato's account of justice, Plato takes up the point he noted earlier, that since Book IV's parts-of-the-soul account of justice will not attain any considerable accuracy, a longer and broader road or circuit will be necessary (IV.435c9-d9 with VI.504a4-d3). In the present section, I shall select a number of lessons I think we can learn from the exploration, in this passage, of the longer road. I shall not attempt to discuss the

passage exhaustively. The longer road in question seems to be identified with bringing ourselves to grasp the *megiston mathēma*, the greatest thing to be learned. What that “greatest thing to be learned” turns out to be is what we must learn if we are to get a more correct grasp on what Wisdom, Courage, Moderation, and Justice are. And what that turns out to be is the Form of the Good (504a2ff, esp. d4-5, e4-6, 505a2), that being also what the guardians of the ideal state must know (505e4-506a2, 506a4, a8-c1). Here already is the *first* lesson of this passage. This is that if the Form of the Good has to be the good that the guardians know, we can see fairly clearly in what way the account of justice in Book IV is inadequate. By that account, justice is a psychological harmony between the parts of the soul, in which each part “does its own,” that is, carries out its own function. Within this account, the function of the Rational part is to rule, with knowledge, in the interest of the entire soul (441e4-5 with 442c5-8). That is—now feeding in what the longer road tells us—

27. the function of the Rational part of my soul, in looking to *the Form of the Good*, is to provide for the good of *my* soul with all its three parts.

This confirms the story I have been telling in (2b) above, and counts against the suggestion in (2a) above that the Form of the Good sets itself up as an impersonal or impartial good which is a new object of desire other than the desire for my own good.

A second lesson is this: the Form of the Good is characterized as that without which all other things, even just things are neither beneficial nor useful (505a3-4, a6, cf 505b1, 506a4). This does not sound like some object in another world, benefiting or being useful *in another world*. Rather, it sounds exactly like what Socrates says of *wisdom* or (a certain relevant) *knowledge* at *Euthydemus* 278d-282e—hardly an other-worldly entity. It is true that later, at *Euthydemus* 288c-293a, Socrates raises a certain difficulty—about circularity—for that knowledge. Since that turns out to be the same circularity difficulty as the present passage of the *Republic* raises for knowledge as a candidate for the good, let us discuss that point directly.

Socrates tells us at 505b5-6 that the many think Pleasure is this good (= the Form of the Good: *to agathon* at 505b6 surely goes back to each of b1 and b3, which must in turn be the Form at a6, a5 and a2), while the more sophisticated who think knowledge is this good (the Form of the Good), if asked what knowledge it is, say, “Knowledge of the good”, as if, when we don’t know what the good is in the first place, we’ll understand it when it occurs in the phrase “knowledge of the good” (505b6-c14). This is the circularity difficulty.

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Let us waive for the moment the difficulty that I have Plato saying—that the many think that Pleasure is a certain *Form*, and the more sophisticated saying that knowledge is a certain *Form*. What is the point of the circularity argument being given here about knowledge?

The reason for the inadequacy of “knowledge is the good” is the same as the reason why the account of justice in terms of each part of the soul doing its own is inadequate, since what Reason is to do is rule the entire soul with a knowledge of *the good of the entire soul*, and nothing has yet been said as to what that *good* is that the relevant knowledge is knowledge *of*. It is all very well for Socrates (in the Socratic parts of the early dialogues) to say that virtue is knowledge. But knowledge of *what*? Of the good and the bad, no doubt. But what are they? Surely Socrates cannot think that what the relevant knowledge is can be determined without our first determining what the good is. This is Plato’s point here, and it is also Socrates’ point in the *Euthydemus*. So too in the *Euthyphro*, Socrates who thinks the gods love piety because it is pious rather than something’s being pious because the gods love it, and so thinks that *what piety is* is prior to the gods’ loving it, will surely also think that *the good* is prior to wisdom or knowledge of the good. And this view is certainly confirmed by *Symposium* 210d8-e6.

Now this identity of the arguments at *Republic* 505b-c and at *Euthydemus* 288c-293a is hardly explicable on the PSP View—at least not unless it is prepared to say that the *Euthydemus* refers to Plato’s Theory of Forms. For the *Euthydemus* argument is about the constant conjunction of wisdom with the good that it is the knowledge *of*. And this is just what the ANLN View urges us to expect.

But what about the references to the Form of the Good in this passage? How can I suggest that what the *Republic* is saying is that the many think that Pleasure is the Form of the Good? Surely the many are so far from believing in the Form of the Good that it has not so much as crossed their consciousness!

The answer has already been given in my discussion of the lovers of sights and sounds above. They too, we have seen, affirm an identity involving a Form when they do not believe in the relevant Form, and would not be able to follow us if we tried to lead them to knowledge of it. For these nominalistic lovers of sights and sounds—cf (5), (7), (8), and (9) above—

28. to think that Beauty itself is identical with beautiful sights and sounds is to think that there is nothing more to this Beauty Itself than the Platonists are always talking about than the many beautiful sights and sounds.

Similarly, the point here is surely that

29. For the many to think that pleasure is (the Form of) the good is for them to think that there is nothing more to this Form of the Good than the Platonists are forever talking about than simply pleasure.

And of course if (29) gives the correct interpretation of these remarks about the many and pleasure at 505b5-6, it is a third confirmation from this passage that,

for Plato, talk about the Form of the Good is talk about the real nature of the good that appears in, as it were, laws of nature governing the way things behave in *this* world.

Fourth, Plato tells us in this very same passage, at 505d11-506a2, that
30. Every soul *pursues the Form of the Good in every action whatever*, divining it to be something, but in perplexity about it, and unable to grasp sufficiently what in the world it is—it being that *without which nothing we do or possess is of any benefit*, and indeed being also precisely *what the guardians of our ideal state must have knowledge of*. (My emphases.)

Now I doubt very much whether Plato could be saying here that every soul whatever in every action whatever seeks a perfect object in some world beyond this, in an effort to escape from this world and what is useful and beneficial in it. (And, once more, Plato is surely not here making a point about benefit in some *other world*!)

We have already seen that the knowledge of the good that one's own Rational part (which the guardians of the Ideal State model) must have, is the good of one's own entire soul. Thus, surely, we have here—what we have already seen in (19)-(21)—that

31. to pursue the Form of the Good is to seek my own good.

The point is also of course once more the same as in the *Euthydemus*.³⁷

More briefly—turning now to Book X of the *Republic*—we may also note the connection between Forms and the objects that underwrite such Socratic sciences as carpentry, flute-making, and the like. Plato gives two quite different characterizations of the trichotomy dividing

- (a) knowledge and the Forms,
- (b) particular artisans and their products in the perceptible world, and
- (c) painters and their representations (imitations) of perceptibles.

The first characterization, at 596b-598c, is in terms of there being three objects, the Form of the bed, the physical bed, and a painting of the bed, and three artisans (with God dragged in, at 597b5-15, as maker of the Forms merely for the sake of symmetry). This looks as metaphysical and as other-worldly as anything in the *Republic*, with even suggestions of Degrees of Reality, in ranking the Form as perfectly real (597a5), the perceptible particular as next most real but somewhat dim or obscure by comparison (597aa10-11), and the painting of the bed as least real (598b6-8, 599a1 ff). It looks as if some strenuous metaphysics is being called for here. If the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View of the Forms is correct, it should apply here if anywhere.

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But if we look at the second treatment of the trichotomy, this hope for the Paradeigmatist. Self-Predicational View is entirely dashed. For the second expression of the trichotomy, at 601b-602b, is in terms of three sciences (or, in the case of two of them *would-be* sciences). These are, in order, the science which *uses* the product, the science which *manufactures* the product, and the art which *imitates* the product. In the middle science, the manufacturer of the bridle and bit “looks to” the person with the expertise in *using* the bridle and bit—the person who has knowledge of the *function* of the bridle and bit (of the *good*, indeed, of the bridle and bit). This knowledge the manufacturer does not have. The painter—much worse—has neither knowledge about how the product is good or bad, nor true opinion [602a3-10], imitating how the product appears, not how it is [602b2-4; and cf (c) above].

Both in the first, metaphysical, treatment of the trichotomy and in the second, functional, treatment of the trichotomy, painting puts us at “three removes from truth,” and gives us a mere “imitation” of the truth (597e-598c, 599a, 602c1-2). This parallel, and others, suggests strongly that what we have here is not two quite different and unrelated trichotomies, but rather two different presentations of the same trichotomy from different points of view. This surely gets us that

- 32a. The person who knows how to use an implement
= the person who knows the Form of the implement.

(The same thesis is to be found at *Cratylus* 389a-b, with 390a-b, concerning the Form of the shuttle—the real nature of the shuttle—and the person who uses the shuttle.) One might say, in fact, in parallel with (32a), that

- 32b. There are laws of implement-manufacturing that require a constant conjunction between the real nature of the *flute* (the *shuttle*, the *bridle*) and the *use* of the flute (the shuttle, the bridle).

The Form here is *what a flute is* (*what the shuttle is*, *what the bridle is*). And to know that Form is to know how to use that instrument. Nothing more. *One cannot escape this parallel in the Tenth Book, between knowledge of the perfectly real Flute, and the science of using the Flute.*

This may seem preposterous, on the grounds that to know the Form of the Flute seems to be ever so much more than to know just how to play the flute. And there is something to this feeling. For it is not so easy to know the Form of anything, and yet some of us seem to know how to play flutes.

The difficulty can be intensified. For by (32b) above alone, we see that if *use* has something to do with *usefulness* and so the *good*, then we will also be able to say that

- 32c. There is a law of nature that joins the Form of the Flute (the shuttle, the bridle) to the Form of the Good.

This dependence of all the other Forms on the Form of the Good is announced in the *Republic*—in the very passage cited in (e2) at the beginning of this paper. To know the Form of the Flute (the Shuttle, the Bridle) we would need to know the

Form of the Good. Such is the difficulty here.

So now we have this larger difficulty: Is Plato now going even further and saying one could not know how to play the flute (use a shuttle, use a bridle) without knowledge of the Form of the Good?

But in fact those who use a flute, or shuttle, or bridle do so to produce something else (entertainment, clothes, horse-riding). But then knowing how to use those instruments correctly would appear to require that one know how entertainment, clothes, and horse-riding are used. And if the point of horse-riding is to be used for attaining victory, it would appear that we do not *really* know precisely what the use of the bridle is till we know what the use of horse-riding, the use of victory and so forth are. If all of these things are for the sake of the human good, it would then appear that, strictly speaking, one *would* need to have knowledge of the higher goods all the way up to human good, if one were going to have knowledge of how to play the flute. So after all, we are not so distant from the need to know the Form of the Good if we are to know the Form of the Bridle.

This removes the difficulty above. Nothing need now stop us from affirming that to know the Form of the bridle *is* to know the use of the bridle, and the same for the bed. No need to add that the Form of the bed is not some super-bed on which one will *really* get a lot of rest. Rather, as this very passage in the *Republic* repeatedly makes clear, the Form of the bed is *what the bed is* (597a2, a4, c3, c9, cf also “*not* a particular bed” at 597a2 and d2). The Form of the bed is not the best answer to the (predicational) question “What things are beds?” but the best answer to the question “What in the world is a bed?” This is just what I have been saying above in secs. VI and VII: it is the abstract structure of the bed. I see no reason why this should not also be true of all the other Forms—*beautiful*, *good* and all the things to which we add “what is,” i.e., what beauty is, what good is, and so forth (*Republic* 507b5-7, *Symposium* 211d1, *Phaedo* 74d6, 75b1-2, d2, *Cratylus* 389b5, *Parmenides* 133d7-e1, 134a3-4, b14).

Returning to the hierarchical nature in which the Forms are implicated, we see that this hierarchical nature is identical with that in which the production/use hierarchy is implicated. This is just what should have been predicted on the account of the Forms I am offering.

No need to add that if the Form of the Good carries this burden, the Socrates of the *Republic* will be wise to be cautious in saying what it is (506b-507a). And no need to add—for this is the whole point of my essay—that the good in Socratic passages such as the protreptics of the *Euthydemus* in fact carries the same burden. Virtue is knowledge; but Socrates is the wisest person there is; and he readily concedes that he knows nothing.

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XI. THE COMPARISON OF THE FORM OF THE GOOD WITH THE SUN

I come to my last point. This is the claim noted at the beginning of the paper, in (e1) and (e2), that the Form of the Good is the cause both of our knowledge of all the other Forms as well as of their existence and being, itself being “beyond being.” Can one really construe this sort of talk as supposed to be true of anything in this world, rather than as fantasy about a world beyond ours? The considerations in the preceding section suggest that one can.

Consider the claim at 509b6-7 that we cannot know other Forms without knowing the Form of the Good. We have here an apparent innovation in Plato’s theory of the good—made explicit first in the *Republic*. In the Socratic parts of the early dialogues, it suited Socrates to allow his interlocutors to *assume* that we can have other sciences without having the science of the good. But in the *Republic*, the carpenter does not know how to manufacture a bed without invoking, from another expert, the knowledge of how beds are to be used, namely knowledge of what sleep is; but by the same token we also cannot have knowledge of what sleep is without knowledge of what rest is; or knowledge of what rest is without knowledge of what the human being is; or knowledge of what the human being is without knowledge of the good the human being seeks in all his or her rational actions. (The points are absolutely parallel with respect to the shuttle, weaving, clothes, protection and modesty, the human being, and the good of the human being.) But these points can quite as well be put in terms of the dependence of subordinate Forms on superordinate Forms; so that we cannot know what the Form of the Flute is without knowing the Form of the Good. For, in fact, there *is* no such thing as *what the Flute is* unless there is such a thing as *what the good is*. So too the flute-manufacturer’s knowledge must ultimately involve also the knowledge of the human good.

To sum up, if what things are is given by their function, then there is, as it were, a law of nature conjoining *what the shuttle is* with *what clothing is*, and another conjoining *what clothing is* with the function of clothing, e.g., protection against the elements, and so on till we come to the human good, and so the Good.³⁸ Hence we cannot know what the shuttle is (the Form of the shuttle) without knowing what the good is (the Form of the Good). And since what the shuttle *is* is given by what it is *for*—its function—evidently there could be no such thing as the shuttle (the Form of the shuttle) if there were no such thing as the good (the Form of the Good).

There is thus no reason to be thinking here of some mystical power of the Form of the Good in another world beyond this world. We have a perfectly natural (if teleological) explanation, involving no appeal to other worlds, both of the claim that no other Form can be known without knowledge of the Form of the Good, and of the claim that no other Form can exist without the existence of the Form of the Good.

“But what about the Form of the Good as “beyond being (*hupekeina tēs ousias*)”? The full phrase is that “the good *is not being*, but is beyond being, surpassing it in dignity and power” (509b8-10: my emphasis). Here we must look at what is said, analogously, of the Sun. It is that the Sun is cause both of “the power of seeing the perceptibles and of the coming-to-be, growth, and nutrition of the perceptibles, though it *is not coming-to-be*” (509b2-4: my emphasis). Could the point of this last remark be that the Sun is not itself a perceptible, not itself a thing that comes-to-be? I don’t think so. The point is simply that it is supreme amongst the things that come-to-be, exceeding other things that come-to-be in power and dignity (he could easily have said) and indeed, on some construal “beyond coming-to-be,” in that all other perceptibles depend upon it, both for their existence and for their coming to be perceived.

What I am suggesting, in other words, is that once we explain how the Form of the Good is the cause both of the knowledge and of the being of all the other Forms, there is nothing further of importance to the talk of the Form of the Good being “beyond being.”

XII. CONCLUSION

I have tried to introduce above a view of the Forms that is quite different from the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View of the Forms that has held the field pretty continuously over the past half-century. The Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature View I have tried to introduce treats the Forms as real natures, not unlike the “universals” connected by Laws of Nature. I believe this different view makes of the *Theory of Forms*—what the PSP View can hardly do—an entirely plausible view about the nature of human knowledge and about the reality which knowledge is *of*. The PSP View, with its uncritical acceptance of the notion of predication, makes of the Form of Largeness the perfect answer to the predicational question “What things are large?”. The ANLN View makes of the Form of Largeness the perfect answer rather to the more distinctively Socratic/Platonic question “What is largeness?”—hence the already noted frequent style of name for the Forms, “what the large is.” The PSP View seems to me quite impossible, both for Plato’s Forms of artifacts, and for such Forms as Largeness, Likeness, Thickness, the Finger, and so forth. Any view of the Forms should surely work for all of the Forms, or be dropped. But even if we (surely impossibly) restrict ourselves to Forms of Beauty, Good, and Justice, my analyses above of *Republic* 475e-480b, 504a-509c, 523a-526b, 596e-598—if correct—show that these three Forms are not, at least in these parts of the *Republic*, to be construed on the PSP View. By contrast, the ANLN View can work for all the Forms, and in all of these

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passages of the *Republic*.

As for Platonic ethics, many will regret the passing of the agent-neutral morality that proponents of the PSP View attribute to Plato—though I do not—and many will regret (on moral grounds) interpretations of the *Republic* in which the rational part of the just person uses his or her knowledge of the good to gain what is best for that person as a whole—though again I do not. I have tried to show, nevertheless, that once Book VI has made clear where we must look for that good which the individual's Rational part pursues, these are the consequences, regretted or not, of the *Republic*'s account of justice in the individual.

As for the “paradigms” which Plato says the Forms are, and which we “look to,” nothing stops the nature of the shuttle or the nature of cutting from being the abstract structures embodied in, as it were, laws of nature, which abstract structures we must know if we are to succeed in cutting or weaving well. Such abstract structures may seem too much of this world to be the things Plato spoke of as the “paradigms” we “look to,” contemplate, or study. We do well, however, to think of the almost religious awe that the study of physics and its laws inspired in Einstein. He says, 1949, 5, of losing his religious faith:

It is quite clear to me that the religious paradise of youth, which was thus lost, was a first attempt to free myself from the chains of the “merely-personal,” from an existence which is dominated by wishes, hopes and primitive feelings. Out yonder there was this huge world, which exists independently of us human beings and which stands before us like a great, eternal riddle, at least partially accessible to our inspection and thinking. The contemplation of this world beckoned like a liberation, and I soon noticed that many a man whom I had learned to esteem and to admire had found inner freedom and security in devoted occupation with it. The mental grasp of this extra-personal world within the frame of the given possibilities swam as highest aim half consciously and half unconsciously before my mind's eye.... The road to this paradise was not as comfortable and alluring as the road to the religious paradise; but it has proved itself as trustworthy, and I have never regretted having chosen it.

If this is escape, it is not escape to another world beyond this one. Is it really impossible that it was something like this vision that moved Plato,³⁹ or indeed any Platonist—though Plato and Platonists wish also to apply these abstract structures of the universe to the human good? That is at any rate what I have claimed here.⁴⁰

APPENDIX

A passage that seems to many to justify the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational view of the Forms is the upward erotic path at *Symposium* 210-212, esp. 210e2-211b5: Here it is said that the Form of Beauty

- a. is the end for the sake of which all the other beautiful things are contemplated in order; is wondrous beautiful in its nature (*ti thaumaston tēn phusin kalon*); and is that for the sake of which all the other labors of *erōs* were undertaken;
- b. is eternal,
- c. neither comes-to-be nor perishes,
- d. neither waxes, nor wanes,
- e. is not any of the following:
 - e1. beautiful in one way, not beautiful in another,
 - e2. beautiful at one time, not beautiful at another,
 - e3. beautiful in relation to me, not beautiful in relation to you,
 - e4. beautiful here, not beautiful there, i.e. beautiful in my view, not beautiful in yours;
- f. is not [identical with] either a hand or a face, or anything bodily, or an argument or a science,
- g. is not *in* something (an animal, earth, heaven, or anything else),
- h. is itself by itself, always with itself, one-in-form,
- j. is partaken in by all other beautiful things in such a way that when those things come-to-be and pass-away, the Form does not become more or less, and suffers nothing.

This passage provides a clear example of the sort of passage that the PSP View is likely to appeal to. Clause (e) is taken to show that no perceptible is to count as perfectly beautiful, whereas clause (a) is taken to show that the Form is perfectly beautiful. This reading is often associated with the positivistic idea that the metaphysically inclined, disappointed with the imperfections of beloveds in this world, project into existence—in another world—a perfectly beautiful abstract object, the Form, which will never disappoint. On this reading, the point of the higher mysteries is to substitute for the one (mortal) beloved another (immortal) beloved. A two-place relation between a lover and another person (or set of laws or science) is replaced by a two-place relation between a lover and some perfectly beautiful abstract object.⁴¹ Certainly this is a mystical flight from this world to another world.

It is a defect of the present paper that I have not left room for a proper rebuttal of this reading. I do make the following two remarks, however. First, nowhere in Plato's dialogues, prior to the introduction of irrational desires that are *not* for the good, can one find love of the beautiful, or (what is the same thing) desire for the good⁴² appearing in a two-place relation. Loving or desiring always involve, beyond lover and ostensible beloved (a body, a soul, honor, civic virtue, a set of

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laws: 208e2-209e4) or beyond desirer and thing desired, a further object, the good (the good which we all ultimately desire). My suggestion will be that the pursuit of knowledge of *what the beautiful or good is* (211d1) here too gives a further object, the beautiful or the good, beyond lover and ostensible beloved. Consider Diotima's words at 209c2-7:

For I imagine that it is by contact with the beautiful [person], and associating with him, that [the lover] brings to birth and procreates the things with which he was for so long pregnant, both when he is present with [the beloved], and when he is away from him but remembering him; and he joins with him in nurturing what has been born, with the result that such people enjoy a much greater partnership with each other than the one people have in their children and a firmer affection between them, insofar as their sharing is in children of a more beautiful and immortal kind. (Translation adapted slightly from Rowe, 1998)

What is described here, I take it, is a three-place relation between lover, beloved person, and the more beautiful and immortal kind of offspring: acts of virtue, conversations about the good—and ultimately the good itself.

Second, clause (e) above invokes the very same kinds of deficiencies which I characterized in detail in secs. VI and VII above, in connection with my anti-nominalist readings of *Republic* 475e-480b, 523a-526a. So we must surely read this *Symposium* passage uniformly with these two passages from the *Republic*. That is, either the *Symposium* passage must be read in a way compatible with the Anti-Nominalist, Laws-of-Nature View, or we must reject the readings given above of the two passages from the *Republic*. I'll take my chances with the readings of the *Republic* passages. Notice also clause (f) above with its promise of an anti-nominalist identity.

NOTES

¹I am indebted, for this way of putting clause (b) to some remarks of Richard Kraut in response to the draft of the paper that formed the basis of my presentation in St. Louis.

²Santas 2001, 168,

³On selfish concerns here—so that I do not mislead—let me say that I distinguish sharply between behavior that is selfish—that shows no concern for the welfare of others—and behavior that is self-interested. As Socrates tries to show Polemarchus and Thrasymachus, it is never in one's self-interest to do what harms others or to do what [as one *thinks*] will allow one to get the better of others. There is a larger self-interest (cf

Republic 337a8ff. esp. d9-10 with 336d1-2), to which wisdom, the knowledge of the good and the bad, is the indispensable means.

In the sequel, I shall be saying not only—what some scholars already concede (though it is hardly a general concession)—that the desire for good in Socrates is self-interested, but also that the same is true of the desire for good that we find in the rational part of the soul in the *Republic*. That is, the concern of the *Republic* as I see it (see my Unpublished A and my Unpublished B) is *also* with that larger self-interest that eschews the harm to the soul of trying to get the better of others. And this without a commitment to a morality or to a pure altruism

over and above one's larger self-interest. This is not to fail to draw any distinction at all between Socrates and Plato. On the contrary, in the Socratic parts of the early dialogues, *knowledge* of the good is, by itself, the indispensable means to one's own good; but in the *Republic*, it is rather a certain psychological well-adjustment among the parts of the soul—albeit one in which the self-same knowledge of the good can be both attained and unimpededly used by the Rational part—which is the indispensable means to one's own good.

⁴Since Vlastos 1954, the notion of "paradigm" in Plato studies has been more or less restricted to the notion of a "perfect sample." Even Wittgenstein (d. 1953) came to have a hand in this, via Geach 1955 and Bluck 1957. The present paper is suggesting that this account of "paradigms" in Plato requires an alternative account. By way of analogy, let us distinguish, following Strang 1961, two sorts of paradigms for the length *one yard*: (a) a standard yard bar, such as that made by John Bird in 1760, damaged in 1834, and (b) five standard bars of 1844/5 provided that certain conditions laid down in act of parliament of 1878, such as a temperature of 62 degrees F, and its manner of horizontal support, are observed. The second standard is actually not a bar at all (though several bars are involved), but an abstract specification, the Imperial Standard Yard, against which any actual standard bar would have to be judged. Should new copies be needed of the standard bar (if some of the old ones came to be broken), it would be the Imperial Standard Yard that the maker would "look to." The PSP View construes the way in which Forms are paradigms by analogy with (a). (The yard bar is itself exactly one yard long in a way that no ordinary physical object could be perfectly and assuredly one yard long.) By contrast, the view I shall espouse construes the way in which Forms are paradigms by analogy with (b).

Moving away from this analogy, the point about the view I espouse is that the real nature of cutting (*Cratylus* 386d-387b) is a paradigm in the following way—not by itself being (a) an act of sublimely perfect cutting, but by there being (b) a structural truth of the matter about what sort of thing cutting is, such that anything that is to count as cutting must conform to that structural truth.

⁵For an excellent and discriminating survey of

this sort of view as it developed from Vlastos 1954, 1965, see Santas 2001, ch. 5

⁶Richard Kraut, in his reply at the Henle Conference at St. Louis University, explicitly endorsed the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View only in connection with the most important Forms discussed in the earlier version of the paper which I delivered there: the good, the beautiful, and the just. Indeed, he went so far as to say that, in the case of Forms of artifacts, it was actually my account of perfection, deficiency, and imitation that was correct, so that there is no question of Plato endorsing the Paradeigmatist, Self-Predicational View for Forms of artifacts.

But if my view is correct for Forms of artifacts, I do not understand why the same view would not be adopted for all the Forms. And what about other Forms—largeness, thickness, equality, likeness, one, many, and so on? Richard did not say whether he thought one could grant the application of the (PSP) View to them—with the consequent absurdity of largeness itself being large, thickness itself being thick, equality being equal, likeness being like, and so on. Nor did Richard offer argument against my anti-nominalistic reading of the treatment of the Form of the Beautiful at *Republic* 475e-480b. (Presumably he rejects it, since I suppose it would be odd to have the Form of the Beautiful and the deficiencies of the perceptible beautifuls being treated one way in the *Republic* and in quite another way in the *Symposium*. The same issue arises below in the Appendix. This said, I am of course well aware that one cannot ask a commentator to respond to absolutely everything.) In any case, the evidence for largeness, thickness, equality, and likeness standing together with the Good, the Beautiful, and the Just is very strong. True, if artifacts are admitted not to be self-predicational, perhaps one could extend this to largeness, thickness, equality, and likeness. My only problem is that I don't understand why we wouldn't then extend this admission to the Good, the Beautiful, and the Just.

At any rate, I myself hold that such features of the Theory of Forms as the perfection of Forms and the deficiency of perceptibles are meant to apply across the board to all Forms. (This, even for those whose Forms are perfect samples but who allow for different ways for the perceptibles

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to be deficient—not *exactly* circular in one sort of case; but not *non-relationally* equal in another sort of case: cf Santas *loc. cit.*) I am unclear what evidence normally deployed to show the presence of self-predication in Plato would allow an interpreter to just pick and choose which Forms he or she will call self-predicational and which not.

⁷See my *Ascent from Nominalism* (1987)—hereinafter *AFN*—at 282–291, with 271–278 and notes to those passages. Note that even Zermelo-type set theories which are often given as the natural expression of Platonism about sets—as opposed to constructivism—have the suspicious form of positing, as antecedently there, precisely every set that *one could have constructed in successive stages* if one started with sets of the non-sets, and then continued constructing without end. This is surely still a moderate constructivism, and not a Platonism at all, or even an Aristotelian Realism (346–348).

⁸One example I give, in the passages from *AFN* just cited, is using first order logic as the language of science in such a way as to imply that “everything” in it covers everything, when the proofs of that logic’s soundness and completeness affirm that there are extensions for every predicate—but do not allow them to count under “everything.” Why? Because otherwise the theory will be inconsistent by virtue of the Russell paradox. This is of course an answer by ad hoc fiat, and not a philosophical answer.

It often seems to interpreters of ancient philosophy that they can skip such details as the philosophical foundations of predication, or of how a philosopher is to respond to the paradoxes. But they should be more worried—especially when this insouciance leads them to attribute to Plato views that seem on their face simply absurd—that the absurdity may flow more from *their* philosophical assumptions than from Plato’s. (In Clarification VI, of *AFN*, I argue that the contradiction Vlastos 1954 finds in Plato’s Third Man Argument flows not from anything Plato says, but from Vlastos’s own handling of the quantifiers—a handling of the very sort that leads to the paradoxes.)

Incidentally, such interpreters, in gaily attributing self-predication to Plato almost always presuppose that Aristotle is not committed to self-predication. This is unfortunately not so. As I demonstrated long ago (*AFN*, 300–310), the transitivity of “said of” and of synonymous predication in the *Topics* and the *Categories* requires *animal* to apply synonymously to both

the species *man* and to Socrates. But then it is hard to see how Aristotle could avoid predicating *man* synonymously of both the species *man* and Socrates. That is, if anyone, it is Aristotle that is plainly committed to self-predication.

⁹I have indeed so argued in *AFN*, *passim*.

¹⁰Of course, some philosophers were content to have Plato hold a view that was entirely absurd in this way. My teachers Ryle and Owen certainly were. For Owen, Plato made the mistakes Wittgensteinians generally expected in metaphysicians, generated from such things as not understanding the grammar of incomplete predicates. This absurdity also suited a certain (as one might say) mystical positivism that one could notice in Vlastos’s approach to Plato. The second generation of proponents of this theory mostly had further (ethical) motives for wanting to stick with the absurdity of self-predication that I am currently describing. Interestingly, no interpreter I know of was tempted by any kind of analogue to the postulation of “analogical” senses of words for the Forms, as opposed to “empirical” senses for things in this world—which one might have thought would attract some empiricist theists and positivist mystics anxious to allow Plato’s metaphysics to make some sense.

¹¹I discount here the ace in the hole of all those who argue that the *Republic*’s ethics is not based on even an enlarged self-interest, not even availing themselves of Irwin’s awkward compromise (see next note) in which we build morality into the very meaning of “happiness”. I refer here to a detail of Plato’s construction of the ideal state, wherein he speaks of forcing the guardians to abandon their happiness-producing contemplation of the Forms in order to go back down into the cave, and then says they do it willingly since they recognize that this compulsion is just. “Does this not show that in the rational desire for the good, Plato leaves room for desire for a good larger than the agent’s own good?”

In my view, this detail is too incidental for it to outweigh virtually every other bit of evidence on the treatment of happiness in the *Republic*. The *Republic* is not about (a) the justice of denizens of the ideal state, even if they are guardians. The ideal state in question probably never existed nor will it ever exist. The discussion of the ideal state is the building of a *model* of the psyche in order to see the justice *not of the denizens of the state*, but the justice of the *state*, which justice will be structurally identical with the justice of the individual (whatever state he or she inhabits). In

building this model, Plato does all sorts of “necessitating” of features in the model (519c9, d4-520a9; 421c1, with 419a2, 420b6, c3, d5, e3, 421b1; 4656a1, a4-6). It is one of these details that leads to forcing the guardians to go back into the cave. But the justice of the guardians is not under discussion in the *Republic*. Rather, the justice of particular individuals *within* the ideal state is an artifact of the model, to which nothing corresponds in the individual. Instead, the justice under discussion in the *Republic* is, as I have been implying, (b) the justice of the ideal state itself, and, in parallel, (c) the structurally identical justice of an individual (whatever city he or she inhabits). The value of this incidental evidence on the way Plato constructs his model is therefore severely limited—even though entire interpretations of the ethics of the *Republic* have been based on it. It is certainly not enough to outweigh the undeniable fact that the main point of the *Republic* is that the just person is happier than the unjust person.

¹²At first sight, the eudaemonism which Irwin attributes to the *Republic* may seem, like my own view, to be recommending justice simply by way of appeal to self-interest (one’s own happiness). It isn’t so, however. For Irwin’s notion of happiness, has morality (= justice as seen by Irwin) built into the very meaning of “happiness.” (See 1995, 273, 312, 73, where Irwin makes clear his view that happiness “cannot be understood independently of” morality.) Irwin also puts this by saying that justice—a justice “not focussed on the good of a particular agent,” but rather a justice that “expresses an impartial point of view” (315)—is not an “instrumental means” to happiness, but rather a “component” of happiness. (Examples at 65-6, 77, 89, 147: money and the service of a friend are *instruments* of happiness; while justice for its own sake, virtue for its own sake, knowledge for its own sake, and having friends to make life worth living, are all *components*.) But the talk about “components,” “good for its own sake,” and “intrinsic good” are mere cover for giving “happiness” a meaning that will never allow one to be happy in the absence of the morality and altruism involved in these components.

There is in any case a confusion here, in Aristotle, as in Irwin. First, there is *ideal* (and even godlike) happiness—the unimpeded and

presumably successful “exercise of one’s essential human capacities” (254), where justice, virtue, knowledge and the possession of friends turn out (as Irwin has it), by virtue of the meaning of “happiness,” to be the relevant capacities. Then, second, there is the *practicable* good, which enjoys more of Aristotle’s attention outside of I.1-2, 7, X.6-9: a certain—invariably less than ideal—maximum of happiness, the maximum of happiness achievable in the actual circumstances one is in. This achievable maximum may, in some circumstances, involve sacrificing contemplation to political activity, friends, and liberality to money needed for family members, and so forth.

With this second notion of (maximal or achievable) happiness, the distinction between component means and instrumental means therefore loses any significance—at any rate from the point of view of any eudaemonism other than Irwin’s moral eudaemonism. It is true that if one could get the operation for one’s child without the money, or the child’s maximum achievable happiness without the operation, one would. But that hardly shows that in the actual circumstances one is in—when one *will not* get the operation without the money, or one’s child’s maximum of achievable happiness without the operation—that the achievable money is not essential to one’s own achievable happiness, in a way in which liberality, contemplation, and keeping of all one’s friends are not. All of which is to say that since the happiness we seek is the achievable happiness, the instrumental/intrinsic distinction is irrelevant from the point of view of any eudaemonism other than Irwin’s moral eudaemonism.

I am not here denying that if

A. there is a purely *moral* good over and above self-interest,

then

B. there is a point to the instrumental/intrinsic distinction.

For then,

C. getting money (at least in a morally neutral way) may be an instrumental means to moral goodness,

while

D. doing something to carry out a duty may be intrinsically a moral good.

What I am denying is that there is any need to

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attribute to Plato belief in any such purely moral good over and above self-interest.

Thus, by my lights, the Moral Eudaemonism which Irwin attributes to Plato is not a eudaemonism at all, and Plato is no moral eudaemonist. Just a eudaemonist—the very eudaemonist Prichard feared Plato might be in the *Republic*.

¹³Cooper 1977, at 1999, 143-5, says that "... the good itself is a good thing, over and above the good things of this world: ..." and again, that "... its goodness is pure, as is that of no other good is. Furthermore, it is the only perfect good. Every other good, being good only in some respect or relation or from some point of view, is also not so good, or even quite bad, in some other ways. No other good can possibly be as good as this one: the very best imaginable human life, for example, will still not be as good as this is, and so not as good as it is possible to conceive something as being.

Again, turning now to what this pure Form of the good becomes in the sights of a guardian, Cooper says "... a just person is a devotee of the good, not *his own* good; and these are very different things" (Cooper's emphasis). So too White 1978, 35 says

... the Good is *good* without qualification or absolutely. By this is meant not just that the Good is unqualifiedly identical with itself, but that it is unqualifiedly good in the *predicative sense* (as we might say) having the property of being good.... [T]he Good is ... not a notion of what is good or beneficial *to* or *for* someone or other. Rather the idea of the Good is the idea of something that is good somehow independently of that reference to a benefited subject that is implicit in the notion of benefit as it is usually understood.... [This] means that, as Plato views the matter, the notion of the Good is the notion of something that can be recognized to be good apart from any considerations of something that is benefited.... [White's emphases.]

And to clarify the last point, White shows very clearly what (from White's own moral point of view) makes this picture of the Good divorced from particular benefit so attractive to some moral philosophers. He says (37)

[T]he point is that if I tend to call good what satisfies me and you tend to call good what tends to satisfy you, and if there is bound to be conflict between us with respect to what states

of affairs satisfy us, then we shall seem to fall into disagreements over what things are good, which would apparently be resolved if we could arrive at a notion of good that did not depend on our thus potentially conflicting views.... The idea that there is a notion of the Good independent of such conflicts therefore can seem to offer an objective way of settling these disagreements.

I concede that this is a profound vision of moral theory, with the idea of social conflict (amongst agents the goodness of whose desires is placed outside the realm of moral theory) at its center. It is simply not my own picture of ethics, nor do I believe it is what the *Republic* is up to.

Turning now to Annas 1981, 221, she says, "The Form of *F* is what really, completely, and unqualifiedly is *F*, whereas particulars manage to be *F* only with qualification." Again (259-260), she says

[T]he Form of the Good ... is precisely not what is good for the seeker, or good for others, or good in relation to anything or anyone, but simply and unqualifiedly good, in a way that is completely impersonal and indifferent between individuals.... The Good that is the supreme object of knowledge has nothing to do with one's *own* good; it is the purely impersonal Form of Good.

And in pursuit of the ideas in the above quotes of all three writers, Annas says (322) that the upshot of Books 5-7—contradicting what she concedes (321) to be the central thesis of Books 2-4 and 8-9 of the *Republic*—is as follows:

The just person comes to have insight into what is absolutely good and just, and will act in accordance with its impersonal requirements. But to achieve this understanding, and to conform oneself to its requirements is to reject the idea that justice must be in my interests for it to be something that I have reason to have.

Finally, we may note that Mackie 1977, 37 (quoted in Korsgaard 1996, 37) seems to take this same impersonal interpretation of the Form of the Good.

¹⁴An urgent agendum for the interpretation of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle is a careful reading of all this talk in the works of Plato and Aristotle about being good "for its own sake" or "in itself." I am not pretending to have done this work here.

¹⁵On Self-predication, there are fuller remarks about some of these passages in *AFN*. On the desire for good in the *Republic*, see Unpublished

A, B, and C.

¹⁶See my 1987, "Socrates on the Impossibility of Belief-Relative Sciences."

¹⁷For the objective nature of the sciences, wherein science *discovers* and does not simply *create*, see the all but conclusive remarks, from the point of view of the Greek geometer, at *Republic* 526c10ff, esp. 527a1-b8.

¹⁸On *such-es* vs *this-es*, and distinctions of logical type, see *AFN*, 1-8 with notes, 357-8 and elsewhere.

¹⁹I suspend here the question of the extent to which Cudworth was right in taking Hobbes to be a conventionalist. Doubts have been cast on such interpretations by Korsgaard 1996, 8, 23-27, as well as by various theological friends of mine on the basis of their study of the material of Books III-IV of the *Leviathan*.

²⁰Notice how prominent the terms here are as examples of Platonic Forms—whiteness from the *Theaetetus*, triangularity and rotundity from the *Republic*, likeness from the *Parmenides*, equality from the *Phaedo*. On whiteness, I am of course taking it that Cudworth (rightly) read the references to whiteness in the *Theaetetus* (156e6, 159e4, and esp. 179c-183b) as reference to Forms. These real natures are Forms in spite of the fact that, as we see later in the quotation in the main text, Aristotelians ignore them and speak instead of qualities in the objects without us, while Atomists speak instead of dispositions of parts, and Protagoreans speak of particular phantasms. In this great work, Cudworth is reducing to absurdity the claims of Atomism and Protagoreanism to be able to dispense with abstract objects—the same kind of anti-nominalist enterprise that I am saying Plato is engaged in.

²¹Cudworth shields himself from the last difficulty—that, in terms of modern physics, God himself cannot make a white body red without making its surface reflect light rays of the longest visible wavelength—by wrongly supposing that there is "a manifest contradiction" in supposing, e.g., that something could be red without reflecting light rays of the longest visible wavelength. This is an entire mistake (one of the few Cudworth makes here). It is a "matter of fact and real existence," and a truth of physics, that there is such a real nature as the color red *at all*, possession of which results in a surface reflecting

light rays of the longest visible wavelength. Thus Cudworth *must* accept the consequence of his Platonism: that God himself cannot change the laws of physics (or of morality).

²²*Such-es* at *Timaeus* 49b-52c are not Aristotelian *such-es*. They are rather bits of the receptacle (which are not themselves *such-es*) described in terms of the Forms they resemble or imitate. For this area of space to be *such* (say, *red, fiery*) is not for it to be the color Red, or for it to be Fire. It is for it to resemble or imitate the *this* which is the Form of Red (the Form of Fire). To say the bit of space is *such* is not to make anything be an Aristotelian *such*.

²³Lovers also of technical achievement—perhaps in scenery for stages: *technudria* at 475e1, cf *philotechnous kai praktikous* at 476b10. The sights and sounds in question are performances and choral songs at the Dionysia and other drama festivals (475d1-e1), presumably together with the colors and shapes and sounds that make them up (476b5-6).

²⁴*AFN*, e.g., 62-69 with 57-62. The point is not, of course, that the many say to themselves—on an "opaque," or even an "oblique" reading—that

A. The well-known Form of the Beautiful is identical with the many beautiful sights and sounds.

This is precluded by the fact that the many neither believe in the Form of the Good, nor are able to follow if anyone tries to lead them to it (476b10-11, c2-4). Nor is it simply that the many say to themselves—"transparently"—of the Form of the beautiful that

B. *it* is identical with the many beautiful sights and sounds

—though that is a little closer to what is needed. The problem here is with the very notion of transparency. For if we replace the entirely odd notion of opacity with the notion of obliquity or indirect reference, then all there is to so-called transparent senses or readings of psychological verbs (as in "Lois believes someone is admirable") is existentially quantified indirect references, as in translations like the following, after David Kaplan:

F1. There is a sense (e.g., the *man of steel* sense), and there is a person (the man of steel) whom the sense in fact determines, such that Lois stands in a certain relation [roughly that

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of believing that the reference is determined by to] that sense and the property of being admirable

So there are not two readings of “believes that”, an indirect and a transparent reading. At most there is an indirect reading (which in particular occurrences may or may not be existentially quantified). The existentially quantified sentence, read as an indirect context, has the obvious advantage over the supposed transparent reading that it requires the agent to have *some* psychological attitude to the object in question.

On my own—as I see it, Platonic—theory of psychological contexts (described more fully in my still unpublished *Plato and the Philosophers of Language*), we have something different. What the lovers of sights and sounds are thinking is that

C. All there is to this beautiful-itself which you, Plato, believe in, is particular beautiful sights and sounds.

What they are saying to themselves here is not simply

C1. All there is to the many particular beautiful sights and sounds is the many particular beautiful sights and sounds.

What they are saying is rather that

C2. The real nature of beauty, whatever that may turn out to be—even if I am wrong about it, that is, wrong in thinking that all there is to it is the many beautiful things, it is that real nature that I want to be understood as talking about—that real nature of beauty is nothing other than the many beautiful sights and sounds.

For Plato, then, given that the real nature of beauty is the Form of the beautiful, this account of what the dreamers are saying to themselves can be abbreviated as:

C3. The Form of the beautiful is the many beautiful sights and sounds.

And that is what we find attributed to the lovers of sights and sounds in the text.

²⁵My claim that the many beautiful sights and sounds are particular perceptible things, events, property-instances, and Protagorean appearances has been doubted. For Irwin, 1977, and 1995, holds that the many in this passage (as opposed to the one, the Form), are, or at any rate include the many *color-universals* and *shape-universals* (rather than, say, particular occurrences of colors or of shapes). When it is pointed out that the many in this passage are explicitly identified with things that can be seen but not thought at

507a7-b10, Irwin replies that some universals are perceptible. (What? The real nature of the color red, which is such that it, for example, reflects light rays of the longest visible wavelength, is *perceptible*? At that rate, all universals should surely be perceptible—since they all have perceptible instances. But this cannot have been Plato’s intention. Notice also that the colors seen and unseen at 507e2 do not seem to be universals—for I suppose they still would be Irwinian visible universals even if in this particular case the particulars instantiating them are not seen.) In any case, the use of “many” for *universals* in the contrast between one and many seems to me totally uncharacteristic of the *Republic*. Are the many beds (596b1) to be, or include, the many *kinds* of beds (the water bed, the roll-away bed, the camp cot, the trundle bed, the hide-away bed)? This is not to deny that the “each is one” locution that is absolutely central to the *Republic* does not show up sometimes functioning quite differently in the *Parmenides* and later dialogues. (See the references at *AFN*, 373, n. 29.)

Turning now to the bottom two (visible) sections of the Line at 509d6-510a6, there are surely no universals here (as there would have to be on Irwin’s view). Only images, reflections, artifacts, and natural objects. (Protagorean color-appearances and shape-appearances in *Theaetetus* 151dff would also count as individuals and not as universals.) And in any case, anything in the bottom two sections would have to be ever-changing, which is presumably not true of any universals. Nor is it clear, on Irwin’s view that the *shapes* at 476b5 are perceptible *universals*, how it is one could draw a universal (510e1) as opposed to a visible *instance* of a shape-universal, or how the universal shapes triangular, square, and the like in the second highest stage of the line (at 510d7-511a1) are not themselves perceptible universals by Irwin’s lights.

Anyhow, it is surely clear that the sounds are individual events—and also that the sights and sounds of which Socrates is thinking in this passage are primarily presentations at dramatic festivals, choral odes, and the like (475d1-e1). There’d be no reason for the colors and shapes not to be individual occurrences of colors and shapes rather than universals. (Cf also the sticks and stones of *Phaedo* 74a9-c5 and *Parmenides* 129d3.)

Irwin (1995, 386, n.6) appeals also to the Adam/Murphy/Gosling view that the many justs contrasted with justice itself at 479a6-7 could be

such universals as the Thrasmachean *advantage of the stronger* (in which the weaker are gotten the better of). But just because you can string some words like “the advantage of the stronger (when the many are gotten the better of),” you should not suppose that there therefore corresponds to that locution a universal. Even aside from the fact that in that direction lie the paradoxes, there is no reason to suppose Socrates thought there was any such thing as this supposed entity (since he holds that you *cannot* gain your advantage by trying to get the better of others), any more than he would grant there were such entities as the kinds *barbarian*, or *not-beautiful*. So too for the many *nomima*, which at 479d4, 9 (with 484b5-6, 485b1-3) are plainly signalized as ever-changing (which I presume is impossible even for Irwin’s perceptible universals). These *nomima* (conventions) could at best be what people at one time or other identify justice with—the shadows or statues of justice (517d8-9) which must be ever-changing things (518c8-9), and so cannot be universals. (Once more, recall such *undings* as the *justice that consists in the strong getting the better of the weak*.)

²⁶See also AFN, 88-91, 373f, n. 30, for the claim that the apparently question-begging argument at 475e3-476a8 (Beautiful and ugly are two opposites so each is one, and similarly for *all the Forms*; [so there are Forms])—an argument that seems to sucker us into accepting the amazing consequence that there exist Forms simply on the basis, which presumably everyone accepts, that beautiful and ugly are opposite. The answer is that—as becomes dazzlingly clear in the anti-nominalist argument that immediately follows—(a) nominalists, such as the lovers of sights and sounds, *have no right accepting that there are opposites*; and that (b) so-called “Forms of opposites” just *are* the opposites. Or put otherwise, the opposites are Forms. See further on “Forms of opposites” my discussion *ibid*.

²⁷See the arguments for this in Vlastos 1965.

²⁸Notice the collocation of artifacts with organs in Socrates’ discussion of function at *Lesser Hippias* 374b-376b, *Republic* I.352e-354a.

²⁹To avoid irrelevant complexities, I am restricting myself in the present context to the cases where what is sought as a good or end is in fact good for the agent.

³⁰Aristotle does indeed say, in *Nic. Eth.* I.6,

that “good” is multiply ambiguous, as Richard pointed out at St. Louis, so that it might be argued that Aristotle thinks there is no universal *good*. But, so far as I can see, there is no reason for supposing that Aristotle thought “the human good” multiply ambiguous in any way that need give us the slightest pause in speaking of the good as a universal in the present context. That is, there is no evidence that Aristotle doesn’t think *the good*, understood as the human good, isn’t a perfectly good universal—quite as good a universal as *health* is, in spite of the multiple ambiguity Aristotle is prepared on occasion, to assign to the word “healthy,” e.g., at *Metaphysics* IV.2.

³¹In St. Louis, Richard appeared to argue that what we want can only be particular things—any other suggestion being “unintelligible” (a Rylean “category-error”?)—even though elsewhere in his reply he was himself willing to speak of desiring the Form of the Good, saying that this “means” wanting to imitate them. (So do we desire the Form of the Good or not?) In any case, Richard’s approach here seems to me too restrictive a way of thinking about desire—hence the elaboration in (14) above. (Cf also *Symposium* 199d2 + 200e9-10, 204b3, with 199d5, e4.) The over-restrictiveness is particularly obvious if we consider the fact I adduced during the discussion, that we can hardly understand desiring to do a particular action as a case of desiring the good if we do not understand the notion of generating this desire from an initial desire to do *whatever action is best in the situation*, by way of *substituting* in various beliefs as to what action will lead to what is best. And desire for *whatever action is best*—at any rate prior to one’s inserting reference to the particular action that one later concludes to be the best—is precisely not a desire for something particular, but a desire directed towards a certain “universal” (good, happiness), to which multiple quantifiers have been applied.

³²This example of the kind of sentence that will force logicians to second-order quantification is from a lecture of Michael Dummett in the fall of 1967. “There is something everyone in this room owns,” is capturable neither by ExAy (we don’t all own the *same* TV set), nor by AyEx, (this would be made true by you owning a TV set, and me owning an iguana), but only by

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EFAy. I am not myself endorsing second-order logic any more than I would ordinary classical set-theory or Russell's theory of logical types. But I have no problem with its use as a more or less ad hoc device that is useful for certain purposes.

³³Examples of different particular final goods I, you, and James might have: the different particular action that in each's circumstances will lead to their maximal happiness over the rest of *their* particular lives. See my New Mexico lectures, Unpublished E.

³⁴Those who think that an architectonic good is being referred to in the first sentence would do well to consider the sentence virtually every editor gives as alluded to in "the good has been rightly affirmed to be that at which all things aim," at 1094a2, namely, X.21172b14. Here what is under discussion is the claim of Eudoxus that pleasure is the good or the best thing. The passage says, concerning pleasure, that "that at which all things aim is the good." Surely no one thinks that Eudoxus is saying that some *architectonic* pleasure is the (supreme) good. He is saying that the "universal" *pleasure*, which is sought by all things, including animals, *is* the "universal" good.

³⁵The ideas of the above brief treatment of the first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are discussed more fully in Unpublished D.

³⁶Aristotle accepts this constant conjunction, even though to leave things at the last constant conjunction is to leave the Protagorean suggestion that there *is* no objective good—a suggestion Aristotle wishes to say he is not committed to, saying that "without qualification and truly" the object of wanting is the good (the object of wanting for the good person *is* the real good), though "for each person" it is the apparent good. Fuller discussion of this important passage unfortunately lies beside our main track here.

Notice that in making *the apparent good* a natural kind needed for the science of psychology, Aristotle becomes the first thinker to introduce phenomenological entities into a science. ("Phenomenological" because it is indifferent to the identity of the entities what reality answers to them—e.g., whether an apparent good is also a real good or is a *merely* apparent good.) I cannot discuss here the fact that Socrates and Plato would *welcome* the extrusion of *the apparent good* from the laws of psychology. See my 1991, 1987.

³⁷For more on the connection between these two important passages from the *Euthydemus*

and the *Republic*, see Unpublished B.

³⁸I do not deny that the Form of the Good embraces more than the human good, which presumably involves considering together the Form of the Good and the Form of the human being.

³⁹Of the two of the key passages Richard cited at St. Louis on behalf of the PSP View as inviting us to another world—*Theaetetus* 176a-b and *Republic* 500b-d—it seems entirely possible to read the first along Einsteinian lines; and the second seems to me to fit almost exactly the Einsteinian vision, if we add to the abstract structures studied the human good.

Richard objected at St. Louis. "Plato without paradigmaticism becomes a philosopher whose interest in ontology is confined to the idea that science presupposes abstract objects." He was perhaps thinking of Quine. My aim was to bring Richard and others to think of Einstein—though I think I did not succeed.

⁴⁰I am very grateful to Richard Kraut for his stimulating response at St. Louis, and the extraordinarily enjoyable exchange between us that followed that response; to Jerry Santas, for the stimulation of his remarks on the Forms in 2001, ch. 5; and to the organizers of this absolutely outstanding Henle conference.

⁴¹Cf the words of Nussbaum 1986, 183, in defence of this picture:

Instead of flesh and all that mortal rubbish, an immortal object must, and therefore can, be found. Instead of painful yearning for a single body and spirit, a blissful, contemplative completeness. It is, we see, the old familiar *erōs*, that longing for an end to longing, that motivates us here to ascend to a world in which erotic activity, as we know it, will not exist.

⁴²Cf *Symposium* 200a6, 201c2-5, 202c10-d5, 204e1-7, 207a6, 208e5, and esp. 205d1-206a4, 207a1-3.

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