THE ONE OVER MANY

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In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle mentions several Platonic arguments for the existence of forms. The arguments, along with Aristotle's criticisms of them, were set out in detail in Aristotle's *Peri Ideōn*, portions of which are preserved in Alexander's commentary on *Metaphysics* A9. In this paper I examine one of these arguments, the One over Many Argument (OMA), along with its Platonic sources.[1]

If Aristotle is to be believed, Plato postulated separated, transcendent forms corresponding to every general term. Aristotle protests that Plato is too generous: in fact, there are forms only corresponding to those general terms that denote genuine properties or kinds—and not every general term does that. Nor, in any case, does the argument show that there are separated Platonic forms, but only that there are the more hygienic Aristotelian *universalia in rebus*.

Aristotle proves an acute critic of the argument he sets out. And as an historian he may seem no less adept. At least, his interpretation of Plato is hardly idiosyncratic. For it is widely believed that Plato's theory of forms just "was the theory that there is an Idea answering to every common name."[2] It is widely believed, too—although here modern commentators go beyond Aristotle—that forms just are the meanings of general terms.[3]

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[1] I am indebted to Professor G. E. L. Owen for stimulating my interest in the *Peri Ideōn* and for influencing my views about it. The translation I provide below of the OMA is based on a translation of his that I saw in 1973. I also wish to thank Sydney Shoemaker, Alexander Nehamas, and especially Malcolm Schofield, for helpful comments on various versions.

[2] W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford, 1951), p. 24; cf. pp. 36, 225.

[3] See, for example, G. B. Matthews and S. Marc Cohen, "The One and the Many," *Review of Metaphysics* 20 (1968), p. 634. (Contrast p. 630, where they say only that general terms name or refer to forms; obviously this claim does not entail that forms are meanings.) See also D. Gallop, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1975), p. 96f; A. Nehamas, "Predication and Forms of Opposites in the *Phaedo*," *Review of Metaphysics* 26 (1973), is not sure that there are forms corresponding to every general term, but seems to think that forms are the meanings of those terms to which they do correspond (p. 480); so also S. Marc Cohen, "Plato's Method of Division," in *Patterns in Plato's Thought*, ed. J. M. E. Moravcsik (Dordrecht, 1973), pp. 189f. References could easily be proliferated.

197

On this view, Plato's one over many argument is a linguistic or semantic argument for the existence of forms: there are forms corresponding to every meaningful general term; and forms just are the meanings of such terms.

But is Aristotle to be believed? Does Plato believe, as Aristotle and others argue, that there are separated forms corresponding to every general term in a language, no matter how arbitrarily the term imposes itself on the world? We shall find, to the contrary, that although Plato often uses *a* one over many assumption, it is not clearly the one Aristotle dockets. Rather, Plato uses a one over many assumption to explain, not the meaningfulness of general terms, but sameness of nature. There are forms only where there are genuine properties in nature; and what properties the world contains cannot be ascertained by language: here Plato agrees with Aristotle.[4] Nor does Plato assume that forms are the meanings of those terms to which they do correspond. We shall find, too, that although Plato believes that there are separated forms, the one over many is not used to argue for them. Where Plato uses a one over many argument, he does not draw the conclusions Aristotle suggests; where separated forms are in view, other arguments are adduced in their support. At least, all of this is so most of the time: we shall find that Aristotle is not entirely unjustified, even if his story is not the one most likely to win our sympathies.

D. M. Armstrong, in *Universals and Scientific Realism*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1978), distinguishes clearly between the semantic and nonsemantic versions of the one over many (see, e.g. vol I, pp. xiii–xiv). He suggests (I, pp. xiii, 65), I think correctly, that Plato is primarily motivated by the nonsemantic version. Contrast Matthews and Cohen who think that it is the linguistic version "that especially gives life to" the OMA (p. 630). D. Pears, in "Universals," *Philosophical Quarterly* (1950), p. 219, suggests that "it was characteristic of Greek thought to confuse" the two versions; he offers no argument in defense of the claim. Gallop seems to confuse the two versions (p. 96). I follow Armstrong in reserving "property" and "universal" for genuine features of reality; I follow him, too, in assuming a sharp separation of the theory of meaning from the theory of universals. I assume, with him, that what properties there are is to be determined by science, not by syntax or semantics. If the argument of this paper is correct, Plato and Aristotle are closer to Armstrong's conception of properties than many suppose. For another realist theory of properties, see H. Putnam, "On Properties," in *Essays in Honour of Carl G. Hempel*, ed. N. Rescher (Dordrecht, 1970). I follow Armstrong and others (contrast Putnam) in using "predicate" in the sense of linguistic predicate (e.g., "man"); I use "meaning" in the sense of sense or intension.

I

I begin with a translation of the One over Many Argument, as it appears in Alexander's text (80.8-81.10):[5]

I. They also use this sort of argument to establish ideas *(ideai)*. If each of the many men is [a] man, and each of the many animals [an] animal, and similarly in the other cases; and if in the case of each something is not predicated of itself, but there is something which is predicated of all of them, and is not the same as any of them *(oudeni autōn tauton on)*, then there must be something besides *(para)* the particulars *(ta kath'hekasta)* which is separated *(kechōrismenon)* from them and eternal *(aidion)*. For it is always predicated in the same way of the succession of numerically different particulars. But what is a one over *(epi)* many, separated from them, and eternal is an idea. Therefore there are ideas.

II. A. He says that this argument establishes ideas both of negations and of things that are not *(tōn apophaseōn kai tōn mē ontōn)*. For one and the same negation is predicated of many things, including things which are not, and it is not the same as any of the things of which it is true. For not-man is predicated of horse and dog and of everything besides man, and for this reason it is a one over *(epi)* many and is not the same as any of the things of which it is predicated. Moreover, it persists forever *(aei menei)*, since it is true alike of like things [i.e. of the succession of numerically different particulars]. For not-musical is true of many things (of all those things that are not musical) in the same way, and similarly not-man of all those things that are not men. Therefore there are also ideas of negations.

II. B. But this is absurd. For how could there be an idea of not being? For if one accepts this, there will be one idea of things disparate in kind and of things different in every way, such as line and man, just because they are all not horses. And there will be one idea of things that have no limit. And of things of which one is prior, one secondary, for man and animal, of which one is prior, one secondary, are both not-wood, and of such things they did not want genera *(genē)* or ideas.

III. But it is clear that neither does this argument prove that there are ideas, although it too tends to show *(deiknunai bouletai)* that what is predicated in common is other than the particulars of which it is predicated *(allo einai to koinōs katēgoroumenon tōn kath'hekasta hōn katēgoreitai)*.

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[5] I translate M. Hayduck's text of Alexander's *In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria* in volume I of *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* (Berlin, 1891). The argument, as well as other portions of the *Peri Ideōn,* is reprinted in W. D. Ross, *Aristotelis Fragmenta Selecta* (Oxford, 1955). A new edition of the *Peri Ideōn,* by D. Harlfinger, with an Italian translation by F. Munari, appears in W. Leszl, *Il "De Ideis" Di Aristotele e la Teoria Plantonica Delle Idee* (Florence, 1975). (I omit translation and discussion of 81.10–22, which is of doubtful authenticity and may be directed to a slightly different issue.)

The outlines, if not the details, of the argument are relatively clear. I sets out a purportedly Platonic argument for the existence of forms or ideas *(ideai)*, the so-called One over Many Argument (OMA). II and III level two objections against it. IIA protests that the OMA's premises are too hospitable: if they generate any forms, they generate too many. In particular, they would license the existence of forms of "negations and of things that are not." IIB objects that it would be absurd for there to be such forms; and here Aristotle assumes the Platonists would agree: "of such things they did not want genera or ideas." III rescues them from the absurdity. For here Aristotle argues that the premises of the OMA fail to prove the existence of any forms. Hence, as far as this argument goes, there are no forms of negations—or of anything else. Aristotle concedes, however, that the OMA shows that "what is predicated in common is other than the particulars of which it is predicated."

Now for some details.

The OMA consists of three initial premises which we may formulate as follows:

    (1) Whenever a group of particulars are F, some one thing is predicated of them.

    (2) What is predicated is not the same as any of the F particulars of which it is predicated.

    (3) What is predicated is always predicated in the same way of the F particulars.

(1)–(3) are taken to license two intermediate conclusions:

    (4) What is predicated is separate.

    (5) What is predicated is eternal.

But:

    (6) Whatever is a one over many, separate, and eternal is a form.

Therefore—the general conclusion of the argument—:

    (7) What is predicated is a form.

First a terminological point. Aristotle makes it a defining feature of being a form that a form be separate and eternal. But *"idea"* need not have this sense. Aristotle elsewhere uses *"idea"* for his own *eidē* or forms, which are not separate.[6] Nor do the

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[6] See *"idea"* in Bonitz, *Index Arist.* 338*b*34–48. The point is made by Owen, in "Platonism of Aristotle," *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1965), p. 128, n. 1,

Platonic dialogues consistently use *"idea"* as Aristotle does here. The early Platonic dialogues—generally thought to represent the thought of the historical Socrates—also speak of *ideai* and *eidē*. But it is generally agreed that Socratic forms, unlike the Platonic forms introduced in the middle dialogues, are unseparated. Indeed, Aristotle himself distinguishes Socratic from Platonic forms in just this way, commending Socrates for "not separating the universal."[7] In the *Peri Ideōn* Aristotle consistently uses *"idea"* for separated Platonic forms; but *"idea"* is not restricted to this use either elsewhere in Aristotle or in Plato. I shall correspondingly follow customary practice and use "form" to cover separated Platonic and nonseparated Socratic forms alike;

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and also in "Dialectic and Eristic in the Treatment of Forms" in *Aristotle on Dialectic,* ed. Owen (Oxford, 1970), p. 124. The same point can be made in other cases, some of which require comment here. Aristotle says that forms are separated (*kechōrismenon*). *"Chōrismos"* and its cognates regularly connote separation or independent existence (I discuss the details of separation below); and Aristotle regularly rejects separation. But other vocabulary is more fluid. At *APo.* 77a5–9 he chastizes the Platonists for positing a *hen para ta polla,* although he allows a *hen kata pollōn* and a *hen epi pleinōn.* Yet at *APo.* 100a7, he allows his own universals to be *hen para ta polla.* This is inconsistency in terminology, not doctrine: *"para"* can be used hygienically, to express some sort of difference between universals and particulars that falls short of separation; but it can also be used nonhygienically, for the Platonic separation. But the mere use of *"para"* need not import separation; only *"chōrismos"* consistently bears this sense. Aristotle, in the *Peri Ideōn,* seems to use *"para"* hygienically at least sometimes. In the arguments from the sciences he says that his *koina* are *para* particulars (79.18–19) although he implicitly denies that they are separated. *"Para"* and *"epi"* in the OMA seem indeterminate; where they occur, so too does *"chōris";* *"chōris"* might be explicative of them, or assert something additional. Unlike the arguments from the sciences, the OMA does not assert that *koina* are *para* particulars, only that they are different from, or other than, particulars. Dancy is seriously misleading in his discussion of some of these passages. He translates *"para"* (in the arguments from the sciences) as "separation," without comment and without noting the Greek, and seems to believe that the fact that Aristotle uses it approvingly of his own *koina* shows that at one time Aristotle accepted a Platonic sort of separation; but Aristotle's use of *"para"* here shows no such thing. See R. Dancy, *Sense and Contradiction* (Dordrecht, 1975), pp. 86, 124–5. Aristotle's terminology is usefully discussed by N. P. White, "A Note on *ekthesis,"* *Phronesis* 16 (1971), pp. 164–8. The essential point is noticed by H. F. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore, 1944), p. 77, n. 56.

  [7] *Metaphysics* 1078b30. I discuss differences between nonseparated Socratic and separated Platonic forms below; see esp. section VI. For *"eidos"* and *"idea"* used for nonseparated forms, see, e.g., *Eu.* 5d4, 6d11; *M.*72c7, e5.

where their difference is important, I shall indicate which is meant. (What "separation" imports will concern us later.) Aristotle takes the OMA, then, to be an argument for the existence of separated forms: what are predicated, the argument purports to prove, are separated, eternal forms. I shall understand (7) in this sense.

I take it that a group of particulars are F just in case a general term "F" is true of them. But what is it that is then predicated of them? One might suppose that it is linguistic predicates that are predicated:

(1a) Whenever a group of particulars are F, some one predicate, "F," is predicated of them.

(1a) might seem a natural and plausible reading of (1). But it is important to see that it is not the correct reading. First, Aristotle's talk of "predication" does not speak in favor of (1a). It is as natural, in Aristotle's Greek, to say that man—a secondary substance, on his view of the matter in the *Categories*, at least—is predicated as to say that "man" is; predication, for Aristotle, need not be a linguistic affair.[8] Second, even if (1a) seems plausible on its own, what it would be used to prove would not be: that linguistic predicates, since these are what are predicated, are forms, are separate and eternal. Whatever sense might be made of this, it is a sense inappropriate to our context. For it is clear that forms are not linguistic predicates: the form Man is not the predicate "man," even if it is the meaning of that predicate. Nor, finally, as I shall argue below, would Aristotle's criticisms of the OMA, in II, be apposite if (1) were read as (1a). I shall assume, then, that (1) is not to be read as (1a).

One might argue that a closely related reading of (1) is correct, however: that whenever a group of things are, say, men, the *meaning* of "man" is predicated of them. On this view, it is the meanings of predicates, and not the predicates themselves, that are predicated:

(1b) Whenever a group of particulars are F, some one meaning, the meaning of "F," is predicated of them.

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[8] For man as a secondary substance, see, e.g., *Cat.* 2a14–19. For man—not "man"—as what is predicated, see, e.g., 1b10–15. Of course, "man" may be predicated as well; see, e.g., 2a19–33. The point is only that predication, for Aristotle, is not always, or even primarily, a linguistic relation.

202

(1*b*) embodies what many take to be a Platonic view. Moreover, what it would be used to prove might also be thought to be Platonic: that meanings are forms. This is, indeed, just the linguistic or semantic version of the one over many sketched in our introduction: that there are forms corresponding to every general term, and that these forms just are the meanings of those terms to which they do correspond. Nonetheless, I do not think we should read (1) as (1*b*). We cannot tell this from scrutiny of (1) alone. But I shall argue below that Aristotle's objections to (1) do not make sense if (1) is read as (1*b*). If this is right then, whatever may be true of Plato, Aristotle at least does not represent him as arguing or assuming that forms are meanings.

There is a further reading of (1): that what are predicated are properties:

    (1*c*) Whenever a group of particulars are F, some one thing, the property F, is predicated of them.

On one understanding of "property," such as that of Carnap, properties just are meanings; if so, (1*c*) collapses into (1*b*). But I do not understand "property" in this sense. Rather, I construe properties as genuine features of reality, as nonlinguistic, non-semantic features of the world.[9] On this view, properties at least cannot be assumed to be correlated one-one with general terms, nor can it be assumed that what properties the world contains are to be discovered by attention to what general terms a language happens to contain. Properties are discovered, not by syntax or semantics, but by science. (1*c*), so read, does not then collapse into (1*b*). Rather, it says that whenever a group of things are F, for any instantiation of "F," F is a genuine property. If a group of things are grue, then grue is a genuine property. So construed, (1*c*) is, I believe, false. But it is also, I think, the correct reading of (1). That is to say, Aristotle claims that the Platonists believe that there are properties corresponding to every general term true of groups of things; and he then argues, quite correctly, that this is false. To see that this is the correct reading of (1) requires further probing, so let us proceed. (I shall assume, for the next few pages, that (1) is to be read as (1*c*); defense of that assumption is forthcoming later.)

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[9] For this understanding of "property," "predicate," and "meaning," see n. 4.

(1) contains a further assumption that deserves mention: that when a group of things are F, some *one* thing is predicated of them. Plato and Aristotle both take the truth of this assumption to be a necessary condition for thought and knowledge. As Plato puts it in the *Parmenides*:[10]

But yet, Socrates, if one does not allow there to be forms of things that are, after having attended to all the present [objections] and others of the same sort, and does not define a form of each single thing, he won't know where to turn his thought, not allowing there to be always a form of each of the things that are, and thus he will altogether destroy the capacity for dialectic. [*Parm.* 135*b*5–*c*2]

Plato and Aristotle disagree over the status of this one thing necessary to thought and knowledge; but they agree that the possibility of thought and knowledge depends on the possibility of univocal predication.

(2) presumably contains something like the following line of thought: suppose, contrary to (2), that what is predicated is identical to one of the things of which it is predicated. Man, say, is identical to Socrates. But Callias is also a man. Is Socrates then predicated of Callias? But no primary substance is predicated of anything (*Cat.* 1*b*3–6; 2*a*11–14). Nor would it do to assume that Callias, too, is identical to man. For then, by the transitivity of identity, Socrates and Callias would be identical. Man, then, is not identical to any of the individual men of which it is predicated.[11]

(3) explains (1) and (2) further: (3) asserts that man is always predicated in just the same way, despite the plurality and variability of what it is predicated of. Particular men come and go, but this does not affect the continued univocal predication of man, does not alter the fact that, as (1) insists, just one thing is predicated of them. One more reason, too, then, for accepting (2): since different properties are true of man and of any individual man (eternity and perishability, respectively), they cannot, by Leibniz' Law, be identical.

From these three premises, the Platonists are alleged to infer that what is predicated is separate and eternal.

"Eternity" may, in fact, be an overtranslation of "*aidion*," if we

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[10] See also *Crat.* 440*a*6–*d*6. In Aristotle, see, e.g., *APo.* 77*a*5–9, *Met.* 100*b*6–11.
[11] See Owen, "The Platonism of Aristotle," p. 134.

understand eternity in the strict sense of existing outside time or timelessly. But in the repetition of (5), in IIA, Aristotle says only that what is predicated "persists forever," and this requires no more than everlastingness. That what is predicated is everlasting seems entailed by (1)–(3), if we add the assumption that there always have been and always will be particulars to receive predications; and this is certainly an assumption Aristotle accepts, whatever may be true of Plato.[12]

For the purposes of this paper, (4) is the more important claim. Aristotle does not explain "separation" for us, and the issue will concern us in detail below. But we may say briefly for now that to say that what is predicated is separate is to say that its existence is independent of that of any or all sensible particulars: the existence of justice, say, is neither reducible to nor dependent on that of any sensible just person or action; justice exists whether or not any just persons or actions do.[13]

It is obvious at a glance that (1)–(3) do not entail (4). (2), for example, says that what is predicated is *different* from what it is predicated of; but plainly difference does not entail separation. I am different from oxygen, but could not exist without it. Even the additional support provided by (3) is inadequate. (3) justifies the claim that what is predicated is independent of any *single* particular of which it is predicated; it does not follow, as (4) requires, that what is predicated is independent of *everything* of which it is predicated, that what is predicated could exist if nothing for it to be predicated of did. Just as the fact that a given piece of wax need not be square or circular does not entail that it could exist

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[12] According to the *Timaeus*, men have not always existed; cf. 30aff. It is disputed whether Platonic forms are eternal; for some discussion see, e.g., Owen, "Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present," *Monist* 50 (1966), pp. 317–40. The issue does not affect our chief concerns here.

[13] I discuss separation below; see section VI. Not everyone would agree with this characterization of what separation consists in. R. E. Allen, for example, in his *Plato's "Euthyphro" and the Earlier Theory of Forms* (New York, 1970), p. 132, rejects it. But my account is not nonstandard, and it will serve us well enough here. For others who also explain separation in terms of independent existence, see W. F. R. Hardie, *A Study in Plato* (Oxford, 1936), p. 73 (also cited by Allen), and T. H. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory* (Oxford, 1977), p. 154.

205

without any shape, so the fact that what is predicated is indepen-
dent of any given particular of which it is predicated does not
show that it could exist if no particulars did. Nonidentity, even
backed by everlastingness, fails to establish separation.

So much for the argument itself. I turn now to Aristotle's criti-
cisms of it, and then to its Platonic sources.

II

Aristotle's first, and longer, objection concerns the range of
forms the OMA is committed to (assuming, for the moment,
that it proves that there are some forms). Aristotle argues that the
OMA commits the Platonists to countenancing forms in a larger
range of cases than they would like; and he applauds their reti-
cence here, insisting, in IIB, that this broad range would be
absurd. In particular he argues that (1)–(3) would license forms
of "negations and of things that are not." For one and the same
negation, such as not-man, may be predicated of a plurality of
sensible particulars (of all those particulars that are not men),
and so satisfies premise (1); not-man is not the same as any of the
things of which it is predicated (2); and it is predicated in the
same way of the perishable particulars of which it is predicated
(3). It follows that not-man is separate and eternal, and so a
form; but this, Aristotle protests, is absurd.

But what are "negations and things that are not"? Let us take
the second conjunct first. Cherniss suggests that "things that are
not" are nonexistent things, such as chimaeras and centaurs.[14]
But there are no appropriate examples of nonexistent things to
sustain Cherniss' suggestion: all of the examples are of nega-
tions—not-man, not-musical, and the like. Then too, in explain-
ing why it is absurd for there to be forms of negations (at the
beginning of IIB), Aristotle or Alexander simply says "For how
could there be an idea of not-being?" On Cherniss' reading, the
question is inserted inappropriately between two discussions of
negations; and it receives no separate answer.

An alternative to Cherniss' reading is ready to hand. The "*kai*"
that links "*apophaseis*" to "*ta mē onta*" is epexegetic, not genuinely

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[14] Cherniss, p. 261; cf. pp. 254, 256.

conjunctive. "*Ta mē onta*" is a gloss on or explanation of "*apopha-seis*" and introduces no new set of examples. Aristotle's concern here is only the absurdity of there being ideas of negations.[15]

Still, what are negations? An answer to this question is best approached by way of seeing what Aristotle's objections to them are. Aristotle seems to think it would be absurd or strange (*atopon*) for there to be *any* ideas of negations (81.2). Now if forms are meanings or predicates—if (1*a*) or (1*b*) were in play—it would be difficult to penetrate his reasons. For surely whatever else may be wrong with "not-man," it is a single predicate, and it may be assigned a perfectly determinate meaning or sense. Then too, it would be difficult to see why the Platonists should not want forms of negations. For again, if forms are predicates or mean-ings, and if "not-man" is as much a predicate as, and can be defined as easily as, "man" or "horse," it is difficult to see why one should welcome forms in the latter cases, but not in the former.

Aristotle's reason for supposing forms of negations are absurd is not that they are not predicates or could not be defined, but that they would "group together things disparate in kind," "things different in every way." The idea seems to be that forms are intended to be devices for "carving reality at the joints" (*Phaedrus* 265*e*), for delineating the real properties and kinds there are, articulating genuine resemblances between things. But Aristotle then protests that the fact that a group of things are all not-men is not a genuine point of resemblance among them, does not show that they genuinely share any real property or fall into any real kind. For not-man merely indicates the absence of man; but that a group of things fail to share some property is not a genuine unifying feature of them. Aristotle assumes, then, that forms are designed to articulate the genuine properties or kinds the

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[15] Further support: the *Met.* passages that mention the OMA (990*b*13–14, 1079*a*9–10) mention only *apophaseis* and not also *ta mē onta*. Contrast, too, the object of thought (81.25–82.7) which speaks of *ta mēd'holōs onta* (not just of *ta mē onta*) and provides appropriate examples (*hippokentauron, chimairan*). Perhaps Alexander incorrectly incorporates that passage into our context. Syrianus *(Met.* 110.18–29) and Asclepius *(Met.* 74.12–28) take the objection to concern only *apophaseis*. That this is the correct interpretation was suggested to me by Owen, as were most of the arguments I cite in its support.

207

world contains; and he then objects, quite rightly, that negative properties or kinds are not genuine properties or kinds.[16]

He makes the same point in a different way in the *De Interpretatione*: "not-man," he says, is not a name (16*a*29); it is only an "indefinite name" (16*a*32)—for what "not-man" "signifies is in a way one thing, but indefinite" (19*b*9). As Ackrill explains, Aristotle "probably thinks of ["not-man"] as a single word but thinks that it fails to name anything in the way in which an ordinary name does: it stands for no definite kind of thing and can be applied to a wildly various range of objects."[17]

If this is right, it suggests that not-P is a negation just in case P is a property; negations are the complements of genuine properties or kinds.[18] This account of negations is not syntactic: the claim is not that every negative word denotes a negation, while no nonnegative word does. Some genuine properties might be denominated by negative words; some negations might be denominated by nonnegative words—we can always coin positive and negative words as we like (say "schman" for "not-man"); we do not thereby dispose of or create negations. Not-P is a negation not just when "not-P" is syntactically negative, but when P is a genuine property. A negation is the complement of a genuine property; as such, we can only know what negations there are when we know what real properties there are, and this is deter-

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[16] Of course, were there only dogs and horses, "not-horse" would pick out a genuine kind. But this would be purely fortuitous, and in particular, there are no interesting truths about all not-horses qua not-horses, although there are interesting truths about dogs qua dogs. Armstrong (II, pp. 23–9) provides an account and criticism of negative universals that parallels Aristotle's account and criticism of *apophaseis*. Their criticisms obviously assume that only certain terms that apply to groups of things pick out *genuine* properties or resemblances. It is notoriously difficult to specify these, and not everyone would accept their approach. For a different view, see, e.g., N. Goodman, "Seven Strictures on Similarity," in *Experience and Theory*, ed. L. Foster and J. W. Swanson (Boston, 1970), pp. 19–29.

[17] J. L. Ackrill, *Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione* (Oxford, 1963), p. 117 f. Aristotle denies that "not-man" is an *apophasis* in the *De Int.* (16*a*31); this is because here he uses "*apophasis*" for negative statements, and "not-man" is not a statement of any sort.

[18] As such, negations are just a subset of nongenuine properties or kinds. "Being," for example, is not the complement of any genuine property, and so is not a negation; but one might argue that it is not a genuine property or kind. See further below, section V.

mined, not by syntax or semantics, but by scientific research. [19]

If this is correct, it suggests that (1*c*) is the correct reading of (1). For only on (1*c*) is it absurd to countenance forms of negations. For surely "not-man" is a single predicate, and may be assigned a perfectly determinate meaning, as we ordinarily construe meaning. It is only if properties are predicated that any absurdities result. I shall take it, then, that (1) is to be read as (1*c*). Further support for this view is forthcoming from consideration of Aristotle's criticisms in III.

As Aristotle construes the OMA, then, it attempts to determine what properties there are by consideration of what general terms there are—and Aristotle rightly objects that following this route leads to the wrong destination. Aristotle thus accepts—indeed inaugurates—a traditional interpretation of Plato's one over many argument—although he does not take the further step, popular in some modern accounts, of identifying forms with meanings. (This is not to say that forms are not meanings— although I do not believe they are—but only that that claim is not in view here.)

III

Aristotle's cryptic second criticism, in III, is lodged against the logic of the OMA. He asserts, with no supporting argument, that (1)–(3) fail to show that there are any separated forms, although they do show that there are *koina*. He implies that (1)–(3) do not entail (4), but only (4*a*):

(4*a*) What is predicated is different from what it is predicated of.

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[19] Notice that as I construe negations, there are *no* forms of negations. For on my view, being wingless, say, applies to all things that lack wings—to points and plants, as well as to people. One might weaken the notion of a negation such that its application is restricted to the sort of thing to which that of which it is a negation applies. Thus, one might restrict the application of being wingless to wingless animals. On this view, there might be some forms of negations (being wingless might be one). In this case, Aristotle's objection to the Platonists would be that they are committed to forms of *all* negations, whereas there are forms only of *some* of them. We should then need to ask, not "Does Plato countenance any forms of negations?" but "Does he countenance too many?" So far as I can see, negations could be construed this way without loss to my argument. But Aristotle seems to think that all forms of negations are absurd; and he seems to use "not" in the more generous way I have.

And he claims that the argument, so reconstituted, licenses, not (7), but only (7a):

(7a) What is predicated is a *koinon*.

It is difficult to disagree with Aristotle's claim that (1)–(3) entail (4a). For (4a) simply restates (2). If (4a) is a premise of the argument, it is obviously entailed by the argument. But just as obviously, this is not a very exciting proof of (4a). Still, Aristotle's central claim, that (1)–(3) do not entail (4), and hence do not entail (7), is, as we have seen, obviously correct. This is not to say, of course, nor does Aristotle say so here, that there are no separated forms. The claim is only that the OMA provides no good reason to suppose that there are. Aristotle in fact believes that forms are incoherent entities; but he reserves defense of that claim for other occasions.

But the OMA is not worthless: it shows that there are *koina*. But what are *koina*? A full answer to this question is beyond the scope of this paper; but a partial answer should be provided. We have seen that Aristotle's criticisms in II make sense only if what is predicated are properties; hence *koina* should be properties. That is to say, (7a) states that a proper analysis of properties reveals that they are *koina*. That *koina* are properties and not predicates or meanings, receives further support from other contexts.

For example, in the just preceding arguments from the sciences, Aristotle insisted that *koina* are the proper objects of scientific investigation.[20] The science of medicine, for example, is concerned with the *koinon* of health. He does not mean that doctors should pay especial care to the dictionary definition of "health"; he means that they are concerned with the nature of health, with what it is to be healthy—and, alas, no attention to the dictionary imparts such knowledge.

Or again, *koina* are what Aristotle elsewhere calls "universals" (*katholou*);[21] and it is clear that Aristotelian universals are not

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[20] See especially 79.18–19.

[21] At *De Int.* 17a38–17b2, Aristotle says that man is a universal, Callias a particular; both are things (*pragmata*). He defines a universal as "that which by its nature is predicated of several things"—just as, in the arguments from sciences and OMA, *koina* are said to be predicated of particulars. At *SE.* 178b37ff, he again talks of *koina* and says they are *koinē katēgoroumenon epi pasin*. In the *APo.* he describes his universals as "the one besides (*para*) the

linguistic predicates or meanings, but properties or kinds, genuine features of reality. Aristotle, like Plato, is a realist; his universals are not concepts or meanings, nor are they determined by concepts or meanings. We may have a concept of goatstag, or be able to define "goatstag"; but there is no universal or *koinon* of goatstag.

But although Aristotle, like Plato, is a realist about universals, he is a realist of a rather different sort. In particular, his *koina* are not separated from particulars.[22] But although Aristotle rejects separation, or independent existence, (4a) reveals that he accepts nonidentity of some sort. He agrees with Plato that what is predicated is nonidentical to any given individual of which it is predicated: when one predicates man of something, one predicates one thing *of another* (*Cat.* 1b10–12). It also seems likely that Aristotle believes that no universal or *koinon* is identical to all the particulars of which it is predicated.[23] But the existence of universals or *koina*, although not reducible to the existence of any or all sensible particulars, is dependent on the existence of such sensibles: "if everyone were healthy, health would exist, but not sickness, and if everything were white whiteness would exist but not blackness." (*Cat.* 14a7–10); "if primary substances did not exist, it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist" (*Cat.* 2b3–6). Aristotelian universals enjoy dependent, not independent, existence; but their existence, although dependent on particulars, is not reducible to the existence of particulars.

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many, whatever is one and the same in all things" (100a6–8)—just as in the *Peri Ideōn koina* are said to be *para ta kath'hekasta;* and the *APo.*'s "one and the same in all things" is surely very close to the common predication of *koina*. Cf. also *APo.77a5–9.* (I assume, against some commentators, but with many, that Aristotelian universals are genuine features of reality, irreducible to sensible particulars, and nonidentical to meanings or concepts; but defense of that claim would take us too far afield here.) J. Cooper, in "*The Magna Moralia* and Aristotle's Moral Philosophy," *American Journal of Philology* 94 (1973) pp. 339–342, also suggests that the *Peri Ideōn's koina* are Aristotle's ontological alternative to Platonic forms, and are his nonseparated universals.

[22] That is to say, even if *para* or *epi,* they are not *chōris.* See n. 6.

[23] If Aristotelian universals are aggregates, then a given universal F will be identical to all the Fs there are; if they are sets or properties, then a given universal F is not identical to all the Fs there are. I believe that Aristotle holds the property view. For some discussion, see B. Jones, "An Introduction to the First Five Chapters of Aristotle's *Categories,*" *Phronesis* 20 (1975), esp. pp. 160–168.

Now if this account of *koina* is correct, there is a puzzle. Aristotle believes that the OMA shows that there are *koina*. He also believes that it allows that negations may be predicated. Hence he appears to be committed to there being *koina* of negations.[24] Yet in II he objected that it would be absurd for there to be ideas of negations. To be sure, *koina* are not ideas—they are not separate. Yet Aristotle's objections turned, not on negations having to be separate, but on their failing to carve reality at the joints. On our interpretation of *koina*, they, too, are meant to be genuine properties or kinds. But it is difficult to see how *koina* could be any more successful here than ideas are, if they include negations. Aristotle, in being committed to *koina* of negations, is vulnerable to his own objections in II.

So far we have examined the logic of OMA and Aristotle's criticisms of it. We have seen that if (1) is read as (1c), Aristotle's criticisms in II are justified; and he is surely correct to argue that the OMA does not prove that there are separated forms. But none of this shows that he has effectively criticized anything the Platonists profess: for that we need to know whether they accept, or are committed to, the OMA as Aristotle presents it. Here three chief questions will concern us: first, is Aristotle correct to say that the Platonists do not want forms of negations? Second, is he correct to say that they accept, or are committed to, the premises of the OMA? And, finally, do the Platonists use those premises to argue for separated forms? Answers to these questions are difficult and disputed, and they require detailed examination of a variety of texts. Here I can just sketch a rough geography of the world of forms, to be filled in better by later explorers.

IV

At *Republic* 596a6–7 Socrates says that "we usually assume one

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[24] This conclusion follows only if Aristotle takes the OMA (read with (4a) and (7a) rather than with (4) and (7)) to be not only valid but also sound. Otherwise he might argue that the argument is valid and has a true conclusion but is unsound; and were he to argue this he would not be committed to *koina* of negations here. But *"deiknunai bouletai"* at 81.8–9 suggests that he accepts the argument (suitably revised). Cf. with 79.16–19 and 83.19–20; contrast 81.10.

form for each group of many things to which we apply the same name." This might seem to suggest (1*b*) or (1*c*), and so it is often taken.[25] Yet at *Politicus* 262*a* ff, Socrates warns against the error of assuming that there is a form corresponding to every name. "*Barbaros*" (meaning "non-Greek"), he says, is a name; nonetheless, there is no corresponding form. There are not forms corresponding to every name in a language, but only corresponding to names that denote genuine properties or kinds. Since "*barbaros*" indiscriminately groups together all non-Greeks, ignoring important differences between, say, Phrygians and Frenchmen (262*de*), it does not denote a form. The mere fact that a group of things are all non-Greeks does not show that there is a kind, the non-Greek kind. *Barbaros*, that is to say, is a negation, and so it is not a form.[26]

[25] See, for example, Ross; Matthews and Cohen; J. Annas, "Forms and First Principles," *Phronesis* 19 (1974), pp. 264, 277; M. Frede, *Prädikation und Existenzaussage* (Göttingen, 1967), p. 92. J. A. Smith, on the other hand, in "General Relative Clauses in Greek," *Classical Review* 31 (1917), pp. 69–71, argues that *Rep.* 596*a*6–7 contains no such assertion. He argues that the passage is correctly translated as "for we are, as you know, in the habit of assuming [as a rule of procedure] that the Idea which corresponds to a group of particulars, each to each, is always one, in which case [or: and in that case] we call the group, or its particulars, by the same name as the *eidos.*" On this translation "all that is said is that if there is an Idea that Idea is indiscerptibly one, and must not be divided or multiplied" (p. 71); there is no commitment to any principle for generating forms. I thank Alexander Nehamas for calling my attention to this extremely interesting article. Notice that in this section I consider only the *content* of (1); I defer until later the question of what Plato takes (1) to show.

[26] "*Barbaros*" is not syntactically negative. But it denotes a negation insofar as it means "not-Greek." But the example is imperfect in two ways. First, "*barbaros*" denotes only non-Greek *people;* it is not the complement of being Greek; it does not apply to everything which fails to be Greek—to Australian surf-boards, say. Second, being Greek is not a genuine property, in which case *barbaros,* once again, is not the complement of any genuine property. (Nor does Plato seem to suppose that being Greek is a genuine property; at least, he suggests that division of humans into male/female would be more appropriate than that into Greek/non-Greek; and here his criticism is aimed at being Greek no less than at *barbaros;* cf. 262*e*3–5). But no doubt being Greek is more property-like than *barbaros* is. Plato also objects that the division is "off-balance," lopping off one small segment of a class and setting against it all the rest. But the force of this objection is not, as is sometimes supposed, that every division must be genuinely dichotomous, or must divide classes into two, each division containing equal numbers of members; rather the objection is simply that the division, being off-balance, fails to carve reality at the joints—and this is just the same objection as that levelled against *apophaseis* by Aristotle.

213

Noting that the *Politicus* is a late dialogue, following the criticism of the classical theory of forms in the *Parmenides*, we might suppose that Plato has retrenched: early on, he subscribed to (1c); later he sees that it leads to the difficulties Aristotle articulates, and so abandons it.[27] Aristotle's argument is then a plausible *ad hominem* attack whose import Plato himself came to recognize.

While this suggestion cannot be decisively rejected, I would like to suggest an alternative. The wording of *Rep.* 596a does not by itself commit Plato to (1c). Before we can conclude that he accepts it, we need to know how he understands "name" (*onoma*). I shall suggest that he has in mind a restricted usage of "*onoma*," familiar from other contexts, such that "n" is a name only if it denotes a real property or kind; names are restricted to what I shall call "property-names," to names denoting real properties or kinds. I shall suggest, that is, that Plato uses "name" in something like the *De Int.*'s restricted sense.[28] If so, *Rep.* 596a asserts, not (1c), but (1d):

> (1d) Whenever a group of particulars are property-named "F," some one property, the F, is predicated of them.

(1c) and (1d) both use "property" in the sense of a real feature of the world. But (1d) restricts (1)'s substitution instances to those sentences gotten by substituting property-names for "F," whereas (1c) is considerably more liberal. On (1c), the mere fact that a group of things are F licenses us to infer that there is a corresponding property, the F. On (1d), we can infer that there is a corresponding property only if "F" is a property-name. Of course, this is not a very exciting inference: for to say that "F" is a property-name just is to say that F is a property. But exciting or not, (1d) possesses a virtue lacked by (1c): it is true. Nor is (1d) trivial: it embodies realist assumptions many would challenge.

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[27] For this view, see Annas, pp. 277, 279; Frede, 92–4; S. Marc Cohen, "The Logic of the Third Man," *Philosophical Review* 80 (1971), p. 473, n. 41.

[28] I do not use "property-name" in such a way as to exclude the names of artifacts from being property-names. Although artifacts are not *natural* kinds, they are *real* kinds (in contrast to, say, *barbaros*), and have natures independent of us, at least in the sense that it is not entirely up to us how to use them. Plato certainly thinks this, in any event: cf., for example, *Crat.* 387d6ff, where he explains the notion of a property name, with reference to cutting instruments and shuttles. See further below, and n. 29.

If *Rep*. 596a asserts only (1d), then it agrees, and does not con-
flict, with *Politicus* 262a ff.

Rep. 596a contains no explanation of its use of "name." But in
the *Cratylus*, the only dialogue where Plato discusses names in
detail, he argues that "n" counts as a name only if "n" denotes a
real kind and reveals the outline of its essence; names refer to
real kinds by describing their essences.[29] Plato also there dis-
tinguishes between correct and incorrect names; "n" counts as a
correct name just in case it describes well the property or kind
to which it refers, just in case its descriptions are especially reveal-
ing or apt. "n" is an incorrect name just in case, although it refers
to a real kind, its descriptive content is less rich or informative.
Both correct and incorrect names are words that demarcate
properties or kinds. If this is correct, then Plato at least some-
times restricts names to those words that denote real kinds, to
property-names. In that case, *Rep*. 596a need not commit Plato
to (1c); at least, the mere use of "*onoma*" creates no presumption
in its favor.[30]

Still, Plato does sometimes use "*onoma*" in a broader sense, as
at *Politicus* 262a. I have suggested that this passage need not
conflict with *Rep*. 596a: perhaps, although the *Politicus* rejects
(1c), the *Republic* does not accept it, but uses "*onoma*" in the nar-
rower sense of the *Cratylus*. Different senses of "name" occur in
the two passages, not different doctrines about the relationship
between names and natures. But although this is a possible way

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[29] For some details on the *Cratylus*, see my "Plato on Naming," *Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1977), pp. 289–301.

[30] M. Schofield has objected to this interpretation of *Rep*. 596a partly, I think, because he disagrees with my interpretation of the *Crat*. but also because "*Ceteris paribus*, one would naturally take *onoma* in as untechnical a sense as pos-
sible—and the very fact that the text contains no hint of restriction suggests that *cetera* are *paria*." But I think the text contains at least one hint: it says that the procedure of pairing names and forms is their usual practice. Surely this means that it is a distinctively *Platonic* pastime—and surely that licenses us to look to other contexts where the practice is exercised. The *Crat*. then ex-
plains their distinctive understanding of "name" (not, I should say, all that unusual an understanding at the time), and other contexts I discuss below explain how names (so understood) are to be correlated with forms. Then too, the entire discussion is very reminiscent of the *Crat*. (see below, section VII). Surely we cannot understand *Rep*. 596a just on its own, but are entitled to see what it is that could count as "usual"; and what is usual is far from being untechnical.

of reconciling the two passages, it is not required. Is there other evidence that can decide between the two interpretations? The *Republic* passage claims that the procedure there described is "customary"; perhaps other sources that use the same procedure will decide between (1*c*) and (1*d*).[31]

Cherniss suggests that the "closest approach to a formal statement" of (1*c*) occurs at *Parmenides* 132a1–4:[32]

> I suppose that this is what leads you to believe that there is one form in each case. Whenever you think that many things are large, you perhaps think there is a certain form, the same in your view of all of them; hence you believe that largeness is one.

Socrates agrees without demur, and is thereby subjected to the tangled Third Man Argument. But what has he agreed to? Certainly something appropriately called a "one over many" assumption, some version of which plays a crucial role in the Third Man. But not all one over many assumptions are tantamount to (1*c*)—nor is (1*c*) required for the Third Man.[33] Socrates agrees that when a group of things are large, there is a form, the large, over them. But we have no license to infer that Socrates would agree that if a group of things are not large, there is a form, the not-large, over them. "Large" is a property-name, and Socrates' acceptance of a corresponding form here does not commit him

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[31] Annas (p. 277) suggests that *Rep.* 596*a* "is the only occasion on which" Plato accepts a one over many principle. That seems to me to be false: some sort of one over many principle is at work in various Socratic contexts (although it is (1*d*), not (1*c*); but then, it is (1*d*) here, too). What is closer to the truth is that *Rep.* 596*a*ff is the only place where Plato uses the principle to generate separated forms; but even that is not quite correct: see below, section VII.

[32] Cherniss, p. 260, n. 17. Cherniss also cites *Sophist* 243*de* and *Philebus* 34*e*3–4. The *Sophist* passage seems to me indeterminate. The *Philebus* passage reads: "What was the common feature, then, that we had in mind to persuade us to call these very different things by the same name?" This seems to count against (1*c*): it is assumed, not that the application of a name licenses a corresponding form, but that we apply names only when we believe there is a shared property. The direction of fit is from property to name, not from name to property.

[33] I explore the connections between the one over many and the Third Man in another paper, "Aristotle and the More Accurate Arguments." (1*c*) is in several respects inadequate as the premise of the Third Man. One reason is, briefly, this: it restricts predications to groups of *particulars* (*ta kath'hekasta*); but for the Third Man regress to work, predications of groups consisting of particulars as well as forms must be possible.

thereby to forms corresponding to every general term. To be sure, nothing that is said here explicitly precludes the extension. The point is only that the passage is silent about the range of predicates to which its reasoning applies; it cannnot be used without further argument as evidence that Plato is committed to (1*c*).

This is especially so in light of the fact that Socrates questions the existence of forms corresponding to various predicates; indeed, he denies that there are forms of mud, dirt, and hair (*Parm.* 130*c*5–*d*5). Either the two passages are flatly inconsistent, or one needs to read the one over many assumption of 132*a*1–4 in some way other than (1*c*).

Then too, one needs to bear the context in mind. Plato is exploring various aspects of the theory of forms; how his claims here map onto earlier contexts where the theory is assumed or argued for (rather than, as here, questioned) is a much disputed question. Plato could as easily be warning against a misunderstanding of his theory—say, a failure suitably to restrict its one over many assumption—as exposing its flaws. I have not argued that the first suggestion is the correct one; the point is that either suggestion requires argument.

Other passages are better evidence of Plato's own views. For example, in the *Meno*, in considering various shapes, Socrates says that "since you call all these things by one name, and say that each of them is a shape, even though they are opposite to one another, tell me what it is that embraces the round as well as the straight" (75*d*5-*e*1). But this passage is as indeterminate as the *Republic*: if Plato has in mind the *Cratylus*' understanding of "name," then he assumes only (1*d*). But he does not tell us what he means by "name," although all of his examples conform to (1*d*): not surprisingly, he does not ask what horses and flowers have in common because of which we call them all "not-man." The absence of such examples does not show that Plato is not committed to, or tacitly relying on, (1*c*); but neither is there adequate evidence to show that he is so committed.[34]

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[34] A comparison with a passage in the *Philebus* might lead us to suppose that the *Meno* uses (1*c*). At 12*c*–13*a* Socrates insists that the fact that we apply the one name "pleasure" to many things should not mislead us into supposing that all pleasures are alike. Rather, just as colors may be opposite

GAIL FINE

Other passages are similarly indeterminate. In the *Phaedo*
(102*b*2, *c*10–11; 103*b*7–8; see *Pmd.* 130*e*5–131*a*2), for example,
Plato suggests that particulars are named after the forms in
which they participate. Thus if *x* participates in a form F, we may
call *x* "F"; if Simmias is large by participating in the form, the
Large, Simmias may be called "large." This does not support
(1*c*), however. It says only that if *x* participates in a form F it may
be called "F"; this does not imply that every time a general term
applies to a thing it applies in virtue of the fact that the thing
participates in a form. The claim licenses an inference from
participation to naming, not conversely, and it says nothing
about the scope of participation. Furthermore, nothing Plato says
implies that the form Large is the *meaning* of "large." Simmias
may be called "large" because he is large, and he is large because
he participates in the form, the Large. But although this explains
why it is *true* to call Simmias "large," it says nothing about the
meaning of "large." Forms are relevant to explaining the truth of
certain predications; they do not thereby constitute the meanings
of any predicates.[35]

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to one another, or shapes opposite to one another (two of the *Meno*'s examples
of cases where there is one name, and so a corresponding form), so may
pleasures be. J. C. B. Gosling, in *Plato's Philebus* (Oxford, 1975), takes this
to "be an explicit rejection" (p. 74) of the *Meno*'s view; Plato now believes
"that it is a mistake to treat 'pleasure' as indicating a respect in which pleasures
resemble each other" (p. 73). But there is no rejection of the *Meno*'s view
here. Even in the *Philebus* Plato insists that colors and figures are each one in
kind (*genos;* 12*e*7), even if their parts (*merē; e*7) are different from, even opposite
to, one another; the same point is made in the *Meno* (74*d*3–*e*2). Indeed,
the *Phil.* insists that all pleasant things are pleasant; hence they are alike
in being pleasant. Plato's point is only that this similarity does not show that
all pleasures are also alike in *other* respects as well; all pleasures are alike in
being pleasures, even if not all pleasures are alike in being good (13*a*7–*b*5).
Nothing Plato says in the *Meno* is incompatible with this claim.

[35] Notice, in this connection, that although Plato says that Simmias is
large because he participates in the form, the Large, he does not say that
Simmias is a man because he participates in the form, the Man. Simmias is
said to be a man by virture of his own nature; no further elucidation is
provided. Of course, even (1*d*) might license a form of man. But as we shall
see, once separated forms are introduced in the middle dialogues, forms
for predicates relevantly like "man" came to seem more problematical; see
below, section VI. In that case, Plato's silence here may be significant. Not,
of course, that he denies that there is a form of man—but none is mentioned.
For good discussion of this passage, see Nehamas—although I disagree with
him on one point at least: he thinks forms are the meanings of those terms

218

A passage in the *Charmides* (175*b*2–4) might seem to favor (1*d*) rather than (1*c*). There Socrates says that he has "been unable to discover to which of the things that are the lawgiver gave this name 'temperance'." Answering the question "What is temperance?" is linked to discovering the nature of the real kind to which the name belongs—just as, in the *Cratylus*, Plato imagines a lawgiver assigning names to the real natures the world contains (390*c*2–*d*5). In both places, the assumption is that our names are the names of real kinds. Since "not-man" does not name a real kind, it raises no parallel inquiry.

Our decision as to whether Plato is committed only to (1*d*) may ultimately rest on our views of the *elenchus*. In his important article "The Unity of Virtue," Terry Penner contrasts two views of Socrates' "What is *x*?" question, what he calls the meaning view, and what we may call the realist view.[36] On the meaning view, when Socrates asks "What is courage?" he seeks a definition of "courage," the meaning of the word "courage," and its meaning is identified with the thing, courage. On the realist view, Socrates wants to know the real nature of courage, the psychological state or condition whose possession makes a person courageous.

On the meaning view, it is reasonable to suppose that Plato accepts, or is at least committed to, forms corresponding to every general term; for every general term may be defined, has a meaning. Indeed, on the meaning view, Plato is also committed to the view that forms are meanings. On the realist view, by contrast, Socratic inquiries are restricted to property-names, to discovering the genuine explanatory properties and kinds the world contains. On this view, there is not a form corresponding to every general term a language happens to contain; nor are forms the meanings of those terms to which they do correspond. Forms are introduced to explain, not the meaningfulness of any general terms, but certain facts about behavior and character. On this view, then, which I accept, Plato is committed only to (1*d*).

I conclude that Plato's use of (1) does not clearly commit him to (1*c*), or to the view that forms function as the meanings of any

to which they do correspond (pp. 480–2); but I see no evidence for this claim.

[36] T. Penner, "The Unity of Virtue," *Philosophical Review* 82 (1973), pp. 35–68.

general terms. In the *Cratylus* he describes a use of "name" that restricts names to property-names; and the realist conception of the *elenchus* similarly avoids commitment to (1*c*). Moreover, we have seen no evidence to support the claim that forms are the meanings of those terms to which they correspond. Forms explain, not the meaning of any terms, but the truth of certain predications.

Why, then, does Aristotle ascribe (1*c*) to Plato? One explanation is that Aristotle does not think that for Plato "name" has the restricted sense I suggested it has in the *Cratylus* at least. But I think this explanation must be viewed with caution. For the suggested restriction occurs as well, as we have seen, in Aristotle's *De Int.*—the suggestion that Plato, too, invokes it is not mere anachronism. Then too, there are clear echoes throughout the *De Int.* of the *Cratylus*—it is not unreasonable to suppose that Aristotle was influenced here as elsewhere by Plato.[37] Aristotle, of course, need not give his opponents credit for making Aristotelian distinctions that could improve their position. But in this case, he may have neglected to give them credit for distinctions he could easily recognize as Platonic.[38]

V

I have argued so far that Plato's use of a one over many assumption does not by itself commit him to countenancing forms of negations: predications may be restricted to property-names, to genuine properties or kinds. Plato's examples, in the dialogues we have examined so far, are compatible with this restriction, and his technical notion of "name," coupled with the realist conception of the *elenchus*, is added support.

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[37] See, for example, 16*a*19–21, 16*a*26–29, 16*b*33–17*a*2. In his second commentary on *De Interpretatione,* Boethius links the latter passage to the *Crat.* and develops the connection between naturalism and tools (ed. Meiser, vol. 2, p. 93f). I owe the reference to N. Kretzmann, "Plato on the Correctness of Names," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971), p. 129, n. 9. Plato discusses the difference between names and animal noises at *Crat.* 423ff; and of course the debate between nature and convention theories of the correctness of names is the central topic of the *Crat.*

[38] For this distinction put to work in other contexts, see Owen, "Dialectic and Eristic," p. 111. Cf. *Top.* 159*b*27–35.

But we have so far left the *Sophist* to one side. Here, many believe, Plato countenances forms of not-being, not-beautiful, not-large, and the like; and surely such forms are negations? Of course, this need not by itself conflict with anything we have argued so far: all we have argued so far is that Plato's one over many assumption does not apply to negations. But perhaps he countenances forms of negations for some other reason. Still, one might question what this other reason could be. For surely the postulation of forms of negations, for any reason, sits ill with the realist conception of the *elenchus*? Worse, one might argue that in any case the *Sophist* does rely on a one over many assumption to generate such forms, perhaps even on (1*c*). Yet if Plato uses (1*c*) here, is it not unlikely that he uses (1*d*) elsewhere, even if his examples are compatible with (1*d*)? After all, they are compatible with (1*c*) as well. Does the *Sophist* not then show that Plato does countenance forms of negations, and on the basis of (1*c*)—just as Aristotle says?[39]

If so, we face a new question. So far we have questioned Aristotle's attribution of (1*c*) to the Platonists. If the line of argument just sketched is correct, that attribution is, after all, justified. But Aristotle also says that the Platonists did not want forms of negations. Does not the *Sophist* then sit ill with that claim? If the Platonists accept, or are committed to, (1*c*), Aristotle's criticisms in IIB are justified; but his further claim, that they did not want forms of negations, is then curious. If, on the other hand, the Platonists accept only (1*d*), then the complaints lodged in IIB are misdirected, although its further claim, that they did not want forms of negations, is reasonable. But how can Aristotle both ascribe (1*c*) to the Platonists and deny that they want forms of negations? (It will not do to say: that is an unwelcome consequence of their view, not one they desire. For in the *Sophist*, on

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[39] Substantially this line of argument is advanced by Frede, pp. 92–4. Frede actually may ascribe something more like (1*b*) to Plato. At least, he thinks forms are meanings in the *Sophist,* and that therefore, since (terms for) negations are meaningful, there are forms of them. That forms are meanings, in the *Sophist* at least, is a popular view. See also F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1935), e.g., p. 293 and *passim;* J. L. Ackrill, *"Sumplokē Eidōn," Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies,* 2 (1955), pp. 31–35; and many others. I discuss the issue of meaning a bit below, but I focus primarily on negations.

the view we are considering, Plato is at pains to argue that there are forms of negations—he does not hide this consequence of his claims but parades it in full view.)

This last question might be answered: there is no evidence that the *Sophist*'s forms are *separated*.[40] Perhaps, in IIB, Aristotle means only that the Platonists did not want separated forms of negations, but did not hesitate over postulating nonseparated forms of them. Even so, Aristotle's primary objection to forms of negations turned, not on their being separated, but on their failing to delineate genuine properties; and this objection remains telling against nonseparated forms as against Aristotle's own *koina*.

But does the *Sophist* admit nonseparated forms of negations? Plato does allow that difference (*thateron*) is a form no less than being and same are; indeed, it is one of the "greatest kinds" (*megista genē*) and pervades all things. He allows, too, that non-being is a form.[41] But notice two things. First, the argument generating them is not (1*c*). Plato does, to be sure, assume that "different" is meaningful; and he is at some pains to argue that "not-being" is too. But he does not infer from these facts that the corresponding forms exist, let alone that forms just are meanings. He argues, in the case of the different, that the different must be a distinct form from, say, the form of being, *not* because "different" and "being" are nonsynonymous, but because difference is a different property of things from their being: the fact that something is different is a different fact from the fact that it is; difference and being are distinct features of reality.[42] He argues,

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[40] Plato does not, for example, ever say that they are *chōris*, as he does in the *Parmenides* (130*b*2); he never contrasts the perfection of the world of forms with the imperfection of the sensible world; forms are not treated as ethical ideals or as paradigms. (It is disputed whether the *Sophist*'s forms enjoy self-predication; but even if they do, this does not affect my claim, since Plato also associates self-predication with nonseparated forms; cf., e.g., *Prot.* 330cff.)

[41] It is generally thought that "not-being" and "difference" denote the same form; see, e.g., G. Vlastos, "An Ambiguity in the *Sophist*," in his *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, 1973), p. 289, n. 44. Frede, however (pp. 81–85), argues that not-being is a *part* of difference. Nothing I say here turns on this issue.

[42] It is quite true, as many have noticed, that Plato does not distinguish between different, being, same, and so on extensionally, since they have just the same extensions. And it is true too that their names are nonsynonymous. It does not follow either that forms just are the meanings of their names, or that they are distinguished solely on the grounds that their names are non-synonymous. Some nonsynonymous terms might denote the same property;

too, that not-being is (a part of) the different, and so to be reck-oned as real as different is (256*d*ff). Further, not-being is as much as being is. The fact that something is is a fundamental fact about it requiring a form of being; but then, the fact that some-thing is not, is different from all other things, is no less funda-mental; and so there are no grounds for withholding a form in this case. If this is any one over many assumption, it is (1*d*), not (1*c*): Plato is asking, not what words are meaningful or can be defined, but what the fundamental features of reality are, how we are to describe the nature of what is. Plato's argument is that a full understanding of any entity requires us to know, not just what it is, but also what it is not, what it is different from, what it excludes no less than what it includes. This insistence—a part of Plato's holism, of his belief that knowledge of any entity is indissolubly linked to knowledge of other entities—is no simple-minded inference from names to things. So whatever faults we find with forms of different and not-being, at least such forms are not generated by any simple-minded appeal to the fact that, after all, our language happens to contain the corresponding names. That is the procedure correctly criticized in the *Politicus*; but Plato does not follow it here or elsewhere.

Still, is this not just to say that Plato uses (1*d*), if not (1*c*), to generate forms of negations? I'm not sure what to say here. "Not-being" is, to be sure, syntactically negative. So had our criterion for negations been syntactic, "not-being" might denote a nega-tion. But then, Plato argues that statements about not-being can be rewritten positively in terms of difference, and "different" is not syntactically negative. So on the syntactic criterion, per-haps "not-being" does not denote a negation after all—for it is

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and I cannot see that Plato denies this. He argues, I think, that different, being, and so on are different *properties* of things; he may not conceive of properties purely extensionally, but this does not turn them into meanings. (For this point, see, e.g., Putnam, "On Properties"). I. M. Crombie, *An Exami-nation of Plato's Doctrines,* 2 vols. (London, 1963), vol. II, p. 405 writes: "But at any rate it is clear that identity-statements in this passage are not about classes. We would be inclined to say that they are in fact about the synonymity of expressions; if such language seems anachronistic we had better say that their subjects are properties." But it is not as though properties are the primi-tive analogue to synonymity; the theory of universals and the theory of mean-ing are two distinct concerns.

eliminable in favor of a nonnegative term that is the more illu-
minating and apt; "not-being" is not the preferred term, and the
preferred term is not negative.

On our preferred criterion for negations, not-P is a negation
just in case it is the complement of a genuine property or kind P.
Now not-being is not the complement of being; it does not apply
to all and only those things that being fails to apply to. On the
contrary, both being and not-being apply to everything; indeed,
something can not-be only if it is. Hence not-being is not a nega-
tion in our technical sense of the term.[43]

Still, even if not a negation, does not not-being—and same and
being, for that matter—"group together things disparate in kind,"
and is it not objectionable on that count? As Aristotle was to
object, being is not a genus.[44] Is not Plato then wrong to suppose
that being and so on are forms, are genuine properties—and for
something very like Aristotle's reasons?

It is true that if we group together all the things there are or
that are different, we collect a heterogeneous group of things;
indeed, as Plato well recognizes, we collect everything that is, for
everything that is is different (from everything else) and is not
(anything else)—different and not-being, like same and being, are
all-pervasive. There is no genuine kind, the different kind, then.
Nor, again, does being different constitute the essence of any-
thing; nothing is what it is because it is different from other
things; appealing to the fact that something is different provides
no special insight into its nature.

Nonetheless, understanding the natures of things requires
understanding what things are different from no less than what
they are. Difference is not the real essence of anything; but
understanding real essences requires understanding difference,
being, and the like. Moreover, insofar as things are beings and are

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[43] Cherniss, p. 262, argues that not-being is not a negation, although his
reasons are not quite mine. Cherniss also suggests that Aristotle may have
thought that not-being was a negation, "the contrary of the idea of existence"
(p. 267). Quite apart from the fact that "*einai*" does not mean "exist" here, I
do not think this is Aristotle's view. For some criticism of Cherniss here, see
D. J. Allan's review in *Mind* 55 (1946), pp. 268–70.

[44] Aristotle, *APo.* 92*b*14; *Met.* 998*b*22–27. Frede, p. 94, suggests that Plato
may later on have come to see that the argument levelled against "*barbaros*"
in the *Politicus* could equally well be levelled against "different," "being,"
and the like.

different, there are interesting truths about them—even if these truths do not themselves specify the ultimate explanatory properties of things. It is these points Plato intends to capture in countenancing a form of different; and they are important points, not touched by the *Politicus'* or Aristotle's criticisms. Indeed, the *Politicus* looks back *favorably* on the *Sophist'*s treatment of not-being (284*b*7–9), even while it rejects (1*c*). And Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* IV, insists that there is a science of being *qua* being—even while he denies that being is a genus. There is no contradiction here. The point is that, although being does not constitute a kind, there are nonetheless interesting truths about things insofar as they are beings—truths investigations into kinds need to understand.

What of such parts of the different as the not-beautiful, the not-large, and the like? Even if different is not a negation, or is at least excusable and understandable, is it not objectionable, for the reasons Aristotle mentions, to recognize forms of the not-beautiful and so on? For surely these are negations, signifying, as Plato himself insists, only that the things of which they are true are other than what follows the "not" (257*b* 9–*c*3). And surely there are no interesting fundamental facts about reality to be gleaned from noticing all the variety of things that are not-beautiful. Surely here Plato is vulnerable to Aristotle's objections?

We should notice first that even though different and not-being are called forms, the various parts of the different are not. Although Plato calls them *"merē"* (parts), he never calls them *"eidē"* (forms). And his silence here may be significant. For in the *Politicus* (263*ab*) Plato draws an important distinction between the parts and the forms of a genus or class. Every way of dividing a class succeeds in dividing it into parts; but not every part is a form. Only those carvings that "cut reality at the joints" cut reality according to forms. Every form is thus a part; but not every part is a form. Perhaps, then, the not-beautiful and so on are only parts, and not also forms; and if so, they are not *forms* of negations. To be sure, he does allow that such parts *are* no less than the beautiful is (258*b*8–*c*4); but not everything that is is a form. Nor does he say, as he does of not-being, that the not-beautiful "has a nature of its own" (258*b*10). Hence, although

225

the not-beautiful may well be a negation, it is not a form.[45]

Still, many would reject this simple way out, and insist that Plato at least implicitly counts the not-beautiful and so on as forms. And if so, would not this sit ill with Aristotle's complaints, and indeed run afoul of Plato's own injunction in the *Politicus*? Perhaps so. But the same strategy that explains the form of different is apposite here. Plato does not suggest that not-beautiful constitutes a fundamental kind, or that it is an explanatory property of things. Rather his claim is that for the purposes of understanding what it is to be beautiful, one needs to know as well what it is to be not-beautiful, what being beautiful excludes as well as what it includes. For the purposes of this particular investigation, further subdivisions within the class of all the not-beautiful things, or important differences among not-beautiful things, may simply be irrelevant. But that is not to say that, for the purposes of other investigations, more could not, or should not, be said. Plato does not suggest that the not-beautiful is the source as such of interesting truths, in the way in which beautiful is; the point is only that understanding what beauty is requires as well understanding what it is not.

If, then, Plato anywhere countenances forms of negations, it is in the *Sophist*. But the argument generating such forms does not rely on (1c). And if we keep clearly in mind the particular concerns of the *Sophist*, Plato's allowing such forms—if indeed he does allow them: we have seen that there are questions to be raised here—is not to be criticized in the *Politicus*' or Aristotle's terms.

We have now answered two of our three central questions. We have seen that where Plato invokes, or tacitly relies on, a one over many assumption, he requires no more than (1d). He never infers that there is a form simply from the fact that a general term is true of a group of things; his interest centers instead on discovering what real properties and kinds the world contains, and he does not assume that this can be discovered by simple inspection of language. Discovery of properties is to be gleaned from science and dialectic, not from syntax or semantics. This

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[45] Cornford (p. 263) and Cherniss (pp. 263-5) also deny that "not-beautiful" and so on denote forms; see also Ross, pp. 167ff. Frede, pp. 92–4, believes that such words do denote forms. The issue is also discussed in R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Sophist: A Commentary* (Manchester, 1975), pp. 165ff.

does not show, though, that Plato does not countenance forms of negations; and in the *Sophist* he *may* (although there are questions to be raised here). But such forms, if forms they be, are neither generated by (1*c*) nor are they separated. Nor, if we bear in mind the *Sophist*'s particular concerns, are they clearly vulnerable to the criticisms levelled in the *Politicus* or *Peri Ideōn*. Aristotle, then, is not clearly off the mark in his claims so far. But while he is not clearly incorrect, neither has he provided the most sympathetic or plausible overall understanding of the text.

So far we have only considered the *range* of forms Plato's one over many assumption generates. We have not yet asked what the *status* of such forms is. In particular, does Plato use his one over many argument, as Aristotle alleges, as an argument for *separated* forms? We have seen that the late *Sophist* might be construed as using (1*d*) to argue for *nonseparated* forms; but what of other contexts?

VI

Even if Plato accepts (1*d*) rather than (1*c*), Aristotle has another objection to OMA waiting in the wings: that its premises do not entail the existence of separated forms. This second argument applies whether Plato uses (1*c*) or (1*d*). So we now need to ask: does Plato use OMA to generate separated forms? For those who believe that Plato ever used OMA as an argument for the existence of forms and who also believe that the only forms mentioned in the dialogues are separated forms, the answer to this question is "yes." However, for those who believe that not all of the dialogues that deploy a theory of forms deploy a theory of separated forms, the answer to this question is considerably more complicated. Like Aristotle, I subscribe to the second view.[46] Although I shall not defend it in detail, let me sketch it briefly.

It is often, and I think correctly, believed that the *Phaedo* intro-

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[46] For Aristotle's view, see *Met.* 987*a*32–*b*7, 1078*b*30–32, 1086*a*31–*b*11. For some discussion of Aristotle's view, see T. H. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory* (Oxford, 1977), chapter 6, and his "Plato's Heracleiteanism," *Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1977), pp. 1–13. For the claim that separation is not a new claim of the middle dialogues, see, e.g., Cherniss, *Riddle of the Early Academy* (Berkeley, 1945), p. 4f, and R. E. Allen, op. cit.

duces the so-called classical theory of forms, a theory prominent
not only in the *Phaedo*, but also in the *Symposium, Phaedrus*,
and *Republic*. On this classical theory, forms are eternal, immut-
able, inaccessible to sense perception, perfect in ways sensible
instances of them are not, and, most importantly, independently
existing or separated. By contrast, in the earlier Socratic dia-
logues, such as the *Laches, Charmides*, and *Euthyphro*, forms are not
so characterized. They are never explicitly said to be inaccessible
to sense perception, for example (although, equally, neither are
they said to be perceptible), nor is their immutability and per-
fection contrasted with the mutability and imperfection of the
sensible world. Nor do Socratic forms enjoy independent exis-
tence.[47]

Why Plato, unlike Socrates, separated forms is a difficult and
disputed issue, and I cannot provide a full or satisfactory account
here. But one motivating factor is roughly this. In several dia-
logues Plato contrasts certain nondisputed predicates (ND),
such as "stick," "stone" (*Alc.* 111*b*12), "iron," "silver," (*Phdrus.*
263*a*6–7), and "finger" (*Rep.* 523*c–d*), with various disputed
predicates (D), such as "thick," "thin," "long" (*Rep.* 523*d*), and
"just" (*Alc.* 111*e*11).[48] For any given (ND) property, most people
agree about what sort of thing it is (*Alc.* 111*b*1); we all think the
same (*Phdrus.* 263*a*6–7), or associate roughly the same descrip-
tions with the name. For (D) properties, however, there is no
such agreement. In some cases, such as length, disputes may
readily be halted with the aid of various decision procedures; in
other cases, such as justice, there is no agreed decision procedure
(*Eu.* 7*b*6–*d*5; *Alc.* 111*a*–112*d*9).

Why do (D), but not (ND), predicates arouse dispute? Plato's
examples of (D) predicates fall into two broad categories: moral-
aesthetic predicates such as "just" and "beautiful," and relative
or incomplete predicates such as "thick" and "thin," "large,"
or "equal." In all these cases, but in no (ND) cases, opposites are

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[47] For an excellent account of Socratic forms, see Penner, op. cit.

[48] For other discussions of what I call (ND) and (D) predicates, see Owen,
"A Proof in the *Peri Ideōn*," *Journal of Hellenic Studies,* 77 (1957), pt. 1, pp.
301–11; reprinted in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics,* ed. R. E. Allen (New York,
1965), pp. 293–312 (latter pagination); C. Strang, "Plato and the Third Man,"
Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supp. vol. 37 (1963), pp. 147–76; Irwin,
Plato's Moral Theory; and Nehamas.

compresent in one way or another. For relative and incomplete predicates, this "F and not-F" problem attaches to properties or types as well as to tokens. Being three inches long is both long and short, in that some three inch things are long, others short; and any sort of texture will make some things soft, others hard. But in addition, Simmias is both tall (*pros* Socrates) and short (*pros* Phaedo) (*Phd.* 102*b–d*); and anything equal to one thing is also unequal to something else. For moral-aesthetic predicates, the F and not-F problem certainly attaches to properties or types: sometimes it is just to return what one has borrowed, other times not (*Rep.* 331*c*1–*d*9); the bright coloring that makes a Gauguin painting beautiful might make something else ugly. But the F and not-F problem does not always carry over to tokens. To be sure, even Helen is ugly compared to the gods (*HMa.*289*a*2–*e*6); but Leonidas' last stand is only brave, and not also cowardly, even if "standing firm in battle" picks out both brave and cow-ardly actions. I shall take it, then, that it is a defining feature of being a (D) property that the "F and not-F" problem attach to the property or type. In some cases it will attach to tokens too; but although this is sufficient for being (D), it is not necessary. No (ND) property, by contrast, exhibits compresence of opposites: nothing is both a finger and not a finger.[49]

Still, why should this feature of (D) properties cause dispute? It is not, I think, the logic of the predicates as such that is of chief concern; the fact that some predicates exhibit this behavior is symptomatic of a deeper problem. What this deeper problem is is explained most clearly in the *Republic*. Here Plato explains that sight can adequately say what it is to be a finger, since the senses never report to the soul that a finger is also not a finger (*Rep.* 523*a*10–*b*2, *b*9–*c*7, *d*4–*e*1). But sight is inadequate for saying what any (D) property is: sense "announces to the soul that the same thing is hard and soft" (524*a*3–4). Disputes arise in (D) cases, then, because, since opposites are compresent, sight is in-

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[49] For the "F and not-F" problem as it concerns types and tokens, see Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, p. 319, n. 34. On the account I give, "odd" and "even" (discussed at *Phd.* 103ff) are (D), whereas "fire" and "snow" are (ND). This accords with Plato's allowing forms in the former cases, but not mentioning them in the latter. I agree with Nehamas, pp. 482ff, and Gallop, pp. 197ff, that fire, e.g., is not said to be a form, but just physical stuff.

adequate; disputes do not arise in (ND) cases because here sight is adequate. The idea seems to be that our observations of (ND) properties lead us to "think the same," whereas our observations of (D) properties do not issue in any such unanimity. And it is the success or failure of the senses, the limits of accounts phrased in terms of observable properties accessible to the senses, that chiefly excites Plato's concern.

Notice that the dispute, or inadequacy of sense, does not concern examples: we are no more adept at identifying fingers than at identifying examples of things that are large or hard. Sight is perfectly correct when it reports to the soul that my three inch finger is long, and also perfectly correct when it reports that a three inch mouse is short. The dispute rather concerns explanation:[50] reliance on perception, on observable properties such as three inch lengths or something's bright color, is inadequate for explaining what it is to be long or beautiful; some three inch things are short, some brightly colored things are ugly. But reliance on the observable features of a finger—its characteristic shape or texture, say—is adequate, so Plato assumes, for explaining what it is to be a finger. Plato believes that whenever opposites are compresent, sense fails to provide adequate accounts; (D) properties are not definable in observational terms alone, and this is the source of dispute about their correct explanation.

Compresence is thus sufficient to preclude observational accounts. At the time of the *Republic* Plato seems to have thought that compresence is also necessary. At least, he provides no

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[50] Whether Plato's concern is identification of examples or explanation is disputed. That Plato's concern is explanation is argued by Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, chapter VI (see esp. p. 318, n. 26, p. 320f, n. 39). It has been objected to me (by Schofield) that even if explanation is Plato's main concern, it is not his only concern; and in particular, *Rep.* 523–5 seems to concern examples. But I do not think it does. To be sure, sight adequately identifies the finger as a finger; but then, it also adequately identifies the hardness and the softness of the finger: it is not that sight is inadequate in its reports on examples in either case. Nor does Plato say that sight says simply that a particular finger is both hard and soft. The point is that sight's reporting on the observable properties of the finger is a good guide to an explanation of what a finger is; but since sight ' identifies the hardness in the finger with the softness in the finger—offers the same explanation of hardness and softness, explains them in terms of the same observable properties—its explanations here are inadequate.

explanation of sight's competence in saying what a finger is other than that it never reports that it is also not a finger. But that is inadequate support: to know what a finger is, one must go beyond surface observable features to unobservable structure, function, and the like. But even if Plato's account of (ND) properties is inadequate, he is at least correct to insist that no (D) property is definable in purely observational terms. (One explanation of his correctness here may be that there are no pure observation terms.)

If observation yields no accounts of (D) properties, either there is no knowledge of them (since all knowledge requires accounts),[51] or else accounts of them must be phrased in other, nonobservable terms. Plato favors the latter option, and thereby introduces separated forms—entities separate from the observable features of things, accessible to the soul but not to sense.

Here is a principle for generating forms, and separated ones, by Plato's lights. But it is quite different from anything to be found in the OMA. It proceeds, not from a group of things *being F tout court,* but from a group of things *being,* as we might put it, *imperfectly F,* in that their F-ness is inadequately judged by sense, since F-ness is imperfectly exemplified by them, since their sensible properties are not a good guide to what F-ness is. Let us call this Plato's imperfection assumption (IA):

> (IA) Whenever a group of particulars are, in the appropriate way, imperfectly F, there is a separated form, the F, over them.[52]

Two features of (IA) especially deserve comment. First, Plato takes (IA) to generate *separated* forms. Any group of imperfectly

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[51] See, e.g., *Meno* 98a; *Phd.* 76b; *Rep.* 534b.

[52] A group of things are imperfectly F just in case sense is unable to provide an account of F. Thus, any group of things of which some (D) predicate is true are imperfect in the appropriate way; but I do not define imperfection in terms of being (D); nor do I restrict "in the appropriate way" to being (D). Being (D) is sufficient for (IA) to apply; but as I define (IA), it is not necessary. Plato, however, in the middle dialogues, seems to restrict the application of (IA) to (D) cases, although he seems to move beyond this restriction in the *Timaeus;* see further below. Notice too that not every sort of compresence counts as the relevant sort of imperfection: a centaur is a man and not a man; but since the opposite aspects are readily distinguished by observation, no form is required. For this point, see Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory,* p. 149, and "Plato's Heracleiteanism," p. 7.

231

F things has a perfect, separated form, the F, over them. Since the form and its participants have different properties—perfection and imperfection, respectively—they are nonidentical; and Plato takes the relevant version of nonidentity to be separation.[53]

Second, (IA), unlike the OMA, is not general in its scope; it does not democratically apply even to all property-names. It generates forms only where sense is inadequate, where attention to observable properties provides no account of what the property in question is. In the middle dialogues, as we have seen, Plato takes the scope of (IA) to be restricted to (D) properties; only they exhibit the relevant sort of imperfection, and so we require separated forms only in their case. Hence, so far as Plato's use of (IA) in the middle dialogues goes, there are forms only for (D) predicates, a subclass of property-names—and not for all property-names, let alone for names denoting negations.[54]

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[53] (IA) requires additional discussion that I do not have the space to provide here. For our purposes, the crucial points are just that (i) (IA) is quite different from OMA; and (ii) whatever Plato may think of OMA, he seems clearly to believe that (IA) is an argument for separated forms. (Of course, as I state (IA), it trivially licenses separated forms whenever there are groups of suitably imperfect things, since the consequent of its conditional states separation. The deeper question is whether the argument that (IA) encapsulates is valid or sound, whether considerations about imperfection, (D) properties, the limits of observation, and the like do require separation.) This is not to say that (IA) is a good argument for separation; for lucid discussion, see Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory,* chapter 6, especially p. 154f. Aristotle, then, might be correct were he to argue that (IA) does not require separated forms any more than OMA does; but when he discusses (IA), or something very like it, he seems to believe that it has more chance of success here; that is why he calls it a "more accurate" argument for forms: see Alexander, *In Met.* 82.11–83.16, and my "Aristotle and the More Accurate Arguments."

[54] N. R. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1951), p. 132, believes that *Rep.* V, at least, licenses a form of, e.g., evil, and that evil is a negation. But as I define negation, evil is not a negation: it is not the complement of good. There are difficulties centering on the question of whether or not Plato recognizes forms of such things as, e.g., evil: for some discussion, see G. Vlastos, "A Metaphysical Paradox," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 39 (1966), pp. 5–19. But this issue is distinct from the question of whether or not he recognized forms of negations (except, of course, insofar as (1c) would license both). See Ross, pp. 167–169; and also his commentary on *Aristotle's Metaphysics,* vol. I (Oxford, 1924), p. 193f. An anonymous referee has objected to me that an imperfect F can be considered to be not-F, so that if (IA) generates forms for sets of imperfect things, it generates forms of negations. Even were this so, however, it would not be OMA that is in this case generating forms of negations; so the point has no bearing on assessment

232

Plainly this does not show that there are no separated forms of (ND) properties; Plato might have other arguments that license them. But in the later *Parmenides,* although he is quite willing to postulate separated forms corresponding to various (D) properties, he is less certain about various (ND) cases. In some cases (man, fire, water), he is unsure whether there are separated forms; in other cases (mud, dirt, hair), he denies that there are any separated forms. To postulate forms here would be "ridiculous" and, anyway, they are just what we see them to be (130*d*3–5).[55] Similarly, at *Rep.* 523–5 Plato argues that sight cannot adequately judge (D) properties, although it is adequate for (ND) properties; in consequence he postulates separated forms for (D), but not for (ND), properties. It is tempting to infer that he takes this difference to show that there are no separated forms of (ND) properties, and not merely that (IA) does not generate them. If so, this would be *prima facie* evidence against Aristotle's claim that Plato uses his one over many to argue for separated forms. For the one over many, if used on behalf of separated forms, would apply to "man" and "mud," no less than to "beautiful" or "equal." If Plato denies that there are separated forms for (ND) predicates, that suggests that he does not take

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of the fairness of Aristotle's criticisms of Plato's OMA. Nor, in any case, are imperfect Fs not-F in the relevant sense.

[55] The *Parmenides* is explicitly concerned with the range and nature of *separated* forms *(chōris:* 130*b*2). The claim that there is no separated form of, e.g., mud does not show that there is no nonseparated form of it; that issue is not broached. Plato's grounds for distinguishing within the class of (ND) predicates between "man," "fire," and "water," on the one hand, and "mud," "dirt," and "hair," on the other, are unclear. His second reason for denying that there are forms in the latter cases, that they are "just what we see them to be," should apply equally well to the former cases—and seemed to in the discussion of finger in *Rep.* VII. His first reason, that they are ridiculous, is rightly criticized by Parmenides for being unsatisfactory. Plato might believe that the former cases play an important role in scientific explanation that the latter do not. Fire and water are two of the traditional four elements; at *Tht.* 147*c* mud is said to be easy to define: it is earth mixed with water. No such consideration is explicitly mentioned here, however; and the *Tm.* shows that fire, e.g., is not regarded by Plato as an irreducible element (although he there allows a separated form of fire; see further below). Socrates does suggest that perhaps what is true in one case should be true in all (130*d*5-6). This need not be an expression of any one over many assumption; he might mean that no properties are learned in the simple way the middle dialogues assume (ND) properties are.

the premises of the one over many to entail any conclusions about separation.

But Plato does sometimes recognize separated forms of some (ND) predicates, so this pleasing *prima facie* argument collapses. In the later *Timaeus*[56] Plato readily acknowledges separated forms of fire (51*b*) and of living creature (30*c*ff)—the very sorts of cases doubted in the *Parmenides*. By the time of the *Timaeus* such doubts have been dispelled in their favor. But notice the argument generating them. Plato does not argue that because things are fiery or because there is a (property-) name "fire," therefore there is a form of fire. OMA is nowhere in view. Rather he argues that observation is inadequate for saying what it is to be fire— fire is subject to (IA) after all, contrary to the tendency of the *Republic* and *Parmenides*. It is tempting to say: Plato now sees that (ND) properties are not definable in observational terms any more than (D) properties are; all alike require us to go beyond simple observation. Perhaps the *Theaetetus'* deeper probings into the nature of perception revealed that nothing is so simple as to be explicable in observational terms alone. But although this might be part, and a welcome part, of Plato's point here, it can- not be said that he makes it entirely clearly. Instead he tries to force fire into the (D) category: he argues that every sensible example of fire is also not-fire, since none is pure fire but each is commingled with its opposite (49*a*6–50*a*4). "Fire" is a (D) predicate, after all, and so (IA) may be applied to yield a sepa- rated form. Hence there are separated forms for what we, at least, would call (ND) predicates—although Plato might not put the matter in just this way. But the *Timaeus* generates such forms by an extension of (IA), not by OMA.[57] Hence even though there

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[56] I assume that the *Timaeus* postdates the *Parmenides*. For an argument for an earlier dating, see Owen, "The Place of the *Timaeus* in Plato's Dialogues," *Classical Quarterly* N. S. 3 (1953), reprinted in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, pp. 313–338, (latter pagination).

[57] Owen, "A Proof in the *Peri Ideōn*," suggests a slightly different account of the argument for a form of fire: "greater preoccupation with mutability (as in the *Timaeus*) would naturally suggest that in a further sense *all* predicates are incomplete in their earthly application, for all apply at one time and not at another" (p. 307). Plainly, this is quite 'a different sense of "incomplete" from that developed in the body of his paper, where *compresence at some one time* is the crucial factor. On my account of fire, Plato tries to show that fire is compresent with its opposite, and so fits the middle dialogues' conception

are separated forms for some (ND) predicates, they are not generated by OMA. The *Timaeus*, despite its broad range of forms, cannot be appealed to as evidence that Plato ever used OMA as an argument for separated forms.

To be sure, other dialogues mention forms of (ND) predicates, and do not invoke (IA). The *Meno*, for example, has a form of bee (72a6–b6), the *Cratylus* of shuttle (389a–390b). And in the *Meno*, at least, the underlying assumption seems to be a one over many assumption, as we have seen. But then, neither the *Meno* nor the *Cratylus* has separated forms.[58] Similarly, some one over many assumption is familiar in the early Socratic dialogues. (We have examined some of these passages above, and argued that it is (1d), not (1c).) But in none of these contexts is separation involved.

It is tempting to infer that Plato uses his one over many assumption only where nonseparated forms are in view; once separated forms are introduced, the one over many is quietly replaced by (IA). We might then argue that Aristotle's claim that Plato uses the OMA as an argument for separated forms is mistaken: where Plato relies on the one over many, only nonseparated forms are in evidence; once separation appears, only (IA) is used in its support. Aristotle illicitly combines the premises of Plato's one over many argument with the conclusions of (IA).

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of incompleteness. Further, he is motivated by considerations of the limits of observation. But Owen and I agree that the OMA has no role to play in the *Tm.* account.

[58] The date of the *Crat.* is disputed. J. V. Luce, "The Date of the *Cratylus*," *American Journal of Philology* 85 (1964), pp. 136–54, and "The Theory of Ideas in the *Cratylus*," *Phronesis* 10 (1965), pp. 21–36, argues that the *Crat.* antedates the *Phd.* and *Rep.*, and that its forms are nonseparated. B. Calvert, "Forms and Flux in Plato's *Cratylus*," *Phronesis* 15 (1970), pp. 26–47, agrees about the dating, but thinks the *Crat.*'s forms may be separated; he is followed by C. H. Kahn, "Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*," in *Exegesis and Argument*, ed. E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty (Assen, 1973), pp. 152–176. Owen, on the other hand, dates the *Crat.* late; see "The Place of the *Timaeus*," p. 323, n. 3. Wherever the *Crat.* is placed, I do not think its forms are separated; see further below. The later *Philebus* discusses *monades* of man and ox (15a); but I do not think *monades* are separated forms either.

VII

One passage, but only one, challenges this interpretation: *Republic* 596*a*ff.[59] For here Plato, as in the later *Timaeus,* acknowledges separated forms of various (ND) predicates, this time of "bed" and "table." Only here, they appear in conjunction with a one over many assumption, and (IA) is not invoked.

But *Republic* 596*a*ff repays close attention: let us examine it step by step. Plato begins by remarking that "we usually assume one form for each group of many things to which we apply the same name" (596*a*6–7). As we have seen, this is just the Socratic procedure of looking for that common feature F by virtue of which all F things are F. The one over many assumption is, as Plato says, familiar; but it is familiar from Socratic contexts, where only nonseparated forms are in view (and, as we have argued, it involves only (1*d*), not (1*c*)). But Plato need not deny this. He says nothing—at least, not just yet—to make us suspect that the forms generated by his one over many assumption are separated. He says only that we assume one form for every (genuine) name; he says nothing—yet—about the status of such forms. Perhaps only nonseparated forms need be assumed.

Nor do the next stages of the discussion require separation. Plato proceeds to insist that, in every case where there is a form F, there is just one form, the F (596*b*); if there is any form of bed, there is just one form of bed. This univocity assumption is built into Aristotle's (1), as we have seen; and, as we have seen, it can be clearly matched to various Platonic, as well as Aristotelian, sources. But neither does this univocity assumption require separation.

Next Plato suggests that a craftsman makes an actual physical bed or table; but when he does so, he is guided by the form of bed or table. The craftsman does not make the form (apparently a god does that: 597*b*); but he is guided by it in constructing actual artifacts. Now this passage, too, has its analogues elsewhere (as Plato indicates: 596*b*6 refers to this view as a familiar one). In

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[59] At *Parmenides* 132*ab,* in setting out the Third Man, Plato does again conjoin some one over many assumption with a separation assumption. But as I have already said, the *Parm.* cannot be used on its own as evidence of Plato's commitments in the theory of forms. See section IV and n. 33.

236

the *Cratylus* Plato argues that if a craftsman wants to make a shuttle, he will look, not to a broken shuttle, but to "what shuttle is," to the form of shuttle (389*b*5). The idea seems to be that a broken shuttle will not display all and only those features the craftsman is to embody; it is only by looking at the form of shuttle that the craftsman will know how to proceed.

It is reasonable enough to suppose that a craftsman should not be guided by a broken shuttle. But why can he not be guided by a nondefective actual shuttle? It is tempting to argue: observation of actual shuttles is as inadequate as observation of broken shuttles—for what features should one embody? The shuttle's shape or color or material? But shuttles come in various shapes and colors and materials; one need not reproduce them exactly in order to construct a perfectly adequate shuttle. Some such argument would point us in the direction of the *Theaetetus* and *Timaeus*: simple observation of anything is inadequate; all observation needs to be supplemented by reflection on inner structure, function, and the like. Some of this may indeed be in Plato's mind here; perhaps it underlies his insistence that one needs to look to the form—which appears to be something like a blueprint or idealized model, specifying just those features essential to being a shuttle. But in the *Timaeus* recognition of the inadequacy of observation goes hand in hand with separation; and separation is not in evidence here. There is no implication here, as in the *Timaeus* or in the middle dialogues generally, that forms enjoy a higher degree of reality or perfection than sensibles do, or even that the form is essentially nonsensible, accessible only to reason and not to sense.

Now this line of reasoning is not any one over many—although it shares with the one over many a certain generality of application. It applies, Plato says, to everything with a "fixed and stable nature" (*Crat.* 386*d*4–*e*4). Nor is it (IA), although it is related to it. It shares with (IA) the view that attention to surface observable features of broken shuttles, at least, is inadequate in understanding what a shuttle is. But Plato does not say that any shuttle is also not a shuttle: the "F and not-F" problem does not apply. So, if Plato restricts (IA) to (D) predicates, (IA) does not apply to "shuttle," even if observation is inadequate. Nor, more importantly, does Plato, in the *Cratylus,* infer that the form of

237

shuttle is separated. Only nonseparated forms are in view. Similarly, in the parallel passage in the *Republic,* we as yet have no reason to suppose that the form of bed is separated. Plato says only that the craftsman will be guided by it. But the *Cratylus* shows that this claim alone does not import separation.[60]

It is only a bit later, at 597*a*ff, that separation seems involved. For here Plato suddenly introduces the whole "degrees of reality" metaphysics. He distinguishes between three sorts of beds, ordered in increasing degrees of excellence or perfection: pictures of beds (which are apparently beds in a way: 597*b*5–15), actual beds for sleeping on, and the form of bed—and only the form is the real and true bed. This sort of language—the emphasis on the perfection of forms, the denigration of their physical embodiments—is characteristic of the middle dialogues, where separation is in view. But it plays no role in the Socratic dialogues, or in the *Cratylus.*

Hence Plato does countenance a separated form of bed in *Republic* X, contrary to what we might have expected from *Republic* VII, with its discrimination between fingers and their sizes. But it is not argued for on the basis of any one over many assumption—indeed, it is not argued for at all. Plato simply says that it is separated, and offers no supporting argument. He does introduce *a* form of bed at 596*a*; and we know there can be only one form of bed. And at 597*a* he says that it is separated. But the one over many does not carry this implication, nor does Plato clearly say that it does. Both a one over many and separation appear in our passage; but Plato does not infer the latter

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[60] Interestingly enough, the *Tm.* also uses this sort of argument as part of an argument for *separated* forms of various natural kinds (30*c*ff). But there are some significant differences: first, the craftsman here is the *demiourgos* who is engaged in crafting the living creatures the world should contain; he is not an ordinary human craftsman. Second, he is constructing natural objects (plants, animals), not artifacts (beds, shuttles). And third, the claim that the *demiourgos* looks to forms in carrying out his craft is only part of an elaborate construction which involves elements not to be found in the *Crat.* or *Rep.* Hence, Plato does not use the same argument in support of different conclusions. Notice that in the *Parm.,* although the existence of separated forms of various natural kinds is questioned, artifacts are not mentioned. Yet artifacts and natural kinds seem alike to be (ND). Might Plato have seen some difference between them that reflects itself in what sorts of forms are involved in the two cases? Aristotle doubts that the Platonists want any forms of artifacts: see Alexander, *In Met.* 79.3–80.6.

from the former—contrary to what Aristotle says.

Rather, what seems to have happened is this: Plato refers to the customary Socratic procedure, which does indeed license a form of bed—but not a separated one. He later insists that the form is separated—here he adverts to his middle period metaphysics. But Plato seems to believe that his typical middle period argument for separation—(IA)—does not apply. To be sure, he insists that a bed may *appear* to be not a bed from different angles or perspectives; but it is not *really* also not a bed (598*a*). Yet every (D) property is genuinely compresent with its opposite. Hence Plato insisted in *Republic* VII that his point did not turn on the effects of distance or perspective (523*b*5-7): even in the most favorable circumstances, three inches is both long and short.

We face the old question: might not (IA) apply to bed even if "bed" is not a (D) predicate? Why does Plato not argue that the variety in appearances at least shows that observation is inadequate in its reports? Observation tells us what a bed looks like, but not what one is, what its inner structure and function are. This would point us again towards the *Theaetetus* and *Timaeus,* and might justify the application of (IA), thereby yielding a separated form of bed, just as it did in the *Timaeus* for fire. But Plato does not fully turn in this direction, even if he is taking halting steps towards it. Instead, he simply insists that a bed is not also not a bed, and (IA) lies dormant. But then, as in the *Cratylus,* it is unclear why we need separation. The one over many does not justify it; (IA) is not used; nor is anything else. Plato simply assumes that the form of bed is separated, even though none of his arguments shows this. He uses a familiar argument, the one over many, to introduce the form; then he later simply characterizes it in the middle period's way. But he does so without justification. If bed is licensed by the one over many it is not separated; nor has Plato provided any other reason for supposing that it is separated. Instead, he appears indiscriminately to press together the arguments of one phase of his career with the conclusions of another.

But the fit is imperfect. For the one over many does not justify separation, even if it justifies a form of bed. (IA) might have been used to justify separation here; but it is not invoked. How

much of this is vivid to Plato is difficult to say. He does not infer separation from the one over many. But the two are conjoined in an unfortunate way. Different arguments and conclusions are fused together in the desire for a unified, simple theory. Having introduced, and argued for, some separated forms, he wants all forms to be separated. But he does not think that his argument for separation—(IA)—applies to bed. So he introduces bed in the familiar Socratic way, as he is entitled to only if the form of bed is nonseparated.

Our answer to our third question, then,—does Plato use a one over many assumption to argue for separated forms?—parallels our answer to our first two questions. Aristotle is not strictly speaking correct if he means to suggest that Plato ever inferred separation from the one over many; Plato does not do that even in *Republic* X. But he does there invoke both separation and a one over many in an unfortunate way, and that fact explains, and to some extent justifies, Aristotle's concern. Still, *Republic* X is the only place where any one over many assumption is conjoined with a separation assumption. Elsewhere the one over many is used only in conjunction with nonseparated forms, in the hygienic way Aristotle applauds. Where Plato wishes to argue for separated forms, (IA) carries the burden. Thus, although Aristotle is correct to be puzzled and troubled by *Republic* 596aff, he is misleading if he wishes to represent that passage as characteristic of the corpus. On the contrary, Aristotle, here as elsewhere in the *Peri Ideōn*, has ignored the central train of Plato's thought and focussed instead on an odd, and uncharacteristic, aside.[61] Aristotle is right to notice Plato's carelessness; but to straightjacket him to the confines of OMA is to miss the richness and fluidity of his thought. The theory of forms is an evolving theory, supported by different arguments leading to divergent conclusions. If we separate the strands that Plato does not always keep neatly apart, we achieve a better understanding of the fabric of Plato's thought than Aristotle's sombre rewriting exhibits.

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[61] Our conclusion thus reinforces Owen's'remark, in "A Proof in the *Peri Ideōn,*" p. 308, that in the argument from relatives, Aristotle "isolates one strand in Plato's thinking which in his earlier work at least he took small care and had small motive to distinguish sharply or to reconcile with others. The same is true of other arguments collected in the *Peri Ideōn.*"