

FORM AND SPACE IN PLATO'S LATER METAPHYSICS: AN
INTERPRETATION OF THE OBJECTS AND FEATURES
OF THE SOCRATIC INQUIRY

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by
Gordon Philip Hook
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ABSTRACT

Although the gap which separates our century from Plato's is great, there is no philosophical gap. Plato's philosophy is immortal in its relevance. And that relevance extends to every philosophical sphere of inquiry, and even beyond. But there seems to be a tendency in contemporary philosophical circles to narrow that range of relevance to only a few interests. This is dangerous, in that certain assumptions, usually taken for granted, rule out ab initio the more important dimensions of Plato's thought. One of these assumptions, to wit, that constructive metaphysics is illegitimate, is here denied the special status which it has been accorded for so long. This is not done merely for the sake of non-conformity, but in order to acknowledge the metaphysical relevance of Plato.

However, Plato's metaphysics is not the sole concern of this discussion. Another dimension of Plato's thought is conspicuously absent from almost every treatment of his philosophy; and that is the existential. In the earlier dialogues Socrates asks certain fundamental questions in the process of inquiring into existential issues. Those questions strike at the heart of metaphysical presuppositions which pervade his inquiry. The Socratic dialectic concerns itself with uncovering these presuppositions, and going further by relating them to

the existential.

The topic of this thesis, therefore, is the problem of the relation of the metaphysical to the existential in Plato. The Socratic inquiry is traced from its existential grounds in the early dialogues to the metaphysical objects treated explicitly in the later dialogues. But it is not a study of Plato's dialogues per se. It is an attempt to isolate and interpret certain ideas contained within the Platonic corpus.

Form and Space are found to be the presuppositions of the Socratic inquiry. The status of Form and its nature are discerned from not only a Platonic perspective but also from the more recent Process perspective. Form is discovered, upon analysis, to be an ontologically prior actuality. Space, whose status and nature are also discussed, is thought of here as the generic unity of, what is usually called, space-time, and is found to be a derivative reality. Finally, the relation between Form and Space is examined in both an existential and metaphysical context.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Unless otherwise stated, the following translations of Plato's dialogues will be used throughout this thesis.

All translations occurring in,

Cairns, Huntington, and Edith Hamilton (eds.). Plato: The Collected Dialogues. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

except the following,

Allen, R.E. Plato's Euthyphro And The Earlier Theory of Forms. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.

Cornford, F.M. Plato's Cosmology. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.

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To the memory of my late grandmother, I dedicate this unworthy essay.

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CHAPTER 1

FORM AND SPACE AS PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE SOCRATIC INQUIRY

We, beholding as in a dream, say of all existence that it must of necessity be in some place and occupy a space, but that which is neither in heaven nor in earth has no existence. Of these and other things of the same kind, relating to the true and waking reality of nature, we have only this dream-like sense, and we are unable to cast off sleep and determine the truth about them. ¹

This statement epitomizes the Socratic situation and general setting of the early Platonic dialogues. It also has important implications for a metaphysics of form and space: a topic which shall be the central concern of this discussion.

At first glance, the above statement of Plato's may seem to be an innocent comment on the way we, as individuals located in space, ordinarily tend to think about reality, i.e., we are somewhat reluctant to admit the possibility that existence is not necessarily restricted to the spatial in character. But if one reflects on this statement in conjunction with the dialogues themselves--for after all that is the purpose of the dialogues, to stimulate thought rather than to present a crystal-

¹Timaeus, 52b, trans., Jowett.

lized result of it--one begins to realize that the presuppositions of the early dialogues and the explicit statements of the later dialogues, which are germane to those presuppositions, may be linked together in a more fundamental metaphysical framework, the purpose of which is to cast off this dream-like sense we have and determine the truth about reality. Just what these presuppositions of the early dialogues are and why they are paramount for the later thought it is the purpose of this discussion to unfold. In order to arrive at the notions deliquescent in those dialogues, it is necessary to consider, briefly at least, the dynamic aspect of Plato's thought, particularly the concept of eros, since it is not at all possible to reach an understanding of what is occurring in the Socratic dialogues unless one understands the factors underlying those existential situations.

Eros is soul with a direction. This brings to the fore Plato's theory of Soul; an extremely rich and complex topic but one that does not concern us in any great detail here. Only a cursory look and a brief sketch will be necessary for our purposes. The most lucid statements that appear in the Platonic corpus concerning the nature of soul are the following:

...we shall feel no scruple in affirming that precisely this is the essence and definition of soul, to wit self-motion.

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²Phaedrus, 245e.

and,

For nothing can be incorporeal and wholly and always devoid of colour, save only being of the divinest type, soul, and 'tis the proper and exclusive function of this type to mould and make. ³

The first passage conveys the idea of soul as self-moving motion (the essential nature of soul), and the second the notion of soul as cause. Soul as self-moving motion is the more general notion and is something analogous to the Whiteheadian concept of Creativity and the Schopenhauerian conception of the Will: a pure dynamism, unstructured and unpatterned in its activity. This is indeed a difficult concept to lay hold of and raises some very interesting questions of interpretation, but if we think of this more general idea of soul in contrast to the other, soul as cause, a distinction becomes clear which calls for attention. To begin with, the second idea of soul expressed in the passage from the Epinomis is the idea of soul as patterned activity, since making and moulding both are activities with a formal unity, i.e., rational activities directed towards a goal. Now this is an important contrast to be grasped; that between unpatterned self-moving motion and patterned self-moving motion. The latter, I think, can be rightly designated as purposive motion and is a more specific kind of self-activity, while the previous notion is the more general and gives a unity to all the kinds of psychical activity including "... wish, reflection, diligence, counsel, opinion true

³Epinomis, 981 b.

and false, joy and grief, cheerfulness and fear, love and hate."⁴ Soul at this most general level is a principle accounting for all those more specific species of activity. At this level, soul as self-moving motion is a metaphysical principle of explanation. As Plato states, "the soul ... is far older and far more divine than all those things whose movements have sprung up and provided the impulse which has plunged it into a perpetual stream of existence."⁵ Although Saunders, who translated this passage, finds it 'mysterious and far from certain', it is a beautiful statement of the distinction I am trying to stress. The divine nature of Soul is precisely the prior notion of a metaphysical unity accounting for the more specific derivative motions which are all those motions springing from it and plunged into a perpetual stream of existence. These derivative motions of Soul, as already pointed out, are patterned; but they must be patterned by something. Soul cannot structure its own activity just simply as self-moving motion; as such it is ethically neutral, without purpose. In order for Soul to acquire direction, it must stand in relation to an object which is formal in character, but not only this, Soul must stand in relation to space (and time) since the spiritual activities such as, reflection, love, fear, etc., are found only in a perpetual stream of existence (space and time), as Plato says.

⁴Laws, 897d.

⁵Ibid, 966e.

With this rather brief glance at Plato's theory of Soul, two important conceptions of Soul have emerged which are extremely important for this inquiry. The second derivative conception of soul in the stream of existence will concern us at this point; the prior notion will prove to be consequential much later when discussing participation.

It is this idea of Soul in the world, or Soul in space and time, that is eros. Eros is soul with a direction, and that direction is always toward an object. Depending upon the object desired the teleological activity of eros may be either wholly rational or not completely so. This may seem rather recondite but let me justify this statement by way of an examination of some important dialogues. In the Symposium we are told that "Love exists only in relation to some object."⁶, and that object is always the Good or the Beautiful. This is eros in its most general sense--the desire of the Good or the Beautiful. But the situation does not stay as simple as this. Eros breaks up in the individual (precisely because of its relation to the Receptacle: its location in space) and desire becomes much more idiosyncratic in its direction. Because of this inevitable dispersion of eros in the world, desire may take many directions and express itself in many ways. But one should not think that there is complete and irresolvable disparity in the individual; the generic concept of eros embraces every desire for good and for happiness.⁷ For a hint as to what

⁶Symposium, 200c trans., William Hamilton.

⁷Ibid, 205d.

is involved in this existential situation we shall look to the Republic and the Phaedrus.

In order to understand the various forms of desire that occur as the expressions of the fundamental eros, Plato offers us an image as an analogy of what the human soul is like. This is the famous image of the charioteer and horses:

Let [eros] be likened to the union of powers in a team of winged steeds and their winged charioteer. With us men ... it is a pair of steeds that the charioteer controls; moreover one of them is noble and good, and of good stock, while the other has the opposite character, and his stock is opposite. ⁸

Later in the dialogue a description of the horses is given. One of the horses is white in colour and its actions are noble and honourable in character; he is a "lover of glory but with temperance and modesty: one that consorts with genuine renown." Of the other Plato says that his colour is black and appearance shaggy; he consorts with wantonness and vainglory and is "hard to control with a whip and goad."

All this imagery is intended to paint the picture of contrasted elements in the individual soul, not completely unrelated, but nevertheless contrasted and accounting for tension and conflict within the human soul. As to the interpretation of these images there should be no trouble in discerning their meaning if we look to the Republic. In Book IV the soul is said to possess innumerable irrational appetites, such as the desire for food and drink when one feels hunger,

⁸Phaedrus, 246a.

and the sexual appetite. There are numerous other wanton and capricious appetites which can be rather distracting at times. This part of the soul is represented by the black horse, and because of its capriciousness it is hard to control. But there is also the spirited part of the individual. The peculiar desire of this part of the soul has, as its objects, honour, wealth, nobility, etc. It is ambitious and desires to win. To this extent it moves in the sphere of morality. This part is represented by the white horse. In its desire and direction it attains a much higher degree of consistency and continuity as compared to the desires of the lower part. This is conveyed in part by the image of the white horse striving upward toward the realm of eternal truth, and the black horse pulling downward into the world where the objects of its desire are multifarious.

There is a third part to the individual soul which is symbolized by the charioteer. The function of the charioteer is to maintain, or venture to maintain, a reasonable balance between the two steeds. This third constituent, represented by the charioteer, is the rational part of the individual soul. Reason though is not wholly concerned with merely ruling over the passions and 'spirit'. It is also a form of eros and striving and has a particular object of desire. And that object is truth or beauty. As Demos states, the rational part "is an eros of the truth and the energy to pursue it as well as the perceptiveness and retentiveness."⁹ This statement suggests still

⁹Raphael Demos, The Philosophy of Plato, (New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1966), p.93.

another dimension of reason besides its role as an inhibiting principle and a purposive striving toward truth and beauty and that is that aspect of reason which 'apprehends' truth. Reason as eros (striving) gets one to the place where he may behold the realm of eternal truth and unchanging beauty; this is the end, the goal of striving, where one passively apprehends the truth in an act of intuition.

A statement which attempts to capture the thrust of this analysis of the human soul is that eros is a teleological activity patterned by its direction towards various objects all of which condition the individual soul in the sense that the object desired or sought after is what accounts for individual differences, just by being that object in which the individual takes an active interest. Because the individual takes such an interest in his object, that object, in a sense, grants purpose to his aspirations. Just what that purpose is depends upon the direction of one's desires. This whole complex situation--the individual eros, its direction and the object which is its end--lends diversity and richness to human existence: something which would not be present if there were simple sameness of direction and object. One can appreciate the myriad objects that there are, but rather than bringing our thoughts to bear on the differences between each of them we shall focus on the more fundamental conceptions which gather them up and give us a perspective from which to view them. We shall also use these perspectives as a springboard to launch into a more detailed

metaphysical analysis of these conceptions.

In the Socratic framework of the early dialogues, Plato presents us with a complex existential situation. The later theory of the eros is operative in these multifarious circumstances in an implicit manner, and, seen from the point of view of this later development, we are led to ask certain questions concerning the nature of the 'erotic' situations in these pregnant dialogues. To begin, how are we to understand what Socrates is attempting to do in these dialogues when he asks his interlocutors for the one rather than the many (which he so often receives)? And even if we come to an understanding of what his basic intentions are, how are we to proceed from it?

It is one of the purposes of this chapter to stress that the early dialogues formed a base from which Plato developed his later metaphysics, and I think that it is possible to understand what is occurring in these dialogues only by way of the perspectives of the later metaphysical developments. At this point we are concerned with the directions that eros takes among the participants of the early dialogues. So from the perspective of the later theory of eros--the notion of eros as a creative force which strives toward and seeks to appropriate the object which is its aim--the existential uniqueness of the Socratic early dialogues shall be clarified.

In the Socratic situations found in these dialogues, Socrates represents, or rather personifies, the creative eros

as reason; true systematic reasoning which transcends the many of existence and seeks the one which is beyond existence but at the same time explains existence, in all its phases. Recognizing and confessing his ignorance, Socrates moves beyond a purely passive acceptance of derivative social values and customs and cultivates an inward desire for truth, not only in thought but in action as well. Hence love is neither ignorance nor is it knowledge, since knowledge is not an activity of desire. Love of truth is, as Plato states, "of an intermediate nature", and a creative activity which bridges the gap between the eternal and the flux of nature and "pre-vents the universe from falling into two separate halves."¹⁰ Thus the eros of Socrates is an attempt to bring basic principles of existence into existence itself. In the language of Kierkegaard, Socrates is seeking to appropriate the eternal into the temporal. In the 'moment' of reflective action, Socrates brings together the infinite and the finite, the formal and the spatial, and captures the richness of their unity.

It is only momentarily that the particular individual is able to realize existentially a unity of the infinite and the finite which transcends existence. This unity is realized in the moment of [reflective] passion.¹¹

This is truly the fullest expression of the creative eros, and represents the character of Socrates himself as we find

¹⁰Symposium, 203 b.

¹¹Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, trans. David F. Swenson, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 176.

him in the dialogues. His interlocutors though represent only one among the many. In this sense his interlocutors are bound to the spatial and this comes to the fore when they attempt to answer Socrates' questions. For example, when Socrates asks Euthyphro what piety is, after meeting him while he was on his way to condemn his father for murdering a slave, the answer is that piety is just what he (Euthyphro) is doing at that moment, viz., prosecuting a murder, whether it is a father or mother or anyone else who is guilty of it. The answer of course does not do justice to the concept of piety since it is extremely limited and overly simple. To this extent Euthyphro locates himself in space as an individual doing what is pious. Socrates is naturally dissatisfied, since Euthyphro's answer is a response in terms of an expression of piety, or an instance of piety, rather than Piety itself. In other words, the piety of his action is mistaken for the form of piety. Here Socrates objects to Euthyphro: "Do you recall that I did not ask you to teach me about some one or two of the many things which are holy, but about that characteristic¹² itself by which all holy things are holy?" This is a rephrasing of the statement that Socrates did not ask for the many but desires the one.

Because of the answer offered to Socrates the eros of

¹²Euthyphro, 6d.

Euthyphro is essentially spatial in direction: in this particular case it is directed toward instances of piety, or, as Socrates says, "some one or two of the many things which are holy", and these have a location in space; in the realm of action. Realizing the characteristically spatial orientation of his interlocutor, and interested himself in formal considerations, Socrates has to try a different tack; one which will alert Euthyphro to the limitations and inadequacies of his thought and tune his eros to the more fundamental formal nature of piety. So Socrates makes his question (what is piety?) more explicit for Euthyphro's sake, and reveals part of his intentions in asking him the question in the first place: his question becomes:

... show me what, precisely, this ideal is, so that with my eye on it, and using it as a standard, I can say that any action done by you or anybody else is holy if it resembles this ideal, or, if it does not, can deny that it is holy. 13

In demanding an answer to the question of what piety or holiness is in the way that he does, Socrates is demanding something which moves beyond Euthyphro's understanding of piety and yet swallows it up, so to speak, at the same time, giving a uniformity and sameness to every pious or holy action. In this way, the characteristic, or ideal, Socrates is in search of, is something formal and static in nature, since it serves as the standard of pious action, and hence the very act

¹³Euthyphro, 6e trans., Lane Cooper.

Euthyphro himself is claiming to do.

But the standard of holy action is not just something by which, from an epistemological point of view, we judge certain actions to be holy or unholy. The standard serves also as the end of pious or holy action. The form of piety itself, in addition to it being an objective moral standard, is also something to be appropriated into the sphere of morality so that one's actions, rather than being merely particular moral actions, are, in a sense, the standard of moral action itself. If one achieves this, then one has moved beyond a purely spatial kind of morality, i.e., one in which the spirited, moral part of the individual is trapped in the realm of the many (space) and looks to the many as standards or explanations, to a true formal morality in which the spirited part is allied with reason and strives toward the one rather than the many as the standard and explanation of moral action.

The earlier statement, that depending upon the object desired the teleological activity of eros may be either wholly rational or not completely so, can now be understood. Its activity is wholly rational if its direction is formal. What this means is that the activity of eros is completely uniform and consistent and has as its object a standard which directs its movement. This kind of activity can only be achieved if the lower parts of the soul are subordinated to the higher: if the spirited part, to be concise, is allied with reason and acts in accordance with its decrees, and the appetitive part plays a subservient role as the slave of reason.

Eros' activity is not completely rational if the lower parts are not subordinated to reason. Reason, for example, may play a subservient role to the spirited part. Euthyphro is an example of an individual in which this situation is chiefly predominant. But this is not to say that his actions are non-rational or even irrational. Euthyphro is basically a moral person, but in his haste to cultivate that positive quality he neglects any kind of moral or self-examination. As a result, when asked by Socrates what piety is, he sees piety as the standard of moral action, located in the realm of action, in space. He fails to see that any instance of piety cannot be the form, or character, of piety. He stands in danger, then, of appropriating a spatial standard of pious action, which is not really a standard at all, instead of the formal standard of pious action which is the true standard, for it is the only one that accounts for the various differences between all holy actions: something for which the former utterly fails to account. Since this is the case, the actions of Euthyphro cannot be seen to be wholly rational.

Another possibility is the appetite's ruling over reason and spirit. This situation would be a totally chaotic one in which the object of desire would change from one moment to the next and hence no uniformity or shape would be discernible over all. There would be some discernible shape on divers occasions as when the eros has a particular object, at one particular time, in view. But as far as individuality and uniqueness are concerned, they would be lost in the constant flux of

desire for one object to desire for another. Standards are not even considered in this situation. Hence the activity of eros here is not completely rational.

The analysis of the direction of the individual eros in the Socratic dialogues may be further clarified if one considers another dialogue: the Laches. The situation there is similar in certain respects to the dialogues with which we have been dealing. The conversation, for the most part, is concerned with the nature of courage.

Before asking Laches, his prime collocutor in this dialogue, what courage is, Socrates states that whenever one is considering who is best at a certain art or virtue one should consult the expert at it. That individual may have learned his craft in either of two ways: from a teacher of the art, or by himself. In either case Socrates raises an important point which turns the dialogue around and directs it to the more consequential. In any philosophical dialogue concerned with art or virtue the prior question about the nature of that art or virtue has to be answered first before a decision can be reached as to which is the better mode of education.¹⁴

The question is aimed at the foundation of art or virtue (in this particular instance, the art of courage). The answer Socrates wishes to achieve is one which will bring to bear before the mind of himself and his interlocutor, the form of courage itself: "that common quality which is called courage

¹⁴Laches, 190b-d.

and which includes all the various uses of that term."¹⁵

The interest that Socrates expresses in the formal rather than the spatial--a distinction his interlocutors unanimously fail to perceive--is the dominant theme of the Socratic earlier dialogues of Plato. And yet, even though his partners in dialogue have a philosophical myopia with respect to form per se, they are not completely in the dark. Although Laches' eros is typically spatial in direction, the objects to which it points, so to speak, have a degree of form to them: spatial form, as it were. When asked by Socrates to give that common quality which is courage, Laches replies that "courage is a sort of endurance of the soul, if I am to speak of the universal nature which pervades them all."¹⁶ Recognizing and pointing out to Laches that there are various kinds of endurance not deemed courageous, Socrates rejects his answer as explicating the nature, or form, of courage. But it has to be noted that Socrates does not reject his answer in total. There are various kinds of courage that are deemed courageous. That is, although these kinds of courage are not the nature or form of courage itself, they are instances of that form. As such, they must exemplify that form, or have that form, to a certain degree. This, we may say, is what is meant by the phrase, spatial form. (The status of spatial form will be dealt with later in this thesis.) What Socrates objects to in the dialogue is not

¹⁵ Ibid., 192b.

¹⁶ Ibid., 192c.

the recognition of spatial form as such. Certainly he realizes that there is such a thing. His objections are lodged against those who view spatial form as the standard of action and as the direction which eros should take in its search for unity. That tendency invariably breaks down, as we clearly see in the early dialogues, and if persistence in the spatial remains constant, despair is inevitable. The only way to conquer an existence which would wallow in a 'pool of mud' is to move beyond it in a search for explanation and standard by means of dialectic--philosophy.

The method of dialectic is the only one which takes this course, doing away with assumptions and travelling up to the first principle of all, so as to make sure of confirmation there. When the eye of the soul is sunk in a veritable slough of barbarous ignorance, this method gently draws it forth and guides it upwards, assisted in the work of conversion by the arts. 17

One who engages in the activity of philosophy but fails to move beyond the realm of the spatial (the 'pool of mud') is not really engaging in dialectic at all, and is, as one Platonic scholar put it, "a mere lover of opinion, and he is, as it were, sleeping his life away in a pursuit which will fail to give him any ... standard of values." 18

Form surpasses its instances but at the same time it includes them by giving them a unity. To look on the instances

¹⁷Republic VII, 534.

¹⁸John M. Rist, Eros and Psyche (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 23.

of form as the form itself is a case of mistaken identity. One could say that the characters that Socrates encounters are the personification of this mistake. The Socratic inquiry takes the form of individuals located in space and limited by space searching for principles and standards of value and action. But the Socratic inquiry involves certain metaphysical presuppositions, viz., that there are those principles and standards of value, and that there is a spatial factor in that very search which limits one to a certain degree. This is explanatory of the time and strain it takes to get the philosophical inquiry on its feet, i.e., the time it takes to recognize the inadequacies and unsatisfactory nature of the spatial and the turning to the more fundamental metaphysical inquiry into form per se.

Now that some understanding has been reached concerning the nature of the Socratic inquiry, it is best to keep this understanding in mind as the discussion proceeds. The dichotomy between form and space is pictorially represented by the famous image of the cave in book seven of the Republic.

In that image there are a number of prisoners who are bound and restrained in such a way that they can only see the dancing shadows of wooden animals and men cast on the cave wall directly in front of them from behind their backs. A large fire which enables the shadows to be cast is also a part of this image. Placed there from the time of their birth, these prisoners mistake the shadows on the wall for reality and

consequently their discourse is concerned with the terpsichorean phantoms which parade directly in front of them, instead of the true reality which they cannot perceive. Hence the unsubstantiality of these shadowy figures is exceeded only by the unsubstantiality of the discourse of the captives.

After sketching this rather disturbing situation, we are now to suppose that one of the prisoners breaks the bonds which hold him and turns to view the truth. There is a painful realization that his former discourse was mistakenly based upon appearance and illusion, but not before an initial perplexity at the whole situation. After having, to some extent, digested and interpreted his place in the cave, someone forcibly drags him up the steep ascent to the mouth of the cave where he is once again blinded. It is at this point that existence and experience make sense. The pinnacle of the dialectical process is the realm of pure form, static and immutable, as opposed to the changing and fleeting shadows of the cave. But the ephemeral nature of the cave, or space, is not to be denied its importance in dialectic. The process starts with the spatial, and the realization that we are finite creatures who exist in space. But it also starts because, as Kant says, man cannot help but do metaphysics (philosophy):

For human reason, without being moved merely by the idle desire for extent and variety of knowledge, proceeds impetuously, driven on by an inward need, to questions such as cannot be answered by any empirical employment of reason, or by principles thence derived. Thus in all men, as soon as their reason has become ripe

for speculation, there has always existed and will continue to exist some kind of metaphysics. 19

With these considerations in mind, the remainder of this discussion will be concerned with following the Socratic inquiry to its principal objectives, and with an eye to detecting its characteristic features.

It has been pointed out that there are very general presuppositions of the Socratic inquiry. If the status of these notions can be determined, we shall go a long way in understanding Plato's later metaphysics.

¹⁹Critique of Pure Reason, trans., Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 56.

CHAPTER 2

THE METAPHYSICAL STATUS OF FORM

After enunciating the most general presuppositions of the Socratic inquiry, it seems natural at this point to inquire into the status of those notions, and estimate their importance for that very inquiry which plants its feet in them. For reasons which will emerge later, the status of form shall be the first candidate up for examination.

It is true to say that one of the most important problems, not only for Plato but for philosophers in general, is that of form. The later Platonic metaphysics witnessed an interest in form that was the initial push of a trend of metaphysical speculation that gained foremost importance from Plato to the present. The career of form in the history of philosophy is an extremely coloured one. Form has been called transcendent, immanent, denotative, abstract and a universal, to name only a few. Some of these conceptions will be examined within this chapter, but before dealing with them important issues have to be raised as preliminary background material.

A superficial reading of the dialogues suggests to the reader that if Plato did anything in metaphysics it was to split existence into two halves, or realms: the realm of changing things which are always becoming and never really are, and the realm of unchanging eternal being which is never becoming but,

in the fullest sense of the word, is. In the Timaeus by way of an example we are told that:

That which is apprehensible by thought with a rational account is the thing that is always unchangeably real; whereas that which is the object of belief together with unreasoning sensation is the thing that becomes and passes away, but never has real being. 1

This passage is not only important with respect to stating a dichotomy of existence but raises some crucial questions in epistemology. We have already seen that the existential condition of Soul in space, which is called eros, is a psychical dispersion into a tripartite unity. This is the inevitable condition of finitude. One of the consequences of this condition is a bifurcation in the cognitive activity of individuals. Plato, in the Republic and elsewhere, attempted to develop an epistemology which he thought would do justice to the various kinds of psychical activities. In the Republic, specifically, he delineates a theory of knowledge known as the image of the divided line. There he divides cognition into two very general kinds of mental activity: cognition of the visible world, and cognition of the intelligible world. One thing, though, does run continuously through this analysis, and, for that matter, every problem Plato sought to solve, and that was the typically Greek problem of the one and the many. This problem runs like an abiding thread giving unity to his inquiries. If we want to get an initial grasp of Plato's epistemology in terms of this, we could simplify

¹Timaeus, 28a.

the situation somewhat and state that cognition of appearances is cognition of the many, and cognition of intelligible structures is cognition of the one. But this is merely an initial simplification in order that we may approach the divided line not completely in the raw, so to speak. It will be found that the problem of the one and the many even occupies the highest steps on the ladder of knowledge.

In asking important questions in epistemology such as 'What do we know?', one thing should be kept in mind about the attempts Plato makes in trying to answer them. This point is best made by W.J. Oates when he says that

Plato's answer to the problem of epistemology runs absolutely parallel to his ontology. In other words, the answer to the questions, 'What do we know?' and, 'How do we know it?', cannot be given without a simultaneous consideration of the question 'What is real?'. 2

The issue here is whether there can be an epistemology without a metaphysics; and the Platonic answer, of course, is that there cannot. The recognition of an object of knowledge or belief involves the concomitant recognition of the degree of reality that object possesses. And whether one has knowledge or belief with respect to an object is contingent upon how much reality that object has. One can perceive, then, that for Plato epistemological inquiry rests on metaphysical presuppositions. In asking the question 'What do we know?' there is the more fundamental

²Whitney J. Oates, Aristotle and the Problem of Value, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p.45.

question to be answered first, viz., "What is there to know?" The image of the divided line is an admirable attempt to explicate this important relationship between the metaphysical and the epistemological.

There is, first of all, cognition of the visible world which Plato, in the Meno, calls opinion--whether tethered or not. Opinion is not simple though. Because of a multiplicity of appearances in the world, opinion accommodates the appearances by becoming numerous also. Just as there are shadows on the wall of the cave and the objects which cause them, so there is a kind of opinion in a shadowy state with no amount of stability, and there is a relatively more stable kind of opinion. In the Republic Plato calls the first imagining³ the second, belief.

Imagining or picture-thinking proceeds in almost total disregard for anything except what is immediately present to the mind. The prisoners in the cave are trapped in their own ignorance and flow with what is immediately present to the mind, i.e., appearances. The shadows on the wall of the cave, then, are to be interpreted as the appearances of real objects in space: the relation between them being a causal one.⁴ Concern

³Paul Shorey translates the Greek eikasia as picture-thinking or conjecture. These two terms capture this cognitive state better, I think, than Cornford's 'imagining'.

⁴I do not agree with I.M. Crombie with respect to the allegory of the cave. He understands this allegory in a literal way and makes no attempt at interpreting it. See, An Examination of Plato's Doctrines, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p.74., and Plato: The Midwife's Apprentice, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p.100.

with appearance is the lowest and basest kind of cognition. There is something analogous to this in Hegel with what he calls sense certainty. In the Phenomenology of Mind he states that:

The concrete content, which sensuous certainty furnishes, makes this prima facie appear to be the richest kind of knowledge, to be even a knowledge of endless wealth--a wealth to which we can as little find any limit when we traverse its extent in space and time, where that content is provided before us. ... It is--that is the essential point for sense-knowledge, and that bare fact of being, that simple immediacy, constitutes its truth.

5

In this sense, imagining is the bare apprehension of appearances. Since appearances are constantly changing, opinion changes at the same time in accordance with the changes of appearances. If one remains at this level of cognition one may find himself in the Cartesian predicament of being unable to distinguish between the appearances which present themselves during sleep and those that present themselves during waking life.

Opinion which moves beyond the curtain of mere appearance to the objects of which they are likenesses is one step higher on the epistemic ladder to knowledge. The question at this point is "How do we get beyond appearance to its object?" The answer must be as Descartes thought; and that is that appearances or ideas as he called them, must have an objective reality. Of this principle, Descartes says the following:

⁵Hegel, Phenomenology of Mind trans., J.B. Baillie, (New York: Harper Torch Books, Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), pp. 149-150.

By the objective reality of an idea I mean that in respect of which the thing represented in the idea is an entity, in so far as that exists in the idea; and in the same way we can talk of objectice perfection, objective device, etc. For whatever we perceive as being in the objects of our ideas, exists in the ideas themselves objectively. 6

One thing must be stated in reference to this passage and that is that the principle of the objective reality of ideas in Descartes is not a representative theory of ideas such as we find in Locke. The principle here is that when we attend to an idea or an appearance we are not simply attending to a purely subjective reality. We are also attending to an objective reality. This is what is meant by the thing existing in the idea. In addition to there being a subjective reality, there is also a formal reality which is the object of the idea in itself. The objective reality of an idea captures the formal reality of the things and because of this, points to the latter as a reference beyond itself. If we attend simply to ideas qua ideas in the mind, as we do in the stage previously dealt with, then we are attending to ideas in their subjective reality only, and we are not paying complete attention to ideas as they really are. The objective reality of an idea is that aspect of an idea which agrees with the formal reality of an object in an ideal sense. Thus, the more reality an object has, the more objective reality the idea has. The answer to the question "How do we get beyond appearance to its object?" is by complete inspection of ideas given in the lower

⁶Arguments Demonstrating the Existence of God and The Distinction Between Soul and Body Drawn Up in Geometrical Fashion, definition III, Haldane and Ross, Vol. 2, p. 52.

stage of cognition. Complete inspection will yield to us that there are these two dimensions of ideas: their subjective reality--i.e., the reality an idea has as an idea in the mind --and their objective reality--i.e., the reality an idea has because of a real object, and the presence of the latter in the former in an ideal sense.

Not only is the distinction between an object and its appearance made but we may agree with Descartes and Hegel that in making this distinction there is also the recognition of a self or subject which experiences the appearances, since the recognition of an object beyond its appearances involves, at the same time, the recognition of a subject in distinction from that object. As Hegel stated:

Amongst the innumerable distinctions that here come to light, we find in all cases the fundamental difference--viz., that in sense-experience, pure being at once breaks up into the two 'thises'... one this as I, and one as object.

7

The activity of the subject at this stage of cognition is the activity of making judgements. This is in contradistinction to the pure passivity of the lower form of opinion. Judgements are possible here because memory is present. In the Philebus we read,

It appears to me that the conjunction of memory with sensation, together with the feelings consequent upon memory and sensation, may be said, as it were to write words in our souls.

8

⁷Hegel, loc. cit.

⁸Philebus, 39 a.

Because there is the capacity to make judgements on this level, in virtue of the conjunction of memory and sensation, there must be a unifying of images at this stage rather than a parade of images with no thread of continuity. And with the capacity to make judgements there is the possibility of making true or false judgements⁹ and hence there may be true and false beliefs.

Now in the Republic it is stressed upon the reader that belief and imagining are both concerned with the visible world¹⁰ and the visible world is in a perpetual state of flux. Hence belief about objects in the visible world of flux is never a stable thing. Although I may make a judgement about an object, that it is white for example, I can never be sure that it will remain white. If it does remain white, then because of my memory, I can remember that it was white before and make the same judgement again about its colour. But if it changes colour I may not recognize it as the same object, and even if I do recognize it as the same object but with a different colour, I can no longer say that it is white object, i.e., my belief about its colour is now false since it is no longer white. I now have to make a new judgement about its colour. Hence our judgements about objects in the physical world (space and time) are not absolutely true, although they may be, in a sense, temporarily true. This is not the result of any restrictions

⁹Ibid, 28b, Statesman, 278a-d.

¹⁰Theaetetus, 152c-153d, Timaeus, 28a-b.

on our cognitive abilities as knowers, but rather it is the result of the nature of those objects in space and time which are subject to our judgements.

One will never attain philosophic wisdom if one restricts himself to this realm of existence, or identifies this realm of existence with the true reality which is the object of philosophic knowledge. That kind of knowledge never has as its object those things which change and flow through time. Philosophic knowledge has a stable order of reality as its object. Experience has taught us that most of what we perceive in the world is very often not the reality we think it is. Colour, shape, size, and a host of other perceptible properties are contingent upon other things being the case. For example, distance may affect our perception of certain things. If the distance between a perceiver and an object is great enough that object may be mistaken for another object. Or, if the light is not intense enough in a room, blue may appear black. But even though the distance is not great and the light is sufficient, still there is no guarantee that the objects of our perceptions will remain the same. We cannot say, because of this, that the reality we experience through perception is a stable kind of reality. The visible world is, as Heracleitus said, a river of motion. As Socrates says, with Heracleitus in mind:

Nothing is one thing just by itself, nor can you rightly call it by some definite name, nor even say it is of any definite sort. On the contrary, if you call it 'large' it will be found to be also small; if 'heavy', to be also light; and so on all through, because nothing is one thing or some thing of any definite sort. All the things we are pleased to say 'are', really are in process of becoming, as

a result of movement and change and of blending one with another. We are wrong to speak of them as 'being', for none of them ever is; they are always becoming. ... all things are the offspring of a flowing stream of change. 11

Just as the visible world is constantly changing, so our cognitive states with respect to that reality will be constantly changing.

It is impossible to see, because of this, how the world of flux should afford any basis for discourse and the search for truth. Plato, like Socrates, is interested in formal considerations and ultimately philosophic knowledge. Surely wisdom is not contingent upon the distance between someone and an object, or how intense the light is in a room at a certain time. The constant flux of objects in space does not offer any sanction for philosophic knowledge; those objects cannot by their very nature function as the objects of the search for truth. Dialectic demands permanence. There must not be the fear that as the dialectical process takes one up the cave to philosophic knowledge, the object of that striving disappears or becomes something other than it was. Permanence in the object known guarantees that the knowledge we have of that object will be firm and unchanging.

Those objects we are directed toward in our search for truth are to be found, Plato believed, not in this world of changing appearance and sensible objects, but in a super-sensible world; a world apprehensible by reason alone and not within

¹¹Theaetetus, 152 d-e.

the sphere of the sensible. If we can lay hold of those objects which transcend the visible world, then we can truly be said to have knowledge.

Just as there are two kinds of opinion, so also Plato makes a distinction between two kinds of knowledge. There may be some disagreement by some in calling both parts of the upper section of the line knowledge. Demos, for example, says that the upper section is to be interpreted as presenting the distinction between understanding and knowledge.¹² I.M. Crombie as another example, is not even sure what the distinction between the two is.¹³ For reasons which will become clear in a few moments, I shall maintain that in the upper section of the line Plato was drawing a distinction between discursive knowledge and intuitive knowledge.

The lowest form of knowledge--signified by the term dianoia--is what I shall call discursive knowledge. Plato says of this kind of knowledge:

The mind uses as images those actual things which themselves had images in the visible world; and it is compelled to pursue its inquiry by starting from assumptions and travelling not up to a principle but down to a conclusion.¹⁴

With the kind of knowledge yielded by this kind of discursive activity, the knower is still within the realm of space, since there seems to be a fundamental preoccupation with images.

¹²Demos, op. cit. p. 282.

¹³I.M. Crombie, An Examination of Plato's Doctrines, Vol. 2, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963) pp. 73-76.

¹⁴Republic, 510 b.

The image plays an important role as a model which keeps the search for knowledge on its feet and going. As an elucidation of this, Plato reminds us of how mathematicians proceed. They start with certain basic unquestioned assumptions, of which they do not feel compelled to give an account, and with these in mind they proceed through a series of steps to their desired conclusion. Given the initial assumptions which are purported to be true, if the steps follow logically from the assumptions then the conclusion is true. This is what is meant by the metaphor of travelling down to a conclusion. Very often this kind of activity proceeds in and through the use of visible figures. But knowledge here is restricted since the basic assumptions go unquestioned. For example they assume that numbers exist and do not ask the fundamental question: What is number? Their inquiry then proceeds not upward to first principles of explanation, but downward to certain conclusions. In this way the knower at this stage has a faint glimmer of essences or forms but yet cannot be said to have knowledge of them. He has a faint glimmer because he grasps those forms, of number for example, through the particular images he deals with. Although his analysis proceeds in a discursive fashion downward by use of visible figures such as rectangles drawn in the sand, his claim, once he has reached his conclusion, is not of that particular rectangle only, but of all rectangles; indeed of the form of rectangle.¹⁵

Plato did not wish to restrict this form of knowledge

¹⁵ See Meno, 83a-86a.

to the sphere of mathematical reasoning only. The notion of discursive knowledge is a much broader notion than just the procedures of arithmetic and geometry. In the Meno Plato presents his readers with an analysis which seems to have gone unnoticed by some when criticizing Plato for making belief and knowledge completely disparate. Some contemporary analysts have misrepresented Plato's theory of knowledge by pointing out that knowledge is analysed in terms of belief, and that when Plato separated knowledge and belief he made a logical blunder. But Plato made no logical blunder, and did not separate knowledge and belief in the way that he is thought to have. In the present dialogue we read the following,

True opinions [true beliefs] are a fine thing and do all sorts of good so long as they stay in their place; but they will not stay long. They run away from a man's mind, so they are not worth much until you tether them by working out the reason. Once they are tied down they become knowledge, and are stable. That is why knowledge is something more valuable than right opinion. What distinguishes one from the other is the tether. 16

The core of the argument here is that, from a practical point of view, true beliefs are essentially no different from knowledge, since both will lead one to the same right action. But from a logical point of view, they differ. One has a tether and is secure because of it, while the other does not. In other words, knowledge is true belief with a justification, a logos, and true belief is simply a belief without a justification. At

¹⁶Ibid, 98a.

the risk of becoming too simplistic, I shall state that this is basically where contemporary analysis has got in an attempt to understand the concept of knowledge. One notable analyst, for example, argues that,

S knows that P if, and only if, (i). it is true that P, (ii). S believes that P, (iii). S is completely justified in believing that P, (iv). S is completely justified in believing that P in some way that does not depend upon any false statement.

17

Now, it is my contention that although Plato did not explicitly state as much, it cannot be argued because of this that he completely separated knowledge and belief; he did not do that as is clear from the Meno. There is a point, however, that calls for attention. Some scholars have pointed out that the Meno and the Republic differ with respect to the objects of knowledge. The former argues, as was noted, that the things in the visible world can be objects of knowledge, whereas the latter dialogue reserves that term for loftier things: viz., the forms. This may present an initial difficulty for our interpretation, but I think Crombie is correct in holding that there is a kind of 'mundane' knowledge in Plato. From a textual point of view this may not be clear, but from a philosophical point of view it has to be said that Plato is not denying the existence of a mundane form of knowledge, since even in the Republic he states that "The artist, we say, this maker of images, knows nothing

¹⁷Keith Lehrer, Knowledge, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.21.

¹⁸I.M. Crombie, Plato: The Midwife's Apprentice, pp.105-106.

of the reality, but only the appearance."¹⁹

Knowledge of things in the visible world may be considered a discursive kind of knowledge for the following reason. Taking a cue from what Socrates says in the quote above (that the tether is a working out of the reason why a true belief is true), it can be stated that in working out a justification for a true belief we have moved from a mere opinion which happens to be true, to knowledge. This movement, which begins with an initial opinion, proceeds through a series of steps to a justification of the original opinion. If the justification is sound, it raises the initial opinion to knowledge. Take Socrates' example as a case. If someone judges correctly about which road will take him to his desired destination, though he has never been to the place, he cannot be said to know that that road is the correct one, even though he has an opinion. Although he will arrive at the destination because he believes correctly, he does not know that he will arrive at the destination. But when he arrives at his destination, then we may say that he knows that the road he took on his journey to the city is the correct road to take. The true belief has become knowledge simply because the experiences he had were such that they justified his true belief; in the words of Socrates, he worked out its reason.

Although Plato, in delineating what he means by discursive reasoning as a vehicle for what I have termed discursive knowledge, employs, in the main, the model of geometrical

¹⁹Republic, 601ff.

science, it has been shown that mathematical knowledge is not the only kind of discursive knowledge. There is, to use Crombie's term, a 'mundane' kind of discursive knowledge--such as knowing the way to Larissa.

Discursive knowledge, however, is not philosophical knowledge. Plato tells us that,

Geometry and those other allied subjects ... do in some measure apprehend reality, but we observe that they cannot yield anything clearer than a dream-like vision of the real so long as they leave the assumptions they employ unquestioned and give no account of them. 20

and,

Furthermore reasoning is, I suppose, at its best when none of these senses intrudes to trouble the soul, neither hearing nor sight nor pain nor pleasure; when it is, so far as may be, alone by itself, taking leave of the body, and having as little communion and contact therewith while it reaches out after reality. 21

Whereas geometrical reasoning proceeds with the aid of at least visible figures, there is another kind of reasoning that proceeds without the aid of anything visible or bodily. This kind of reasoning Plato calls dialectic. Dialectic is the means to, what I called earlier, intuitive knowledge, and its goal is to grasp that reality which is unchanging and permanent and is not contingent upon anything but itself.

²⁰Republic, 533b.

²¹Phaedo, 65c.

Since we can never get a permanent grasp of those things which are by nature devoid of permanence, "it follows then that reason..., and knowledge that gives perfect truth, are foreign to them."²² Hence,

We find fixity, purity, truth and what we have called perfect clarity, either in those things that are always unchanged, unaltered and free of all admixture, or in what is most akin to them: everything else must be called inferior and of secondary importance.

23

Intuitive knowledge is that knowledge which is the goal of the Socratic inquiry. The unchanging reality which intuitive knowledge has as its object is what Plato calls form. Rational intuition is that rather rare mode of cognition which is the intellectual apprehension of an object as it is in itself. But it is not the common apprehension of objects in space, rather it is the grasp of those factors which underlie and give unity to those objects--the apprehension of form per se. So far as this is possible, we may be said to have grasped the nature of existence in all its modes, since a grasp of the fundamental features of objects in space means also a grasp of those objects qua objects in space. The master of dialectic, Socrates tells us, is one who is able to account for the form and existence of each thing.

24

The apprehension of intelligible structures is not a cold affair though. Once a man has achieved philosophic knowledge

²²Philebus, 59b.

²³Ibid, 59c.

²⁴Republic, 534b.

or wisdom, he cannot help but be a just man. According to the dictates of reason and the understanding of reality that he has, "the just man does not allow the several elements in his soul to usurp one another's function."²⁵ Justice, or virtue, is wisdom, or philosophic knowledge. The apprehension of intelligible structure (forms) is not only the apprehension of a metaphysical reality, i.e., the ground of an object's existence, it is also the apprehension of a moral reality which transcends space and serves as a standard of action. To sum up, the intuitive grasp of form is the grasp of a multi-dimensional sphere of reality which necessarily leads one to courageous, temperate, and just acts²⁶, as well as being a grasp of reality. (The multi-dimensional reality of form shall be dealt with and clarified in the next chapter.).

This fourth and highest kind of cognition moves up from assumptions or hypotheses to first principles, unlike discursive reasoning which moves in the opposite direction. And, "it makes no use of the images employed in the other section, but only of Forms, and conducts its inquiry solely by their means."²⁷ But whereas the lower mundane kind of knowledge moved down from assumptions to conclusions, or beliefs to knowledge by working out their reasons, dialectic which is being described in the above passage really does not 'move' in the

²⁵ Ibid, 443 d.

²⁶ Ibid, 441-442.

²⁷ Ibid, 509.

way discursive reasoning does. One does not move from form to form. One may be said rather to grasp each form in its richness as it is in itself. The 'movement', if it can be called that, is really the recognition of necessary or intrinsic relations among forms, and this recognition is achieved via an expanding focus of attention, i.e., the expanding intuition of many forms in necessary relation from the intuition of one form which seemed to be isolated. We may be able at times to focus on particular forms but if we could apprehend all forms in a moment of intuition we could concede a realm of form which is essentially one. This kind of intuitive ability on the part of the knower, whether it be of one form or many forms, is possible because the mind is in touch with reality: this is the meaning of the myth of recollection which appears throughout the middle and late dialogues.²⁸ The myth is that in a previous lifetime, before incarnation in the body, each soul was in communion with the forms, and hence the process up the cave from ignorance to knowledge is one of recollection. This is a myth though and because of this demands interpretation. And the interpretation is basically that the mind or soul is able to grasp the forms; in the words of the Phaedo, it is akin to the forms by its very nature. If we were to deny this, or deny that forms even existed, we would destroy the rationality of discourse.

If ... a man refuses to admit that forms of things

²⁸Meno, 81 d ff., Phaedo, 72 e-78 b, Phaedrus, 349 e-250 d, Philebus, 34 b.

exist or distinguish a definite form in every case, he will have nothing on which to fix his thought, so long as he will not allow that each thing has a character which is always the same; and in so doing he will completely destroy the significance of all discourse. 29

To harken back to what was stated earlier, the objects in space that are constantly changing cannot by their nature serve as the sanction for philosophic knowledge; our minds must grasp something more fundamental. Even though our bodies exist in space, our souls do not, Plato stresses. Our souls are akin to those things which are most like them and that is what is invisible and apprehensible by thought only: the forms. To deny that forms exist or that the mind can grasp them is to deny that rational intuition can get beyond space. Plato clearly rejects this. There is philosophic knowledge and hence forms must exist and the mind must be in touch with them. And if the mind is, in some sense, in touch with forms, then forms must be present to the mind when the mind intuits them. That is, there must be a kind of participation of forms in the minds when discourse and dialectic proceed. This brings to the fore a central point in the upcoming analysis of the metaphysical status of form, and should be kept in mind since it will be referred to presently.

Here we are finally in a position to attempt an answer to the question, "What is the status of form?" The excursion

²⁹Parmenides, 135 b-c.

into the relation between metaphysics and epistemology was not irrelevant to the problem now at hand. By sketching Plato's theory of knowledge, as we find it in the image of the divided line, we set the stage for a search for the correct answers to this important question.

In a little book entitled, Essays on Philosophical Method, the author, R.M. Hare, suggests an interpretation of form which he thinks is an adequate, indeed the only adequate view of form and one which he further thinks is true to Plato's philosophical intentions. According to Hare, forms are mental images. He arrives at this position by way of an epistemological analysis. First he asks the question, "What is happening in Plato's experience when he was, as he would have put it, seeing or apprehending an idea?"³⁰ Hare, after asking this question, goes immediately to the image of the divided line for an answer, and rightly so. But he goes to the wrong place on the line, to discursive reasoning rather than intuitive reasoning. There he talks about the procedures of the mathematicians and their use of visible figures. He concludes here that just as we see a figure such as a triangle with our eyes, so also the mathematician sees triangle-ness itself with their minds. What must Plato mean by this? In an attempt to fathom the answer he makes a rather striking statement for which he offers no argument, and that is: "What we do when we are thinking may be classified into

³⁰R.M. Hare, Essays on Philosophical Method, (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1971), p. 57.

first, talking to ourselves, and secondly, the forming of mental images."³¹ Notice here that there is no room for rational intuition if Hare is right, but since this is not my central concern, I shall grant Hare the point and see if it is consistent with what Plato says.

He discards talking with oneself as the seeing of a form, because, he says, when we talk to ourselves, we are talking about forms in order that we may possibly see or apprehend them. With great assurance in his unjustified analysis of thinking, he concludes that by the process of elimination, "what was happening when Plato was 'seeing' an idea was something falling within the vague class 'the forming of mental images'."³² What Hare means by mental images are 'quasi-visual' images and imagined smells, sounds and feelings which we have, such as the feeling of lust, he says.

Now Hare's argument is that the apprehension of a form is actually the forming of a mental image, and he concludes from this that forms are mental images. It is odd that at one point in his discussion he says, "I am not suggesting that Plato equated his ideas with any mental images. He, it goes without saying, would have dissented from this identification."³³ But almost immediately after saying this, he goes on to say that "... Plato attributed the highest sort of reality to what we would call a

³¹Ibid, p.61.

³²Ibid, p.62.

³³Loc. cit.



mental image."³⁴ He has contradicted himself at this point. But even if he had not contradicted himself his thesis is still incorrect. The entertainment of mental images such as those listed by Hare form the lowest kind of cognition, as we saw earlier. Imagining, or picture-thinking, was placed on the bottom of the divided line. Plato certainly did not view forms as mental images: how could a mental image function as the formal cause of an object in space? The answer, of course, is in no way at all. Mental images such as quasi-visual images are derivative not fundamental, as Plato believed forms are.

Continuing with the effort to be as fair as possible to Hare, it shall be assumed, at this point, that what he meant by a mental image was a concept rather than actual images in the mind. So when Hare stated that the seeing or apprehension of a form is the forming of a mental image, what he means by the latter, is the formation of a concept. If this is what Hare means, he has touched on a much more paramount issue than what he appeared to mean. But there is still room for disagreement with our author.

To begin with, his argument that forms are concepts is invalid. It may well be the case that when one apprehends a form he is forming a concept, but it does not follow from this that the form is the concept. The concept which is being formed in the act of apprehension is 'of' the form, and not the form itself. When discourse proceeds, as was noted earlier, the forms are in

³⁴Loc. cit.

some sense present to the mind, or minds, discoursing, but present in the sense of being contained in the concepts which are of those forms. Hare should have asked the more important question: how do we get from concepts to forms? And the answer is in the same way as we moved from appearances to objects in the realm of opinion; by the recognition of an objective reality to the ideas, and in this case, concepts. This is the way in which form participates in the minds which discourse about them. Concepts contain the reality of forms in an objective or ideal sense. There is a subjective reality to concepts as well, just as there is for ideas or appearances, and that is the reality a concept has for a knower in space as that which orders his experience.

This brings up another point of criticism. In concentrating on mental images or concepts as having reference to physical objects only, Hare was moving in the wrong direction, and hence against the intentions Plato has in setting up his program for education and dialectic in the Republic. The Socratic inquiry is a movement of thought up the line or cave toward form, in opposition to space. Hare views mental images, or concepts, as having reference to what is spatial only. And what is more, seeing them as hypotheses requiring no justification. In this way, he is in the position of the geometers who assume the existence of number without asking what number is. Starting with their assumptions they move down the line to objects via visible figures. Hare makes the same move. Rather than following

the Socratic inquiry to form he remains content with the spatial by resting his analysis on experience with the notion that forms are concepts and concepts have a subjective reality only, i.e., apply only to experience.

The Socratic inquiry does not stop at concepts. Concepts applied to experience yield discursive knowledge only. Dialectic, it was stated earlier, moves up from assumptions to first principles. To remain with concepts only is to terminate the Socratic inquiry prematurely and on the wrong side of the divided line: on the epistemological side rather than the metaphysical side. As an example of the Socratic inquiry that proceeds all the way to form, we have an illustration in the middle dialogues: the quest is for the form of beauty.

And this is the way, the only way, he must approach or be led toward the sanctuary of Love. Starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find him ever mounting the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung--that is from one to two, and from two to every lovely body, from bodily beauty to beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself--until at last he comes to know what beauty is. 35

and,

It will be neither words, nor knowledge, nor a something that exists in something else, such as a living creature, or the earth, or the heavens, or anything that is--but subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal oneness, while every lovely thing partakes of it in such sort that, however much the parts may wax and wane, it will be neither more nor less, but still the same inviolable whole. 36

³⁵Symposium, 211c.

³⁶Ibid, 211b.

It is clear from this that the Socratic inquiry moves through concepts to form and does not rest in concepts themselves mistaking them for form at the same time. If forms were concepts, then eros would have nothing to strive toward but its own concepts. But this is precisely what Socrates wishes to dissuade his interlocutors from doing. There must be the recognition of a reality beyond mere concepts in order for eros to move creatively toward its quest for wisdom. The notion of forms as concepts is one example of the dream-like sense we have that all things must exist in space. To remain with concepts is to remain with one's own experience, and hence in space.

To be true to the Socratic inquiry and the science of dialectic, then, we must proceed up the line to intuitive reasoning which by nature crosses over the line to the metaphysical and engulfs or appropriates its objects: the forms.

In our attempt to fathom the answer to the question of what form is, we will consider two important figures who have appeared in the present century with an abiding interest in the problem of form. They are Santayana and Whitehead.

Plato makes a very general distinction between being and becoming, as we have seen. Of the relation between the two realms he states that the visible world of process is the copy of being, or form. To quote: "... the world has been fashioned on the model of that which is comprehensible by rational dis-
course and understanding and is always in the same state."³⁷

³⁷Timaeus, 29 a.

What this passage means, essentially, is that the flux of nature is derivative by being contingent on that which is metaphysically necessary; the forms. In this way form is prior to nature which is posterior. The priority of form here suggested is an ontological priority and not a temporal priority. In order to understand just what this kind of priority is, we may turn to Aristotle who says a lot by way of explanation.

Some things are described as prior and posterior in respect of their nature and substance; all those, namely, which can exist without others, whereas others cannot exist without them. This distinction was recognized by Plato. In a sense therefore, all things called 'prior' or 'posterior' are so called in this respect. 38

If form is understood in these terms then we can say that form can exist without things, whereas things require forms for their existence. This is certainly true of Plato, as Aristotle has pointed out. But we need more than this if we wish to answer the question of the status of form. So far we have managed only to explicate the relation between form and the world. The answer to the question must be couched in terms of what form is in itself. Unfortunately Plato does not say anything in the dialogues themselves in this regard. Our analysis, then, must depart from the text somewhat, and this is where a turn to Santayana and Whitehead will be helpful.

Since it has not been shown in any adequate way, to this point, why form is prior and not dependent upon the world,

³⁸Metaphysics Book 5, chapter II, trans., John Warrington.

our following deliberation on the nature of form will proceed in the following way. We shall compare and contrast two fundamentally different views of form--form as actuality and prior, and form as possibility and dependent--and in the search for a consistent metaphysics of form, the notion of form as actuality and prior will be found to be the only adequate theory.

A distinction that Santayana makes, in the same way that Plato does, is between essence and existence. The former is a principle of pattern and intelligibility, while the latter, characterized by radical flux and instability, is that matrix upon which the former confers determination and pattern thus enabling a knower to recognize a specific region of matter with a shape, i.e., a thing. If it were not for essence or form per se, the mind would not be able to grasp the flux of existence and know that there is a profluence of events. Hence it is only insofar as there is a principle of pattern, or static factor in reality, that a knower is capable of discerning this bifurcation of reality. As Santayana himself says, "Essences by being eternally what they are, enable existence to pass from one phase to another and enable the mind to note and describe the change."³⁹ Plato is in agreement here. The forms in the Platonic universe function as patterns or 'blueprints' for the objects in space, but at the same time are distinct, or separate from those objects.⁴⁰ Santayana,

³⁹George Santayana, Realms of Being, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1972), p.5.

⁴⁰Parmenides, 132c-133d.

like Plato, insists that the two realms of essence and existence--form and space--are related in such a way that existence is necessarily related to essence. That is, there can be no pattern or character to the emerging process of nature unless there are forms that are instantiated or exemplified in that process as particular events with shape and direction. But form is not necessarily related to the process. Forms are not dependent upon a spatio-temporal introduction for their being; in other words, forms do not require things to be what they are. Forms or essences are self-contained and independent.

In contrast to Santayana's theory that forms are independent and prior (in Aristotle's sense), Whitehead maintains the opposite: that forms are dependent and posterior. To see just why Whitehead's theory of form fails it is necessary to delineate some pertinent points in his metaphysics and weigh them against Santayana. I have chosen Santayana's philosophy to best represent the Platonic theory of form not in any arbitrary way but rather because it comes closest to Plato's intentions in the latter dialogues. The justification of this will, I hope, emerge during discussion. There are points of divergence, though, and these will become clear also.

To begin with, the creative movement of the visible world is an upward movement. The activity of a physical object is that activity which unites discrete elements into the synthetic unity of one object. Form is one of those discrete elements; matter, or creativity, is another. To account for the ingression of form in the world, Santayana must posit a

moving principle which introduces, or instantiates, static forms into space. Plato, as well, perceives that there must be a principle other than the forms if process is to be accounted for; this principle Plato calls the Demiurge, which is a creative soul⁴¹, i.e., a cause⁴². The active principle, which Santayana terms matter, selects at each moment a relevant range of forms which significantly modify its nature, and give rise, as a result, to a recognizable well-defined fact in space and time. This is important, for form is that factor in an emerging object which enables one to recognize that object as the same object that it was a moment before. Character, then, is a continuous and permanent element in the history of an existent. But these existents are not finished facts. They are constantly emerging into newness, and may change their clothing of form at any time. As Santayana states so poetically,

Nothing more truly is than character. Without this wedding garment no guest is admitted to the feast of existence: whereas the unbidden essences do not require that invitation ... in order to preserve their proud identity out in the cold. 43

Matter is that principle which accounts for this constant change of form in nature. But form as being does not change. Only form in space, i.e., spatial form, goes through modification and degeneration. Matter, per se, clutches at the

⁴¹Timaeus, 29b-30b.

⁴²Philebus, 26e.

⁴³Santayana, op. cit., p. 24.

realm of essence, getting a grip on those forms which it desires, and drags them down from heaven. The result of this merging of matter and form is the unity of a physical object.

To the extent that matter is the selective principle in nature Whitehead agrees. In Process and Reality, Whitehead contends that actual occasions, which are particular concrete instances of creativity (matter), select from a whole range of possibilities a form of definiteness which, if actualized, confers a new pattern or character on that object. Two passages are relevant at this point.

The determinate definiteness of each actuality is an expression of a selection from these forms. It grades them in a diversity of relevance ... this whole gamut of relevance is 'given' and must be referred to the discussion of actuality. 44

and,

This principle would be a mere word, a term without indicative force, if it did not select some feature of the realm of essence to be its chosen form: in other words, if this brute accident were not some accident in particular, contrasted with the infinity of other forms which it has not chosen. ... The principle of constancy, or perhaps of inconstancy--the selective principle--is matter. 45

As is evident, both Santayana and Whitehead agree with Plato that forms cannot of themselves account for process; both argue that an active principle is necessary for metaphysical explanation. But even though these two positions appear

⁴⁴A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967.), p. 64.

⁴⁵Santayana, op. cit., p. 15.

closely akin, there is a fundamental difference between the two. In the first instance, decision (selection) rests in a subject which is the concrescence of diverse elements of categorical types: an actual occasion is the synthetic unity of eternal objects (forms) and creativity. Once an actual occasion has effected a decision to introduce possibilities into its internal constitution, it achieves a satisfaction which "closes up the entity, and yet is the superject adding its character to the creativity whereby there is a becoming of entities superseding the one in question."⁴⁶ But before that entity moves on to become an element in the process of another entity, and after the satisfaction of achieving a new character, "it has not yet lost itself in the swing back to ... decision."⁴⁷

As in Santayana, an actual occasion is not a finished fact. Whitehead rejects the notion of an actual occasion, or existent, as a substance which undergoes change. For him the activity of an actual occasion is self-constitutive. The process is the constitution of an existent; it is the 'real internal constitution' of an actual occasion. An actual thing can only be understood in terms of it becoming and perishing. This is in contradiction to Santayana, who agrees with Whitehead that things are by nature fluent and changing but maintains that they are to be understood only in terms of static eternal forms. Plato as well held that a knower can only

⁴⁶Whitehead, op. cit., p.129.

⁴⁷Ibid, p.233.

understand the essence of a changing object by grasping the metaphysical presuppositions which underlie its existence. For Whitehead, then, the process which is the actual thing, is a patterned fluency by virtue of its nature as a conjunction of creativity and form. And they are, as such, the subjects of decision and selection. Decision, as a directed activity, is the cutting off of certain possibilities in favour of others which are more relevant to the process at that moment in time.

Santayana, unlike Whitehead, insists that matter by itself is the selective principle. Matter, like Whitehead's creativity, is an unconditioned force: pure potency. "Matter ... is the principle of existence: it is all things in their potentiality and therefore the condition of all their excellence or possible perfection."⁴⁸ The realm of matter is pure dynamism and "from the point of view of our discovery of it is the field of action."⁴⁹ Santayana, then, rests his theory of decision, or selection, in a subject which is not really a subject at all. Conceive, if it is possible, how matter which is an amorphous unconditioned potency, tantamount to Aristotle's 'prime matter', can be a rational principle of decision. It is in no way possible. It seems that a rational activity, such as decision or selection, is the out-

⁴⁸Santayana, op. cit., p. 183.

⁴⁹Ibid, p. 189.

come of the relation of matter (creativity) and form, for rationality is a patterned activity, a purposive striving with a direction. As we saw in chapter one: it has a discernible unity to it, something that matter qua unbounded potentiality does not have. Creativity and form, then, are the presuppositions of decision.

Thus Whitehead's theory of decision is not the same as Santayana's, although prima facie they are similar in certain respects. Where Whitehead agrees that decision rests with activity, the activity has shape and form. Santayana recognizes that form (essence) cannot be an active principle of decision (selection), but he fails to see that matter alone cannot be that principle either. I think we must agree with Whitehead that it is only insofar as there is a union of creativity and form that there can be any activity of decision or selection at all. Both the Timaeus and the Philebus stress this as well. For example, "... all the wise agree ... that in Reason we have the king of heaven and earth" and "the sum of things or what we call the universe ... is governed by Reason and a wondrous regulating Intelligence."⁵⁰ Reason in this dialogue is distinguished from two other factors, which may, for the purposes of this discussion, be equated with what Santayana calls matter and essence, and Whitehead calls creativity and form. Hence Whitehead sides with Plato with

⁵⁰Philebus, 28c-d.

respect to the problem of how forms play a role in process and that is by admitting an initial relation between form and a dynamic principle: the dynamic principle in Plato is Soul.

We have already seen that insofar as forms are static entities of pure character they are relevant to the flux, for they render it intelligible and patterned by giving to each emerging entity a location and structural identity. But there is something more fundamental in the nature of form itself which shows why forms have significance for the flux.

Santayana states categorically that form is not possibility but actuality.⁵¹ Each essence is exhausted by its real definition⁵² and is perfectly individual. As a fully actual individual form it transcends the empirical realm of events and requires no spatio-temporal exemplification to be what it is. And as an individual it is identical with itself.

This inalienable individuality of each essence renders it a universal; for being perfectly self-contained and real only by virtue of its intrinsic character, it contains no reference to any setting in space or time and stands in no adventitious relation to anything. 53

Because they do not require a spatio-temporal rendering into emergent fact in order to maintain their being, forms may be repeated in facts. Particular things may exemplify

⁵¹Santayana, op. cit. p. 27.

⁵²Ibid, p. 18.

⁵³Loc. cit.

them any number of times or even not at all and their absolute individuality is neither diminished nor erased; they remain forms to the bitter end, so to speak. If it were possible that a form could be diminished or obliterated because of particular instantiations and continued repetition, then the realm of essence could ultimately be exhausted. The creative advance would halt leaving a static morphological universe with no alternatives; at this point decision would cease. If it were the case that repetition in the flux did diminish individual forms we could ask how many iterations would be necessary before an essence were expunged. Surely such a question would be nonsensical, since it would presuppose that forms exist in a space-time matrix; that somehow pieces may be broken off and its nature modified over a period of time. But forms are standards of action and patterns of objects, and do not, as was stressed, exist in such a context. The forms must remain themselves no matter what the circumstances in nature.

It is precisely because forms are individual and self-contained that we can know particulars as such. The unity of a physical object is grasped because of its participation in a more ultimate metaphysical unity of form. In this sense, forms are the foundation of existence; an indelible background to the fluency of events in space.

Essence so understood much more truly 'is' than any substance, or any experience, or any event.
 ... To be able to become something else, to suffer change and yet endure, is the privilege

of existence; whereas essences can be exchanged,
but not changed. 54

Form, because of this, may be called the principle of identity and individuality.

What one sees emerging from this metaphysical analysis is that forms have two characters. Consider Santayana's statement:

Realization of essence, by an ironical fate, is accordingly a sort of alienation from essence ... instances are indeed occasions for deviation: they are the cross-roads at which two worlds meet. One set of relations exhibits the instance as an essence; another set exhibits it as fact. 55

It was pointed out earlier that essences are individual and define themselves, and here we see in the notion of exemplification (in Whitehead the notion of ingression) that forms have another character as well. Whitehead calls this their relational essence, or relational character. On the other hand, the character a form has because it is an individual for its own sake is termed its individual essence or individual character. The essences of Santayana, it is remembered, do not require any relation to facts in order to be what they are, but they do stand in necessary relations to one another. These intrinsic relations of forms to one another constitute one aspect of the relational character of the individual forms. The awareness of these intrinsic necessary relations among

⁵⁴Santayana, op. cit. p. 23.

⁵⁵Ibid, p. 121.

forms is, from our point of view, brought about by dialectic and an expanding focus of attention at the level of form itself.

Santayana, in agreement with Plato's argument found in the Sophist, argues that the realm of essence is a realm because of the identity of each essence with itself and its difference from every other essence.

In one sense indeed, the being of any essence implies that of every other; for if any one is assured of its being because it is a distinguishable something, obviously every other distinguishable something is assured of its being on the same ground: so that an infinite multitude of essences is implied, if you will, in the being of any essence. 56

This position is sometimes known as the theory of internal relations, which states that implied in the existence of anything are certain relations to other things, and these relations are intrinsically necessary to the individual thing in order for it to be exactly what it is. Whitehead maintains the same with respect not only to eternal objects but actual occasions as well. In fact he employs the theory of internal relations at the level of emergence as a criticism of the traditional theory of universals. Whitehead contends that not only do universals enter into the real internal constitution of an actual occasion but other actual occasions do as well.

every so-called 'universal' is particular in the sense of being just what it is, diverse from anything else; and every so-called 'particular'

⁵⁶Ibid, p.78. -

is universal in the sense of entering into the constitution of other actual entities. 57

Returning to Santayana, it is surprising how close he comes to Plato with respect to what was stated above. In the Sophist Plato introduces two of what he calls the very great kinds of forms: ⁵⁸ they are Sameness and Difference. The other great kinds are Motion, Rest, and Existence. Sameness and Difference are found to be distinct individual forms but necessarily related to the infinite multiplicity of other forms. For example, Motion partakes of Sameness to the extent that it is the same as itself, and partakes of Difference to the extent that it is different from every other form. This is by no means a statement of the obvious, but a rich metaphysical insight.

There are other complexities of forms as well. Motion combines with Existence; Sameness with Difference, and vice versa; and so on. The whole complex network of inter-relations of forms constitutes what Plato called in the Republic the Good, and what he later called the Pattern; and what Santayana calls a realm of essence. What Plato is essentially doing in asserting this notion of the weaving of forms is declaring the fundamental unity of one metaphysical principle of Form, infinitely rich in itself, rather than the disjunctive diversity of a plurality of metaphysical principles, which are lacking in them-

⁵⁷Whitehead, op. cit. p. 76

⁵⁸Sophist, 245d ff.

selves: what would a form be if it was not the same as itself and different from other forms? It is because of the forms of Sameness and Difference that all relations at the metaphysical level are internal. But all relations at the level of emergence need not be internal. Indeed Santayana is quick to point out that the only relations between existing things are external relations, for "the intrinsic qualities of a thing compose its essence and its essence, when caught in external relations, is the thing itself."⁵⁹ "Existence", he says designates "such being as is in flux, determined by external relations, and jostled by irrelevant events."⁶⁰ In addition to this, along a similar line of thought we are told that:

Existence itself is a surd, external to the essence which it may illustrate and irrelevant to it; for it drags that essence into some here and now, or some then and there; and the things so created far from being identical with their essence at any moment, exist by eluding it, encrusting it in changing relations and continually adopting a different essence. 61

This is a rather difficult passage to fathom, but I think it reasonable to assume that what we are being told is that the peculiar relation of individual fact to essence is an intrinsic necessary relation but the converse is not true. Individual facts depend upon the realm of essence for their existence, but the realm of essence has being apart from any instantiation

⁵⁹Santayana, op. cit., p. 44.

⁶⁰Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1955), p. 42.

⁶¹Santayana, Realms of Being, p. 110.

in nature. In the words of Aristotle, the realm of essence is prior, and facts are posterior. This is good Platonism and is certainly true. The analysis stresses the priority and significance of form, and the contingency of existence or nature, and goes unchallenged. What needs to be challenged is Santayana's contention that at the level of emergence the characteristic species of relations among individual facts is external. In the Realm of Matter he states in emphasis to his earlier suggestion that,

A mutual externality ... is characteristic of existence. ... the conjunction of existence in nature must always remain successive, external, and unsynthesized.

62

and also,

The nature of existence is to possess whatsoever nature it possesses with a treacherous emphasis, dragging that essence, by a sort of rape, from its essential context into contingent relations; those relations, being contingent relations, are variable.

63

Whitehead agrees with this position, but in a qualified way. We have already noted that the internal relations of particulars to universals are not the only internal relations which Whitehead admits. He also admits the internality of relations between a present event and its past. The actuality and value achieved in the past is necessarily prehended by the present emerging unity of feelings, and the present unity can be identified with the past emergent along the same linear path

⁶²Ibid, p.203

⁶³Ibid, p.295.

of advance. Hence in addition to a spatial dimension of an object, there is also a temporal dimension. Historicity is a necessary factor in the existence of objects. This is where Whitehead diverges from the earlier metaphysics of substance in which a thing can be identified with its spatial thickness only. He argues that temporal spread is equally important. "What is given at a moment is not the real thing,⁶⁴ but an arrested cross-section of what the thing really is."

Observation along a linear path of advance, though, reveals that each past emergent comprising this present emergent is the culmination of the whole process to that point. The present individual fact involves the complete richness and value of the whole past. What this means is that present actual things are internally related to the actuality achieved in the past. The conclusion here is that there really are not distinct paths of process for present facts since an attempt to trace the historical route of an object leads one to the immensity of the whole past. The present represents only a temporary distinction.

If we remain at the level of emergence, the internal relation of present to past is the only such relation Whitehead will admit. He does not admit that any internal relations hold between contemporary actual occasions. Contemporary occasions, he insists, are causally independent. "According to

⁶⁴D.W. Gotshalk, Structure and Reality, (New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1968), p.16.

the modern view, no two actual entities define the same actual world. Actual entities are called contemporaries when neither belongs to the 'given' actual world defined by the other." ⁶⁵

Stated succinctly, since the data for the prehensive activity of an actual occasion are objective, subjects cannot apprehend one another. Thus, we read,

The prehension of one actual occasion by another actual entity is the complete transaction, analysable into the objectification of the former entity as one of the data for the latter, and into the fully clothed feeling whereby the datum is absorbed into the subjective satisfaction. ⁶⁶

... the exterior things of successive moments are not to be identified with each other. Each exterior thing is either one actual entity, or (more frequently) is a nexus of actual entities with immediacies mutually contemporary. ⁶⁷

So, in conclusion, it may be stated that Santayana was mistaken with respect to his statement that all relations in nature are external. It would seem that the continuity of objects in space and time demand that they be internally related to their past. To this extent, Whitehead is on the mark, although his position may be an extreme one. ⁶⁸

Let us ponder the notion of internal relations further; more specifically, the peculiar internal relations between

⁶⁵Whitehead, op. cit., p.102.

⁶⁶Ibid, p.82.

⁶⁷Ibid, p.87.

⁶⁸His notion of complete causal independence of contemporaries suggests that among contemporaries there hold no relations at all, not even external!

particulars and the forms in which they participate. Earlier in his career Whitehead had written:

The essence of an eternal object is merely the eternal object considered as adding its own unique contribution to each actual occasion. This unique contribution is identical for all such occasions in respect to the fact that the object in all modes of ingression is just its identical self. But it varies from one occasion to another in respect to the differences of its modes of ingression. Thus the metaphysical status of an eternal object is that of a possibility for an actuality.

69

While Santayana maintains that forms have being apart from particulars (the essences do not require instantiation in nature to be what they are), Whitehead contends that they require actual occasions to be what they are. "An eternal object, considered as an abstract entity, cannot be divorced from its reference to other eternal objects and from its reference to actuality [actual occasions] generally."⁷⁰ Eternal objects as forms of definiteness are intrinsically related to the flux of existence and have a status only as possibilities: as "potentialities for ingression into the becoming of actual entities." Consequently an endeavour to understand the realm of form in complete abstraction from the world of flux results in reducing them to nothing. Eternal objects are only what they are because of a relation to fact: "this is an exemplification

⁶⁹Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p.159.

⁷⁰Loc. cit.

of the categorial principle that the general metaphysical character of being an entity is 'to be a determinant in the becoming of actualities'." ⁷¹

In arguing that eternal objects (forms) are abstractions from fact, Whitehead is denying what Santayana asserted, viz., that form is ontologically prior to fact. Whitehead insists on this, so that, in a sense, form emerges from the creative advance. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that the purpose of philosophy is often misunderstood. According to Whitehead, philosophy should explain form and leave particulars as given. To quote: "Its business is to explain the emergence ⁷² of the more abstract things from the more concrete things." He goes on to say from this that "philosophy is explanatory of abstraction and not of concreteness." If Whitehead is correct in his contention then the Socratic inquiry should be turned on its head, since, according to his analysis, it is proceeding in the wrong direction in the dialogues. But, that inquiry is proceeding in the correct direction.

Abstract reality requires, or depends upon, the concrete from which it is derived. Abstractions are essentially derivative, and are relative by nature. But if forms are derivative (abstract), I fail to see how they could function, in a system that views them as such, as principles of explanation: in Whitehead they are seen as both abstract possibility and

⁷¹Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 392

⁷²Ibid, p. 30.

principles of definiteness. Whitehead further tells us that the definiteness of things in space-time is due to their participation in forms. But how could form condition the creative unity of an emergent entity, if form itself is dependent upon that entity by being an abstraction from it? The notion of form as an abstraction from the process suggests that there is a definiteness to fact prior to the emergence of form. The Whiteheadian scheme of things is one in which form is posterior and things are prior. This is the point to be considered here.

First of all, the derivation of form from fact, termed abstraction, seems to violate one of Whitehead's own principles, viz., the ultimate metaphysical principle which, he states, is the advance from discrete entities given in disjunction to the synthetic unity of those elements in a finished fact. Since we have seen that the process is the striving for the novel togetherness of eternal objects and concrete emergents to produce the unity of one fully determinate satisfaction, I see no alternative to the view that form is prior to fact, and fact is derivative: a contradiction of Whitehead and an agreement with Santayana. To see this we have to show why Whitehead is incorrect, and the case rests on the notion of the posteriority of form.

There are two possible interpretations of posteriority in Whitehead: temporal and ontological. Is temporal posteriority of form a metaphysically adequate view? The answer is most emphatically no. Such a theory is quite inadequate for it fails to account for just how there could be any definiteness

or determinateness in the world. A theory of form must be one which accounts for the pattern and intelligibility of an object at every moment of its existence. If form emerges at a certain point in time from a particular object we are left to account for the pattern and intelligibility of that object prior to the emergence of form. If it had no pattern and intelligibility then it was not an object, and if it did have pattern and intelligibility there must have been form to account for it. There are other questions as well in connection with this. If form is temporarily posterior to facts, does this mean form emerges in space as well as time? If it does, then forms are things in space and time; but this is incorrect. If it does not emerge in space but does so in time, what is its post-emergent status? Transcendence? But it is silly to say that form emerges in time only to be located beyond time.

Is ontological posteriority of form a metaphysically adequate theory to explain facts? This is a much more serious question, and I think a much more germane one as far as Whitehead is concerned, since I think it is accurate to say that he wished eternal objects to be understood in this sense. Briefly, the ontological posteriority of form is the view that while forms and things may coexist, forms are real abstractions from facts, and because of this are contingent on facts in the process. In Aristotle's sense, form is ontologically posterior by being such that its existence depends upon actual occasions. Attention to form, as such, yields the essence of that derivative reality, and this, Whitehead states, is "boundless

abstract possibility."⁷³ In itself, form is boundless possibility, but in its relational character possibility is bound to the process. To quote,

The status of all possibility in reference to actuality requires a reference to this spatio-temporal continuum. In any particular consideration of a possibility we may conceive this continuum to be transcended. But in so far as there is any definite reference to actuality, the definite how of transcendence of that spatio-temporal continuum is required. Thus primarily the spatio-temporal continuum is a locus of relational possibility.

74

Later Whitehead called this limited locus of relational possibility, i.e., the relational character of form, potentials for ingression. Hence we have explicit reference to space-time with the notion of ingression. "The eternal objects [as bound to space-time] are the pure potentials of the universal."⁷⁵ Possibility becomes potentiality with a reference to creativity (decision).

Whitehead, as was seen, stressed that eternal objects have an inner unity by being individual and also a status as a social entity. Now Santayana stated that forms, in virtue of their individual character, are actual. Because they are actual they have a unity and definiteness. Individuality, he thought, is definable or intelligible only in terms of actuality. White-

⁷³Ibid, p. 336.

⁷⁴Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p. 161

⁷⁵Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 226.

head disagrees with this since he argues that mere possibility may be self-contained. But how can this be the case? Whitehead did see that at the level of emergence individuality is defined in terms of actuality, but he failed to perceive that mere possibility, per se, cannot be individual and self-contained. If it could, what would be the distinction between actuality and possibility? Possibility is spread out indetermination, so to speak, whereas actuality is the containment of value: complete determination.

From a Whiteheadean point of view, it is only when one considers the relational character of form that possibility enters into the scheme of things. That is, the notion of form as possibility only has significance if one is entertaining a fact in relation to a form. But this relation does not obliterate the actuality of form. Indeed, it is only because forms are actual that there can be this relation, and the relation is the possibility of ingression into the creative advance of an actual form, i.e., possibility is the possible introduction of a form in nature. Looked at in another way, individual facts during their phase of existence in the process take active interests in certain forms of definiteness and just what forms are considered relevant depends upon the conditions which affect their existence at different times. The acknowledgement of certain actual forms then gives rise to the possibility that they may be exemplified in the process. Of course the possibilities may be eternal, as Whitehead suspects they are, but the point being stressed here is that possibility is derived

from a relation of form to facts and not from facts alone. Hence, possibility is contingent upon the actuality of forms and the subjective recognition of form qua something actual. The nature of possibility is an exemplification of the relational character of form, and the actuality of form is the individual character of form. Thus Whitehead's theory of eternal objects is an explication of the relational character of form. Possibility, as such, presupposes the actuality of form.

Whitehead, in a way, recognized this when he stated that eternal objects are both determinate and indeterminate. They are determinate by being individual and indeterminate with respect to their ingressions. W.A. Christian, a noted Whitehead scholar, is helpful here when he states that "what is indeterminate about an eternal object is not its individual essence but its realization in the actual world. In this respect an eternal object is wholly indeterminate."⁷⁶ Form is only possibility, we may say, insofar as it stands in indeterminate relations with particular facts. The possibility of ingression is a multifarious situation, but form can stand in these relations only because it is actual. Its actuality is its determinateness: its self-containment and individuality: form as both ground and goal of process.

The conclusion is that Whitehead's insistence on form as possibility is the result of a bias toward an analysis of

⁷⁶W.A. Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 206.

the relational or indeterminate character of form to the exclusion of the more fundamental individual or determinate character of form as actuality, which Santayana rightly insisted on. Although Whitehead did perceive that form has a determinate character, he failed to see that mere possibility is not determinate and self-contained. Possibility cannot be independent since it, by nature, holds reference to form and fact.

Suppose form were an abstraction and its metaphysical status was that of possibility rather than actuality. How could there be a prehensive activity of an actual occasion if form was such? According to Whitehead's theory of prehension, an actual occasion relates itself to eternal objects by its prehensions, or decisions. Prehension, as an active relating of data, is a patterned intelligible activity and one aspect of the formal nature of a physical object. If form were not an actuality, ontologically prior to the process, such an activity could not be accounted for. Creativity cannot structure its own activity; by nature it is purely dynamic. As in the case earlier with Santayana, decision and purpose would seem to be the outcome of the relation of creativity to a formal principle. Each emergent entity has a direction in the process, and this direction is to increasingly higher levels of organization and pattern, which presupposes an interest in something actual which functions as the goal of that activity. In this way, form grants purpose to the process of each emerging entity as well as being an ontologically prior unity at the heart of each existent.

Rather than contending that form is dependent on particular things, as Whitehead does, we must agree with Santayana when he says that "no essence, much less the realm of essence, is an abstraction from existing things."⁷⁷ Santayana rather views the metaphysical status of facts as abstractions from form (this is Plato's position as well).

Existing things would be abstractions from their essences, which in the realm of essence possess much richer essential relations than those which in existing instances are abstracted [from the realm of essence] and realized materially. ⁷⁸

I think it safe to say, in agreement with Santayana, that the only correct conception of the metaphysical status of form is the one which views form as actual, ontologically prior to the process which it conditions yet capable of entering into the process and accounting for definiteness and pattern by being that ultimate metaphysical principle of definiteness.

This conception of form saves the Socratic inquiry from intellectual bankruptcy and lends intelligibility and credence to it as a legitimate inquiry into reality beyond experience and change. But although this theory of form sanctions the leap from process, individual forms themselves are not the final resting place of the Socratic inquiry, and neither are they the final objects of rational intuition. Although intuition does land on them, in a sense, it may use them as springboards for that more ultimate object of intuition. At any

⁷⁷Santayana, op. cit., p. 34.

⁷⁸Loc. cit.

rate, the cross-over from the epistemological to the metaphysical via rational intuition reveals a formal reality beyond the visible world of change. The next chapter will seek the final abode of the Socratic inquiry.

CHAPTER 3

THE UNITY OF FORM

It was noted earlier that the typical Greek problem of the one and the many occupies all levels of inquiry, and, for that matter, all kinds of inquiry whether they be moral, metaphysical, aesthetic, or whatever kind of philosophical inquiry. Socrates, in the Euthyphro, desires the one form which unifies pious actions, and, when doing metaphysics, we desire the one form which unifies the many particulars in space. Having arrived at a multiplicity of forms, then, the Socratic inquiry, by nature, cannot rest content. The problem now becomes "What is the One which unifies the many forms?" Fortunately we are blessed with some discussions of this problem in the dialogues and are not left totally in the dark as we were when discerning the status of form.

While we may bathe ourselves in the beauty of form at this level of many-ness, we cannot do so for long, for like Plato's charioteers, the sight of beauty makes the wings of reason grow quickly and fly upward toward the One. This creative spirit of reason contradicts the popular view of it as a cold and calculating faculty. Reason is not only concerned with analysis and discursive activity, as was pointed out, it enriches our existence by grasping the unity which underlies

it and as a result discloses meaning. This is essentially the attitude of the Socratic inquiry: the creative search for first principles which unify all existence and make sense of all modes of experience.

If the dialectic of the Socratic inquiry is followed through in the proper manner, it should be clear that the point at which we have arrived is an improper stopping place. "The natural gift for dialectic", Socrates tells us, "is the same thing as the ability to see the connections of things."¹ Having arrived at a multiplicity of forms, the task at hand is to discern the connections and relations between them. This will turn out more fruitful than just the cataloguing of relations though. And it is not done merely to satisfy the requirement of the program of education, but rather because our grasp of form, and hence our grasp of existence, at this point, is diverse. We seek by our very nature, as Kant pointed out, to unify our insights into a comprehensive whole; that is, to seek a unified metaphysics.

In the Republic Plato states that the highest object of knowledge, and the highest metaphysical reality, is the Good. But in the Symposium it is made clear that the Beautiful is the highest reality. And, once more, in the Timaeus, he tells us that the form of Living Creature, or the Pattern, has claims to being that reality also. Does this represent a contradiction in Plato's thought? It shall be argued that, far from being

¹Republic, 537c.

a contradiction, it is one of the most profound insights that has been made in philosophy.

The notion of the weaving or communion of forms was briefly mentioned in the preceding chapter, and there it was noted that the Sophist deals specifically with the interrelation of forms. This interrelation among forms is grasped by what was termed an expanding focus of attention. Three forms stand out more so than any others as a result of this kind of activity; they are, Existence, Sameness and Difference. It seems that these three forms are the most general forms, since every other form must partake of these to be what they are, and even these three forms partake of each other. Now the problem here is, how are we to conceive of this hierarchy of forms? Is each form to be considered individual and independent? Surely not, for every form is dependent on at least Existence, Sameness and Difference for its reality, and to this extent they cannot be individual and independent. The activity of an expanding focus of attention in dialectic fulfills the obligation of finding the connection among forms, but it seems to lead to the paradoxical conclusion that the forms that stand in these relations are not independent.

The solution to this seeming paradox is to realize that an expanding focus of attention comes to an end with the very great kinds of forms, but that dialectic itself does not cease. More clearly, the search for first principles is not grounded in an infinite multiplicity of forms necessarily related to one another, but in something more fundamental.

The infinite metaphysical unity which is sought in the Socratic inquiry is the one Form which unites the many forms. This unity Plato calls the Pattern, the Good, and the Beautiful.

The Pattern, or as Plato also calls it, the Living Creature, is that which

... embraces and contains within itself all the intelligible creatures, just as this world contains ourselves and all other creatures that have been formed as things visible. 2

There may be an initial difficulty with the term 'Living Creature' as a term referring to Form. The term is not to be understood as implying that Form is a living, moving creature. ³ Rather, as some scholars have pointed out, what we are to understand by this term is that Form is the source of living creatures in the world, in the sense of being their formal cause. This is brought to the fore by Plato himself when he speaks of the same Living Creature as the Pattern which embraces all the forms.

Where the real difficulty lies is in trying to make sense of what Plato means by the metaphor of embracing or containing. This is not a concept that is introduced solely in the Timaeus though. The other two dialogues mentioned also present us with this idea. The Republic tells us that the Good is the source of individual forms. Speaking of the forms,

²Timaeus, 30c-d.

³See, A.E. Taylor, Plato, The Man and His Work, (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959) p. 442 and, G.C. Field, The Philosophy of Plato, second ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 98.

Plato says that they "derive from the Good not only their power of being known, but their very being and reality."⁴

And finally, Socrates, in his elegant speech from the Symposium, states that the Beautiful subsists in and by itself in an "eternal oneness"⁵; the source of all beauty and form.

Before attempting to interpret what containment means here, a few points stand in need of statement.

It is not the case that the Pattern, the Good, and the Beautiful are three different forms. Were this the case, then, as Plato argues correctly, there would needs be a One accounting for their existence and relations.

For that which embraces and the intelligible living creatures that there are cannot be one of a pair [or triad]; for then there would have to be yet another Living Creature embracing those two [or three], and they would be parts of it; and thus our world would be more truly described as a likeness, not of them, but of that other which would embrace them. ⁶

The one Form which unites the many forms must not be distinct from them; otherwise, in construing it in this manner, we add yet another form to the many forms. But in stating that the One must not be distinct from the Many, it does not follow that the One is the Many. If so, then this is a round-about way of denying the existence of the One. Raphael Demos does this by maintaining that the One is composed of the Many;

⁴Republic, 508e.

⁵Symposium, 211b.

⁶Timaeus, 31a.

that the necessary interrelatedness of the forms, when looked at as a whole, is the One.⁷ But this contention is nothing more than the assertion of the Many and the denial of the One, and does not do justice to Plato's statement that the One is the source of the many--in fact it disregards it. It is also not true to the intentions of the Socratic inquiry. To raise the Many to the status of first principle is to imply that unity can never be achieved and, as a result, the Socratic inquiry is a useless enterprise.

If the view that the Many is ultimate is to be argued for consistently, there would seem to be no reason for contending that there is one form which unifies many particulars in space. The point here is that if the Socratic inquiry were predicated on the notion that the Many is its objective, there is no reason for the inquiry to move beyond space. Once the inquiry is committed to the search for the one form which accounts for the many particulars in space, it is equally committed to the search for the one Form which unifies the many forms, otherwise we have one more example of the Socratic inquiry prematurely terminated.

The point made above, that the one Form which unifies the many forms must not be distinct from them, comes down to the notion that the One contains the Many. The only way, I think, to make sense of this metaphor is to conceive of the

⁷Raphael Demos, "The One and the Many in Plato", Philosophical Essays for A.N. Whitehead, (New York: Longmans Green, 1936).

Form (the Pattern, the Good, the Beautiful) as the identity of all the many forms. This is to state that there are not many forms, but only one Form, which is all the reality that we might attribute to many forms. This one Form is perfect in a way that one form among many would not be, for the reality 'this' form would have does not have the reality 'that' form would, but the reality the one Form has, has both the reality this form and that form would have. The one Form is all the formal reality of what we have, to this point, called the many forms in an original identity. Hence, Form might aptly be called, to use a Cartesian term, Perfection.

This presents a problem, viz., whence our grasp of individual forms, since we understand what it means to say that there is a form of piety, or even of mud, hair, and dirt?

A tentative solution may be offered to this problem by stating that since the one Form is perfect and infinite, in the sense that was outlined above, it may be conceived, as a consequence of this, in an infinite number of ways. Harking back to the discussion of R.M. Hare's interpretation of Plato, it is agreed that the 'seeing', i.e., apprehension of Form, is the forming of a concept, but that Form is not the concept itself. The one Form is independent of any knower's grasp of it, but because there are an infinite number of perspectives from which to apprehend that Form, an infinite number of concepts of it are possible. This infinite number of possible concepts may properly be said to be the many forms.

At this point a possible objection may have arisen which needs to be answered. In the preceding chapter we argued against Hare's position that forms are concepts and stated that concepts, rather than being the forms, are of the forms. Now it seems that we have taken a step in Hare's direction and agree with him in his identification of concepts and forms, and, as a result, have contradicted ourselves.

The answer to this hinges on the use of the word 'concept', perhaps a better term is 'intuition'. But we mean by a concept something more complex than a mere mental image, as Hare calls it. Concepts, we pointed out, have two dimensions: a subjective reality and an objective reality. To concern ourselves with just the former is to be concerned with a mental image only. But this is not what is meant when calling a form a concept. Concepts, as they are defined here, 'touch' Form, so to speak, in virtue of their objective reality. In this sense they are more than concepts in the ordinary sense of that term. They are the one Form grasped by a knower from a certain perspective, and Form is that reality attributed to many forms, in an original unity. Hence, in calling individual forms concepts, we are not in agreement with Hare, but mean something much richer in content; we mean an intuition of Form.

Spinoza is helpful in understanding the notion that the many forms are concepts resulting from the varied perspectives from which the one Form may be viewed. To quote: "By attribute, I mean that which the intellect perceives as

constituting the essence of substance."⁸ Notice there is reference to a mind which grasps substance. Spinoza argues further that substance is by nature infinite, and, hence, there is an infinite number of ways of conceiving of Substance. The reality an attribute of Substance has, or a concept of Form has, is not a complete reality, since it is only that which the mind perceives or grasps as constituting the essence of Substance, or Form; although one's concept of Substance, or Form, may be conceived in itself. This may sound paradoxical since its reality, it would seem to follow, is dependent upon the prior Substance, or Form. But it is really not paradoxical if we realize that the reality our concept of the one Form has, or the attribute we perceive Substance to possess, is that which expresses the reality of the one Form, or Substance, from one point of view. But the reality of the one Form, or Spinoza's Substance, is not just the reality expressed by one concept, or attribute. Since it is infinite and perfect, it must be the reality expressed by an infinite number of concepts or attributes. The reality expressed by these concepts and attributes, comes together in the one Form, or Substance. This is what it means to say that the One contains the reality of the Many, but in identity not diversity.

The goal of philosophy (metaphysics) is, as Socrates

⁸Spinoza, The Ethics Part I, def. 4 trans., Elwes.

said, to bring together our glimpses of reality by seeing their connections. As one commentator on Plato said,

... the business of Philosophy and Religion would be to extend these momentary gleams into a continuous light, so that even now, so far as may be, the Ideal world shall become the luminous reality in which our life is passed. 9

This suggests that our vision of the Good, the Pattern, and the Beautiful, so far as that is possible, does not lack an existential significance. Indeed, the Socratic inquiry is unique in this respect. Its aim and objective do not neglect the individual; far from it. The vision of the one Form enriches him, by giving rise to an original wholeness that was there from the beginning, yet unrealized. This is an important point made by the theory of recollection. The moral integrity of the individual is preserved, from the beginning of the inquiry to its most fruitful engagement: the vision of the one Form. Spinoza, on the other hand, argues that once the objective is reached there is no further need of the individual, he becomes engulfed by, and vanishes in, the totality of Substance.

Now, in calling the one fundamental Form the Good, the Pattern, and the Beautiful, Plato was not alluding to three different forms, as was shown, but was eliciting different dimensions of that one reality, which is the principle objective of the Socratic inquiry. It was an assertion, in other

⁹Paul Elmer More, The Religion of Plato, (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), p. 321.

words, of a multi-dimensional character of Form which underlies plurality.

Before dealing with this character of Form, a brief review may be helpful. It has been found to this point that the reality we would normally attribute to many forms is actually the reality of one fundamental encompassing Form conceived in different ways. It is that one reality to which the objective reality of the many forms (concepts) point. In this sense, the one Form contains the many forms. Aristotle, once again, displays a lucidity in grasping this point: "'Limit' denotes the last point of anything, i.e., the point beyond which it is impossible to find any part of it, but within which all its points are found."¹⁰ This mathematical conception of Form is not foreign to Plato, in fact Form is called the Limit in the Philebus and conceived after a mathematical fashion, as a positive infinite. Precisely because Form is a positive infinite, it embraces or includes all reality within its nature, and hence it may be seen as having various dimensions.

Metaphysical Dimension of Form

This dimension has been touched on briefly already. The metaphysical status of Form is actuality, as was discerned earlier, but not only this, it is an actuality, ontologically prior to the creative process of events in space and time.

¹⁰Metaphysics, Book 5, Chapter 17.

But this is only a partial explication of this dimension of Form. There is another aspect to this dimension which needs to be probed also, in order to arrive at some understanding of what Plato meant when he referred to the Pattern.

That aspect of Form which accounts for the intelligibility and structure of events in space and time, and prevents the world from falling into utter chaos, is Form as cause.

Form is a pattern which renders events open to being objects of scientific inquiry. Since Form is pure character it identifies and characterizes events by limiting their matter to a specific region of space. This is that aspect of Form as formal cause. The form a particular event has is received from its participation in Form. We read,

It appears to me that if anything else is beautiful besides the beautiful itself the sole reason for its being so is that it partakes in that beautiful; and I assert that the same principle applies in all cases. Do you assent to a cause of that sort? 11

Things in the changing world are what they are because of the Pattern; if no Form, then no particulars, since to be a thing in space is to possess a discernible shape and unity. Without the Pattern, there would be simple unconditioned matter; as Aristotle would say, a pure potency. It can be said, then, that Form is the cause of the existence of particular events.

- 11 Phaedo, 100c.

Not only do things in space possess a discernible shape and unity, they possess a certain direction. Because of this the Pattern also functions as final cause. Events seek to exemplify Form to the fullest extent possible by their nature. This is what it means to state that things are approximations to the forms.

The clearest illustration of the final causality of Form is present in the nature of the Socratic inquiry itself. Like the creative process as a whole, the Socratic inquiry is directed toward static immutable Form. To rest in anything else is to rest in imperfection. In moving toward its goal, it moves through various levels of simplicity to the purely Simple.

Here we notice a fundamental difference with those who are usually called the Process philosophers. Whitehead and Alexander, the two most prominent figures, view the creative process as an emergent organism with an internal drive toward greater and greater levels of complexity. Alexander,¹² for example, contends that the most simple, space-time, is the starting point of creative evolution which pushes the process of generation toward the most complex of all, God.

The Socratic inquiry, because it begins with the many, starts there, and views Simplicity, the Pattern, as its goal.

¹²Samuel Alexander, Space·Time·And Deity, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1920).

The creative process is to be construed in the same way: each emergent entity strives to approximate to its form as fully as its nature will allow; and the process as a whole seeks to approximate to the Pattern as fully as possible. The one Form as the Pattern, then, functions as both the formal and the final cause.

Value Dimension of Form

This dimension of Form is denoted by what Plato calls the Good, although it does not strictly denote this. Let it be stated again that in dealing with different dimensions of Form we are not slicing the pie into pieces, as it were, but rather explicating the richness of Being.

The Good is the unity and actuality of all value. This suggests that there is a rational or evaluative ordering of the multiplicity of forms, and that the ground of their objective reality is pure value. This is a point with which Santayana disagrees. He views the realm of essence as devoid of any value and just the simple ordering of bare essences. It is difficult, if not impossible, to make sense of this, since if he admits the ordering of essences in terms of greater generality of form, how can he not admit an evaluational ordering? The answer is, he must admit it. The more unity and simplicity there is, the more value.

This argument applies with equal force at the level of emergence. As we saw, the Pattern is the final cause of the process, and the achievement of unity in accordance with the

Pattern as final cause is the achievement of value. As each emergent entity proceeds through time it views certain forms as relevant to its emergence at particular moments. This grading of relevance can only be conceived in terms of value. And this evaluational ordering of forms is an eternal pattern, i.e., its value is to be conceived as immutable. How could it be otherwise, since to argue that it is not so would destroy the unity and actuality of value, as hierarchical pattern?

But Whitehead does just this. His reasons are entrenched deep within his metaphysics. He argues that the valuational ordering of eternal objects is dependent upon the subjective feeling of each actual occasion.

The definiteness of the actual arises from the exclusiveness of eternal objects in their function as determinants ... But in the formation of this integrated datum there must be determination of exactly how this eternal object has ingress into that datum conjointly with the remaining eternal objects and actual entities derived from the other feelings ... According as the valuation of the conceptual feeling is a 'valuation up' or a 'valuation down', the importance of the eternal object as felt in the integrated feeling is enhanced, attenuated.
(italics not mine)

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The value that the realm of eternal objects has, for Whitehead, is not permanent, for its value changes with each emergent occasion. Whitehead endorses the view that the realm of form is apprehended in an infinite number of ways, and agreement is present here, but he views the value of form as

¹³A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 367-368.

identical with the grading of relevance by each actual occasion. As a consequence, the value of form is relative to each individual. This makes the hierarchy of value dependent on each point of view.

Value, for Plato, on the other hand, intensifies with unity; absolute value is absolute unity. Value is not dependent upon any individual's conceptual grasp of it. It remains forever. To be sure, the value of Form is grasped in different ways, but the value is not these different apprehensions of Form. The unity of the Good, is the unity of absolute value, and that value can be grasped in different ways only because it is absolute value.

Whitehead's reason for his evaluational relativity rests, by and large, on his theory that eternal objects (forms) are pure possibilities. The evaluational ordering of eternal objects by individual occasions is not value per se, but rather it is the conferring of value on them in the sense that they become valuable for experience when so ordered. "Such ideal situations, apart from any reality, are devoid of intrinsic value, but are valuable as elements in purpose." ¹³ Actuality is value per se for Whitehead.

'Value' is the word I use for the intrinsic reality of an event. Value is an element which permeates through and through the poetic view of nature.

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¹³A.N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p.103.

¹⁴Ibid, p.93.

There is no value apart from actualities in the process.

"Actuality is the value."¹⁵ Since eternal objects are possibilities, they become only a valuable component in the experience of an actual occasion if realized, i.e., they are merely the possibilities of value.

Plato, if we have interpreted him correctly, would have been in agreement with Whitehead in his contention that actuality is value, but would have disagreed with him in his assertion that actuality is restricted to Becoming, the spatial. Granted, there is spatial actuality, i.e., spatial form, but this is a derivative reality. Form, the Good, is that fundamental actuality which transcends the realm of space. But Form does not have value conferred upon it by particulars in space; on the contrary, Form, the Good, is value, and is the source of those derivative spatial actualities. The Good confers value on particulars. The simplicity and transcendence of Form is the simplicity and transcendence of value. And because value is identified with actuality, there is no distinction between Being and value.

From an ethical point of view, it could briefly be said that the value of moral action is proportionate to the amount of unity and consistency achieved. The moral man is that individual who brings about a harmony in his soul among its three parts, and, as a result, contributes to the harmony of the community. That kind of harmony and unity can be achieved

¹⁵Ibid, p.105.

only in accordance with a grasp of the Good. The fruits of such unity are justice, temperance, wisdom, and courage--in a word, virtue.

[We] must lift up the eye of the Soul to gaze on that which sheds light on all things; and when [we] have seen the Good itself take it as a pattern for the right ordering of the state and the individual. 16

The spatial morality of Euthyphro will never achieve a weaving together of the parts of his soul because of his preoccupation with diversity, i.e., spatial form, as value. Standards, as Plato tells us above, must be seen in the Good itself. Only when one has his eye to absolute unity can he hope to consummate the unity of self and moral action, and hence to achieve value in himself and the community.

Aesthetic Dimension of Form

Now beauty, as we said, shone bright amidst these visions, and in this world below we apprehend it through the clearest of our senses, clear and resplendent. ... For beauty alone this has been ordained, to be most manifest to sense and most lovely of them all. 17

The aesthetic dimension of Form, termed the Beautiful, is a more specific aspect of the value dimension, although it may be treated as a separate dimension for our purposes because of a heavy emphasis Plato puts on beauty and the Beautiful.

Beauty is Form, and beauty in the world is formed

¹⁶Republic, 540a.

¹⁷Phaedrus, 250d.

matter. The artist tries to embody, as far as possible, ideal Beauty in the world. But he runs into a fundamental difficulty: his materials are spatial. Since Form cannot be introduced into space, he must be content with approximating as closely as possible to ideal Beauty, by forming his material according to his vision of Beauty. Beauty in the world, then, is an expression of artistic activity, and is the unity the materials possess as a result of that activity.

Now Plato maintains that beauty is the most forceful quality of all in the world, and that its sight makes one re-¹⁸collect the true Beauty more so than any other quality. The beauty of an object in space, qua artistic creation, is an impetus to the contemplation of true Beauty and Unity. A truly great work of art is an almost perfect embodiment of Beauty per se, but there is always that indelible element of necessity, or brute fact, which resists the urge of the beautiful object to become Beauty itself. Space is the curse of the artist. Even the divine Demiurge, the greatest artist, is bound to create in space (the receptacle). Because of this there is always the chance of evil; of unity breaking up.

Plato's theory of art may be capsulized by stating that particular works of art are imitations of eternal patterns. Critics are quick to point out that this does not do justice to the novelty of art and that when the artist creates something he is creating a new object. One critic, for example,

¹⁸Phaedrus, 249d - 250d.

says the following:

Plato starts his inquiry from the assumption that all art is the imitation of reality, and that the work of art must be judged to possess the same qualities and defects as the object imitated. . . . A peculiarity of this theory consists in the fact that not only does he regard a work of art a mere reduplication of something already in existence without anything else being added to it, but a mere "copy of a copy". 19

There are a number of points to be noted here that are foreign to Plato's theory as we find it in the dialogues. To begin with, there are two kinds of art in Plato: creative art and
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acquisitive art. The first is the production of an object which is the imitation of a form, and the second art is the acquisition of an object already produced. Hence the above statement that all art for Plato is imitative is incorrect. Secondly, the work of art as an imitation of a form does not possess the same qualities as the original. The original form is not in space, whereas the created object is. Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly, Plato's theory of art as imitation does not suggest that the created object is a mere reduplication of another object. Because the work of art is an imitation this does not negate the novelty of the creation. The work of art is a novel object in space. When the artist has concluded his manipulation of materials the result is a new spatial actuality which enters into, and creates, new spatial relations.

¹⁹Cecil Gray, The History of Music, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1945), p.261.

²⁰Sophist, 219b-c, trans., Jowett.

That work of art enriches not only the artist who created it but enriches the process as well. But because that object has structure and shape its pattern is eternal. Although a new spatial reality has been produced, a new eternal reality has not.

In order for someone to judge correctly the beauty of a work,

He must understand, first, what the object produced is, next, how correctly [it has been copied] third and last, how well a given representation has been effected, in point of language, melody, or rhythm. 21

In other words, for someone to understand the beauty of a work of art he must take into account the spatial reality of art and realize that because of space, works of art can only approximate to true Beauty. Each productive art orders its peculiar matter or materials according to a certain form. The closer the approximation to that form, the more beauty will that work of art possess.

Beauty is that aspect of things which the soul recognizes as akin to itself. The Socratic inquiry justifies itself on this very point. The anticipation of the vision of beauty begets a creative desire or spirit, like that of the artist, to move beyond beauty in the world to the immutable Beauty itself. The one who engages himself in this form of inquiry is like an artist. His material is his own soul on which he strives to impose order and unity. The Socratic inquiry is not just an aesthetic inquiry. It is at once a metaphysical, axiological,

²¹Laws, 669 c-d, trans., A.E. Taylor.

and aesthetic inquiry. It gathers together the most fundamental questions of each and points to the one reality which brings together their answers.

CHAPTER 4

THE RECEPTACLE AND SPACE

Now imagine what would happen if he went down again to take his former seat in the Cave. Coming suddenly out of the sunlight, his eyes would be filled with darkness. He might be required once more to deliver his opinion on those shadows, in competition with the prisoners who had never been released, while his eyesight was still dim and unsteady; and it might take some time to become used to the darkness. 1

As this passage indicates, the philosopher who has reached the pinnacle of the dialectical process is not an other-worldly figure. After surveying the realm above the cave, he returns to its dark recesses, i.e., he does not neglect, indeed he cannot neglect, his spatial existence. He must act in space, with consideration of the inevitable vicissitudes it imposes on him. But he has something which those who are strapped in the chains of space do not have, and that is a grasp of Form. "Without having had a vision of this Form no one can act with wisdom, either in his own life or in matters of state." 2

The vision of Form, then, is not just an intellectual flight above space, but is also, to use Kierkegaard's terms, an appropriation of the eternal in the temporal.

The subject [who] is an existing individual, is also subject to a dialectic with respect to time. In the passionate moment of decision, where the

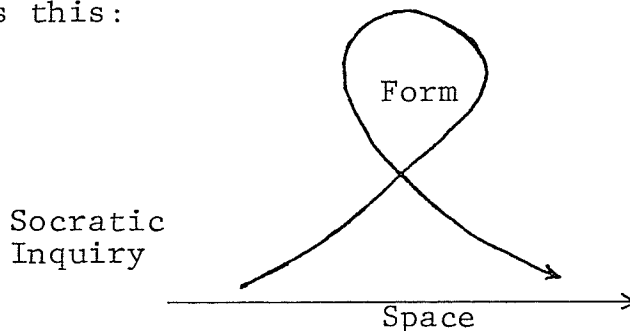
¹Republic, 516e.

²Ibid, 517c.

road swings away from objective knowledge, it seems as if the infinite decision were thereby realized. But in the same moment the existing individual finds himself in the temporal order and the subjective "how" is transformed into a striving, a striving which receives indeed its impulse and a repeated renewal from the decisive passion of the infinite.

3

The striving of the Socratic inquiry is not finished above the cave with the vision of the Good. The philosopher must return to the cave and discern what he ought to do as a spatial creature. It is not enough that he grasps Form, he must also bring that understanding into proximity with space. In this way, the Socratic inquiry has a 'looping feature' to it: it travels up above space, engulfs Form, and loops back down to space. This is the meaning of existential pathos in Kierkegaard; exercising oneself in the relationship to Form. Diagrammatically the situation is this:



This feature of the Socratic inquiry marks it off from other forms of inquiry, which seek only the object of their activity and rest content when it is reached. The inquiry under

³Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript trans., David F. Swenson. p.182.

discussion, on the other hand, wishes to bring that object into relation with the individual as a subjective thinker as well as an objective thinker. The Socratic inquiry is creative; an artistic activity which makes and moulds in space. Although it departs from space at one phase, it returns to it at another, for space, as we saw, is the medium of all artistic creativity. Space is not only this, but also a shared reality which preserves the integrity of moral action by preventing it from becoming an idealistic fiction. Ultimately it preserves the Socratic inquiry lending it credence as the highest activity of eros.

Much has been said and implied in the discussion so far about space. Since we are taking Plato's image of the cave seriously and as a model for the construction of this discussion, we are now at the point where we have to ask ourselves the question, "What is space?" Aristotle, once again, takes his hat off to Plato when he makes the statement: "... while all hold place to be something he [Plato] alone tried to say what it is."⁴ (*italics not mine*). If this is true of Plato, then we should find a treatment of space, or place, in the dialogues. And, indeed, we do, in the Timaeus. In that dialogue we are introduced to something called the Receptacle, which includes the notion of space but is something more than just that.

⁴Physics, Book IV, Chapter 2, 209b15. trans., R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye.

Before dealing with that problem, let us start where Plato does. He points out first that he has two things postulated already: Form and copies of Form. But now there needs to be a third factor added to those.

A third we did not then distinguish, thinking that the two would suffice; but now, it seems the argument compels us to attempt to bring to light and describe a form difficult and obscure. ... it is the Receptacle--as it were, the nurse --of all Becoming.

5

Let us ask the most logical question in connection with our interest in determining the nature of the Receptacle. Since we have been dealing with Form, is the Receptacle Form? It would seem not, for we are told that the Receptacle is that in which visible objects come to be and perish. Forms are static realities and their very nature disallows them from functioning as the matrix of becoming. As we saw, they are the formal and final causes, but to identify the Receptacle with a Form is to argue that Form is the material cause of objects; a confusion of principles.

Plato himself deals with this question and answers it by stating that whereas the Receptacle is not something capable of being grasped by a true account, i.e., reason, and is hardly even an object of belief, Form, on the other hand, is that which is grasped only by reason, with a true account. The conclusion that he reaches is thus:

... so long as the two things are different, neither

⁵Timaeus, 49a.

can ever come to be in the other in such a way that the two should become at once one and the same thing and two. 6

If the Receptacle, or space, is not a form, is it absolute, i.e., is it a principle co-existent with Form yet independent of Form? There may be an intimation of this with the term 'Receptacle'. This term suggests that space is a big box or container in which are found all physical objects and their motions, and what is more, that any change of object or relation does not affect the Receptacle in any way. This is, in fact, the image which we are presented with in the Timaeus and as a reality alongside yet independent of Form.

But we face a problem in construing the Receptacle as absolute space, viz., what would be its metaphysical status? Would it be actuality or possibility? If it were actuality, what would distinguish the actuality of space from the actuality of Form? This question cannot be answered in terms of a criterion, since we only multiply the problem and confuse the issue if we suggest an answer in those terms. In fact, the question has no answer at all. The actuality of space would be identical with that of Form, because, it is remembered, apart from only a conceptual difference, there is an identity of transcendent actualities. Hence in arguing that absolute space is actuality we are, in fact, denying the existence of absolute space, or, looked at in another way, we are back to the problem of whether space is a form.

⁶Ibid, 52c.

Would its status be possibility then? But if the status of absolute space were possibility, then space would amount to nothing at all. Possibility, we argued earlier, is derivative therefore it is impossible to conceive how a metaphysical principle alongside, or co-existent with, Form could be a mere possibility.

Let us suppose for a moment that the Receptacle is absolute space, with the question of its status remaining. If the Receptacle were unrelated to Form by being an absolute principle in itself, then, by hypothesis, it would have no intelligible structure, since the only things which are intelligible and structured are Form and those things which partake of Form. But the traditional conception of absolute space includes the notions of three dimensions and continuity,⁷ and to this extent it certainly has an intelligible structure. Because of this the Receptacle is not absolute space in the sense we have described. Insofar as it is intelligible, it partakes of Form for part of its reality at least.

Leibniz lodges a complaint against the absolute theory of space without considering its relations to other principles as we have done, but by considering the ideas of infinite extension in three dimensions and continuity. If space is something entirely uniform in itself and unaffected by changing relations and objects located within it, then the peculiar

⁷See Descartes, Principles of Philosophy, Second Part, and, more recently, C.D. Broad, Scientific Thought, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), p.29.

positions of bodies within it cannot be accounted for--not even by God. That is, no sufficient reason can be given as to why bodies are arranged in one position and not another.⁸

Because of these difficulties, we conclude that the Receptacle cannot be absolute in the sense of an independent metaphysical principle. The only alternative is to contend that the Receptacle is derivative, and this I believe to be Plato's position. And in being derivative, there must be a form of the Receptacle. Plato says of the Receptacle that,

we shall not be deceived if we call it
a nature invisible and characterless, all-
receiving partaking in some very puzzling
way of the intelligible and very hard to
apprehend.

9

The non-fundamental nature of the Receptacle is pointed out here by stating that it partakes of the intelligible in some puzzling way. T.M. Robinson suggests that what is meant here is that "the Receptacle, while being itself neither an idea nor a sensible, has in some way the characteristics of both."¹⁰ It is like Form in that it is invisible and non-tangible, and does not in itself change, and it is like sensibles because it is derivative, partakes of Form, and plays a role in the generation of objects. Because of these two aspects of the Receptacle, Plato says that it is hard to apprehend, and is "apprehended without the senses by a sort

⁸Leibniz, Correspondence With Clark, Third Paper, par., 5.

⁹Timaeus, 51a.

¹⁰T.M. Robinson, Plato's Psychology, (Toronto:University of Toronto Press, 1970), p.94.

of bastard reasoning, and hardly an object of belief." ¹¹ Not only does the Receptacle wax and wane and shake, as we are later told it does, but our apprehension of it does so as well. While we might be aware of something out there which defies sense-perception, and, to some extent, a rational grasp of it, still it is an irreducible factor in Becoming, and we may be made aware of it in the best way by a kind of mental abstraction. As Cornford explains,

Plato may have in mind the process we call 'abstraction'--thinking away all the positive perceptible contents of Becoming, until nothing is left but the 'room' or place in which they occur.

12

But it is a mistake to assume that the Receptacle is what it is apart from those physical objects we abstract. Cornford does not point it out but the process of abstraction is actually a process whose aim it is to arrive at a common denominator in each object. It is a process of thinking away differences in order to arrive at sameness. The Receptacle is actually that shared spatial reality which all objects possess. This comes close to what is usually called the theory of relative space. According to the proponents of such a theory, objects in space and their relations, and space are merely two sides of the same metaphysical coin.

Space is the order of objects and their relations. But

¹¹Timaeus, 52b.

¹²F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p.194.

the Receptacle is more than just this. Plato sees that there is more to the notion of the Receptacle than just a locus or matrix of events. He also sees space, or rather the Receptacle, as possessing another aspect, the Chaotic. He poeticizes his insight into this aspect by the following image:

Now the nurse of Becoming, ... because it was filled with powers that were neither alike nor evenly balanced, there was no equipoise in any region of it; but it was everywhere swayed unevenly and shaken by these things, and by its motion shook them in turn. And they, being thus moved were perpetually being separated and carried in different directions; just as when things are shaken and winnowed by means of winnowing baskets and other instruments... 21

As many commentators on Plato point out, the Receptacle is the matter of factness, or the 'brute-ness' of things. On the whole, I tend to agree with them. Plato, however, does not leave the problem at that point. We are pointed to a problem which seems almost paradoxical. The Receptacle is both determinate and indeterminate. In other words, to harken back to an earlier statement, it partakes of the intelligible yet in a puzzling way because it is, on the whole, hard to get a grasp of in a rational sense. Plato is leaving us with a perplexing problem. The answer that the Receptacle is merely bruteness of facts only solves part of the problem. The problem must be solved in a more comprehensive way.

First of all, the bruteness of fact comes down to the

¹³Timaeus, 52e.

idea that while Form may characterize and limit an object to a specific region, there is something else in the nature of an object which resists its limitation: an almost inherent tendency in the object to break up and become many. Form does explain why one object stands in certain spatial relations with other objects, because spatial relations such as tallness, shortness, equality, etc., are part of the formal nature of an object.¹⁴ The position of an object in space, i.e., its relations to other objects, is a formal characteristic of that object. The geometrical extension of objects, which is their spatiality, is a result of their location within the Receptacle. All objects are essentially spatial and this is that factor of them which resists idealization or a reduction to Form. This is what the so-called brute-ness of fact comes down to.

There is a positive aspect to the Receptacle which adds something to the life of an object. Plato says that visible objects 'cling' to the Receptacle "on pain of being nothing at all". In conjunction with Form it facilitates the location or the fixing of an object in space. This aspect of the Receptacle we may call its determinate aspect. But this is not called determinate for any arbitrary reason. The Receptacle, in this aspect, may equally be called the principle of determination from a hint dropped by Whitehead. He analyzed the concept of determination in the following way:

'Determination' is analysable into 'definiteness'

¹⁴Phaedo, 70e - 75e.

and 'position' where 'definiteness' is the illustration of select eternal objects, and 'position' is relative status in a nexus of actual entities. 15

The Receptacle is the principle of determination for it gathers together the formal elements of an object, or event, and confers upon the resultant unity a location or position in space, i.e., a position among a group of other objects. Thus the Receptacle as the principle of determination shall be identified with what we understand as space: the order of relations among matters of fact and their positions.

But there is another aspect of the Receptacle which is almost the polar opposite of space, and this is the indeterminate, as it was called above. Of this Plato says the following:

Further we must observe that, if there is to be an impress presenting all diversities of aspect, the thing itself in which the impress comes to be situated cannot have been duly prepared unless it is free from all those characters which it is to receive from elsewhere. ... Hence that which is to receive in itself all kinds must be free from all characters. 16

The Receptacle, then, is without any form of its own but is that which is the possibility of receiving different forms. It is compared to a mirror which receives all the images cast in it but has no qualities itself. And, as Demos points out, though the Receptacle has the capacity to receive Form, it also resists it. 17 Its receptivity coupled with its proclivity

¹⁵Whitehead, Process and Reality, p.38.

¹⁶Timaeus, 50d-e.

¹⁷Raphael Demos, The Philosophy of Plato, p.39.

to resist breaks Form up into a plurality of objects. Instead of the actual Form, only approximations to it are possible.

At the present we wish to understand what the indeterminate aspect of the Receptacle is. It was stated earlier that the Receptacle is the possibility of receiving form, perhaps it could be said that the Receptacle is the 'spread-outness' of possibility. It is difficult to speculate on the meaning of the indeterminate aspect of the Receptacle, because there is nothing concrete about that aspect to get a grasp of. But, I think if we turn to a later dialogue we shall go a long way in getting a handle on the problem.

In the Philebus, Plato offers an analysis of what he terms the Unlimited and its relation to certain other principles. Once again the problem of the one and the many plays a central role in metaphysics. But in this dialogue the problem appears in a different manner than it did earlier with Form. Here the problem is approached from a purely spatial point of view. "All things", Plato states, "that are ever said to be consist of a one and a many and have in their nature a conjunction of Limit and Unlimitedness."¹⁸ He sets forth this doctrine prior to a discussion of pleasure which is the main topic of discussion in this dialogue.

When Plato speaks of the Unlimited he means by it the absence of proportion and measure. In the case of pleasure, there are many different kinds.

¹⁸Philebus, 16c.

Of course the mere word 'pleasure' suggests a unity, but surely the forms it assumes are of all sorts, and, in a sense, unlike each other. For example we say that an immoral man feels pleasure, and that a moral man feels it too just in being moral; or once again an intelligent man, we say, is pleased just by being intelligent; now if anyone asserts that these several kinds of pleasure are like each other, surely he will deserve to be thought foolish. 19

The numerous forms of pleasure, some of which are mentioned here, constitute what we may call a continuum of pleasure. The unity of a particular kind of pleasure is really a particular extent on the continuum. In much the same way, the musical scale constitutes a continuum also. The continuum is unlimited or indeterminate because of a lack of particularity: it admits of a 'more' or 'less' at any point on the continuum. By limiting a particular extent of the continuum, by pressing one of the keys of a piano for example, one introduces measure and proportion to the continuum where it did not exist before. A certain unity results from the imposition of Limit on any continuum of that sort. That is to say, the object which results has a formal unity, but it also owes part of its existence to the unlimited continuum from which it emerged. Because Plato identified an unlimited continuum with the many in one sense,²⁰ a physical object (including a sound, a feeling,

¹⁹Ibid, 12c-d.

²⁰Not the many in the sense with which we have been dealing: the particulars of a form. Plato warns us at Philebus 16d not to make the mistake of identifying the unlimited with the many particulars. The Unlimited is the many in the sense of a "multitude ... [which] becomes a plurality of discrete units when actually divided." Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p.144.

etc.) is both a one and a many. It is one object in space, i.e., it has a unity, a distinct shape, and intelligibility because of Form, the Limit, and it is a many, for it holds within itself relations to other objects and to itself as a mixture of Limit and Unlimited.

Now we are to gather all these indefinite continua together as a single class and stamp the term Unlimited on it.

When we find things becoming 'more' or 'less' so-and-so, or admitting of terms like 'strongly' 'slightly', 'very', and so forth, we ought to reckon them all as belonging to a single kind, namely that of the Unlimited; that will conform to our previous statement which was, if you remember, that we ought to do our best to collect all such kinds as are torn or split apart, and stamp a single character on them. 21

But this is more than just a class concept. Plato has moved in his understanding of the unlimited from a number of different kinds of continua to a principle of Unlimitedness which is, as it were, a continuum of continua.

The Unlimited is a mass confusion, a principle of diversity. It resists the imposition of Limit and prefers to remain in its confused state. An analogy here is to be found in the early dialogues. The Socratic objective is to urge the interlocutor of Socrates from his confused state of ignorance to a state of knowledge, one with form or limit.

In its resistance to Limit, the Unlimited breaks Form up and scatters it into plurality. The plurality is what

²¹Philebus, 25a.

Plato calls the Mixture: a multiplicity of relations. In the Timaeus Plato conceives of the mixture of the Limit and the Unlimited as the mixture of the Same and the Different in the World Soul.

The outer movement he named the movement of the Same; the inner movement of the Different. The movement of the Same he caused to revolve to the right by way of the side; the movement of the Different to the left by way of the diagonal. And he gave the supremacy to the revolution of the Same and uniform; for he left that single and undivided; but the inner revolution he split in six places into seven unequal circles, severally corresponding with the double and triple intervals, of each of which there were three.

22

There is definitely a parallel here with the Limit, Unlimited, and Mixture. The Same remains uniform and one, while the Different is plural in its movement. It is of no importance whether the principles presented in the Philebus, on the one hand, and those in the Timaeus, on the other, are to be strictly identified. For my part, I do not think an identification is possible. What is important is that Plato conceived of spatial existence as, to use a term of Whitehead, di-polar: an object is both formal and spatial, one and many, limited and unlimited.

The Receptacle is the order of relations among objects, in one aspect. In another of its aspects it is that which produces the spatiality and plurality of those objects which stand in those relations. This is its indeterminate aspect;

²²Timaeus, 36c-d.

what Plato means by the unlimited. Form cannot account for the spatiality of objects by itself, and neither can the Receptacle qua orders of relations. It must be the Unlimited which is the very general possibility of geometrical extension. The reason it is a general possibility of geometrical extension is that to maintain that it is an actual continuum of extension is to accord it the distinction of being an individual. But Plato's characterization disallows such a mistake, for it always admits of a more or less. In being so, one can never fix it intellectually or otherwise as being 'this' or 'that'.

We have arrived at a most important point. The Receptacle is di-polar just as those objects are which come to be in it. It has a formal aspect to it, to wit, a space which owes its existence to Form. But its other aspect has no formal reality; indeed, it resists Form, and therefore it resists any rational or sensual apprehension of it. It is without a character of its own as Plato states. Because of this, the indeterminate aspect does not owe its existence to Form. But we cannot say that this aspect of the Receptacle is fundamental either, since we found that the Receptacle is derivative and not absolute. From what does the indeterminate aspect derive its existence? The answer is Soul.

In Chapter 1, we reviewed briefly the notion of Soul and found it a very pregnant idea for metaphysics. The nature of Soul was shown to be self-moving motion, and two kinds of self-moving motion were presented: unpatterned self-moving motion which is the prior notion at the metaphysical level,

and patterned self-moving motion, a more specific motion at the existential level. This latter kind of motion is patterned in virtue of a relation to Form. But, as we are about to see, all derivative motions need to stand in relation to Form.

An important distinction is drawn by Plato between two very different types of causes. The passage in which this distinction is made calls for quotation.

We must declare that the only existing thing which properly possesses intelligence is soul, and this is an invisible thing, whereas fire, water, earth, and air are all visible bodies; and a lover of intelligence and knowledge must necessarily seek first for the causation that belongs to the intelligent nature, and only in the second place for that which belongs to things that are moved by others and of necessity set yet others in motion. We too, then, must proceed on this principle: we must speak of both kinds of cause, but distinguish causes that work with intelligence to produce what is good and desirable, from those which, being destitute of reason, produce their sundry effects at random and without order. 23

We are interested here in the second, random kind of cause.

Presently, Plato tells his readers that this is an "Errant Cause--in what manner its nature is to cause motion." 24 The activity of this cause is without form and pattern (destitute of reason) and must be persuaded by Reason to produce the best effects. The Errant Cause is also called Necessity and resides in the Receptacle. Without the intervention of some kind of rational activity to direct the vital yet unpurposive causality

²³Ibid, 46c-d.

²⁴Ibid, 48a.

of Necessity, nature would be something unrecognizable: a random conglomeration of events with no purpose or structure. Commenting on the Errant Cause, Cornford illustrates a case.

If we toss a coin and it comes down heads up, it would not occur to us to call that a 'necessary' result, because (we should feel) there is no law that coins must come down so. [However] Aristotle would call it indifferently a 'chance' result or a 'necessary' result: it comes about by causes that cannot act other-wise than they do and are not directed by purpose. 25

It is important to bear in mind the characterization of the Errant Cause in terms of motion. In the Statesman the Errant Cause, or Necessity, is depicted in a myth as an original impulse to resist the guiding hand of God.

And now the pilot of the ship of the universe ... let go the handle of its rudder and retired to his conning tower in a place apart. Then destiny and its own inborn urge took control of the world again and reversed the revolution of it. A shudder passed through the world at the reversing of its rotation, checked as it was between the old control and the new impulse which had turned end into beginning for it and beginning into end. This shock set up a great quaking which caused ... destruction of living creatures of all kinds. ... This bodily factor belonged to it in its most primeval condition, for before it came to its present order as a universe it was an utter chaos of disorder. It is from God's act when he set it in its order that it has received all the virtue it possesses, while it is from its primal chaotic condition that all the wrongs and evils arise in it--evils which it engenders in turn in the living creatures within it. 26

This is important in that it conveys the resistance of

²⁵F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology, p.166.

²⁶Statesman, 272e - 273c.

the Receptacle (Necessity) to receive Form, and even when persuaded to receive it, there is an inherent tendency of objects to dissipate into many. This inherent impulse of objects and the world is conceived in terms of motion--counter-revolution. In the Timaeus it is presented as the subordinate revolution of the Different. Thinking of the indeterminate in terms of motions throws us back to the notion of Soul and motion. Passages in which this aspect of the Receptacle is the subject of conversation always mention it in terms such as the following. It was made "watery and fiery"; "there was no equipoise in any region of it; but was everywhere swayed unevenly and shaken."; "In the same way at that time the four kinds were shaken by the Recipient, which was itself in motion, like an instrument for shaking."²⁶ As one scholar put it, the chaotic or necessity is "an irreducible element of imperfection in the material universe."²⁷ Necessity lacks form; it does not partake of Form in any way, and, in the words of the Philebus,

Any compound, whatever it be, that does not by some means or other exhibit measure and proportion, is the ruin both of its ingredients and, first and foremost, of itself; what you are bound to get in such cases is no real mixture, but literally a miserable mass of unmixed messiness.²⁸

This is a comment on the Unlimited in itself, prior

²⁶Timaeus, 52d - 53a.

²⁷G.C. Field, The Philosophy of Plato, p.106.

²⁸Philebus, 64d.

to the mixture. It lacks beauty, proportion, and truth,²⁹ and because these characterize the Good, the Unlimited is devoid of any relation to Form. Its reality as an Errant Cause is therefore derived from Soul, which, at the meta-physical level, is unconditioned, unpatterned and lacking any measure and proportion. The conclusion that the indeterminate aspect of the Receptacle partakes of Soul is unavoidable. Form, by nature, cannot account for motion, yet the Receptacle is fiery and shakes.

We have found that the Receptacle is a derivative reality and not fundamental as it may seem in its presentation in the myth of the Timaeus. It was also found to be complex and not simple; it partakes of both Form and Soul and because of this its complexity consists of two aspects: a determinate and an indeterminate aspect. Throughout this chapter we were concerned mainly with the latter. The former, determinate aspect shall be dealt with in the next chapter while treating the theory of participation.

²⁹Ibid, 65a, "Then if we cannot hunt down the Good under a single form, let us secure it by the conjunction of three, Beauty, Proportion, and Truth."

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPATION

A common criticism of process philosophers imputed against Plato is that his separation of Being and Becoming, which they laboriously term ontological bifurcation, is a metaphysical faux pas. No metaphysics, they would say, could separate Form and fact, Being and Becoming, and still lay claims to being consistent. Any move of that sort inevitably leads to two worlds and the irresolvable problem of accounting for their relation. The problem, they might further contend, is analogous to the problem Descartes encountered once he had separated mind and body. One such process philosopher argued that Plato's 'extreme separationism' rendered the task of philosophy suspect.¹ While Bigger is incorrect in his assertion that Plato held an extreme separation of Form and fact, he is on the mark in his view that the key to the difficulty lies in the theory of participation.

In endeavouring to understand the relation of Form to space in Plato, we are essentially interested in fathoming the meaning of participation and spatial form. From the point of the Socratic inquiry, we seek to capture the unity of Form in

¹Charles P. Bigger, Participation: A Platonic Inquiry, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p.56.

space, the infinite in the finite as Kierkegaard said.

When dealing with the Euthyphro a number of points were noted about the Socratic inquiry. The most general perception was that Form and space are presuppositions of that inquiry. But not only are they the presuppositions, they are also the objects of the inquiry as well. The objective of Socrates was to extract those presuppositions which pervaded his inquiry, not just to dangle them in front of himself so to speak, but to act with the awareness that these constitute aspects of the existential; the self. In his interlocutor, Socrates faced a poetic exemplification of the spatial; someone who refused to move beyond the particular in the search for principles of explanation. But in himself Form was not the only exemplar. Granted he sought the form over and above the particular, but he did not lose sight of the particular, even in the loftiest moments of discourse. The morality of Socrates is unique in this respect. It is not merely spatial or temporal, and neither is its locus in the eternal. One philosopher capsulized the moral life in this way which is true of Socrates.

It is not merely successive; if it were it would not even be a life of serious endeavour towards good. It is not simply a life of present and eternal fruition, from which succession and conflict have fallen away, for then it would be something more than ethical. In proportion to its moral worth, it is a life which is undergoing a steady elevation and transmutation from the mere successiveness of a simple ... existence to the whole and simultaneous fruition of all good

which would be the eternity of the divine. 2

It is true to say that the morality which Socrates is in search of in the early dialogues is to be found between the successive, or spatial, and the eternal. At one end of the scale, there is that morality the centre of which is in space, and the morality at the opposite end finds its centre fixed in Form. Spinoza is an example of the latter. For Spinoza, the moral man is he who lives his life in the intellectual love of God, which transcends the duration of things and views existence 'under the form of eternity'.

Socrates sought to help his colleague in dialogue overcome the separation within himself between the spatial and the formal. The separation consisted in the preoccupation with the former to the exclusion of the latter. But Socrates did not wish that his interlocutor fix his thought exclusively on Form, and live as Spinoza's moral man, for that does not resolve the separation but perpetuates it in a different guise. The Socratic objective is not to tip the scales in any one direction but to balance them. The good life, the Philebus argues, is the 'mixed' life. Socrates himself wished to understand the form of an action and appropriate that reality so as to give rise to virtue in the soul. And this takes place in the course of unearthing the formal presupposition of an action in order to

²A.E. Taylor, The Faith of A Moralist Series 1, (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1930), p.100.

understand one's self and one's actions.

Kierkegaard made a distinction that is germane at this point. The distinction appears in an earlier work and is that between subjective dread and objective dread. "Taken in the strictest sense, subjective dread is the dread posited in the individual as a consequence of his sin."³ Subjective dread is an existential category, while objective dread is a metaphysical category. "The creation is in a state of imperfection. ... Surely this dread in the creation can rightly be called objective dread."⁴ The important point to be noted here is that Kierkegaard conceived of dread and sin in terms of separation.

Subjective dread, being the conflict and separation within the individual, is not the simple separation between reason and passion, as one may gather from the image of the charioteer. The existential situation is much more complex than that. The image suggests a dichotomy of the formal and the spatial within the individual, and even between the individual and society intimated in the allegory of the cave. Kierkegaard notes this in a passage.

The human soul is a contradiction between the

³Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread trans., Walter Lowrie, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 50-51.

⁴Ibid, pp. 51-52.

external and the inward, the temporal and the eternal. It is a self-contradiction because that which makes it what it is, is the fact that it wishes to express the contradiction in itself. The soul is therefore in contradiction, and is self-contradiction. If it were not in contradiction ... then movement would be impossible.

5

The contradiction, or rather separation, is essential to the Socratic inquiry. If the human soul were simply spatial, i.e., concerned only with particulars at the moment, there would be no recognition of Form in any way. As Taylor said in the quote above, there would be no serious aspiration towards any goal. In fact, the moment would be an end in itself. On the other hand, if the soul were completely formal in orientation, or, in other words, if its centre were posited in Form, there would be no existential problem: the soul would only rest. The separation is necessary, but it does not have to be malefic. It is the very impetus of the Socratic inquiry.

The separation is not to be overcome by opting for one of its elements, as was pointed out, but by bringing the elements together. We shall call this, 'existential participation'.

When the Socratic inquiry begins its descent back down the cave, the problem for the individual is to bring his grasp of Form into relation with himself qua creature who must act. In this sense he becomes a subjective thinker; one who is interested in bringing together seemingly disparate elements of

⁵Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses Vol. 2 trans., David F. Swenson and Lillian M. Swenson, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943-6), p. 76.

the soul. The Socratic answer lies in virtue, where one's knowledge of Form is tantamount to one's actions in space (which, from this point of view, we earlier termed the realm of action). This is what it means to say that this kind of moral action is, in one sense, the very standard of action itself. Hence the unity sought after in the Socratic inquiry is not only the unity of Form, but also the unity of the individual.

The notion of existential participation here is a complicated one. The activity of the eros qua reason is shaped by Form in its very search for Form itself. Existential participation is the achievement of unity in the soul in accordance with its grasp of a fundamental metaphysical unity. This is essentially the meaning of the Socratic theory of virtue, and what Plato means by justice in the individual soul, as the harmony among its parts. The unity of the soul is a process which begins in the initial stages of the inquiry with the recognition of the inadequacies of the spatial as a principle of explanation. It is doubtful whether complete unity of soul can ever be reached, for that would mean the annihilation of difference. Difference must be preserved. Rather than annulling the tension between the formal and the spatial--the eternal and the temporal--within the individual himself, by opting for one or the other, the tension must be

maintained. As Kierkegaard held, only when the temporal and the eternal are held in a dialectical tension can there be any purpose to existence.

This is not a simple affair. The eternal must be appropriated by the individual in time. This is what Socrates attempted to do in unearthing the formal presuppositions of particulars: not to take existence to the eternal, for that erases the individual, but to bring the eternal to existence. This is what some philosophers mean by 'authentic' existence, and what we choose to call existential participation. Kierkegaard displays an understanding of the Socratic inquiry's search for existential unity when he writes: "He who with respect to guilt is educated by dread will therefore repose only in atone-⁶ment."

Dread, therefore, is separation and it is overcome by⁷ participation. This is true of objective dread as well as subjective dread. The former, it was said, is a metaphysical category, and is, more specifically, the separation between the realm of Form and the realm of changing things. The extreme separation of which Biggar accuses Plato is not quite correct, for it suggests a radical distinction between Form and things. Admittedly there is a distinction between the two realms, but not a radical one.

⁶Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p.145.

⁷Kierkegaard, of course, does not employ the term 'participation' in this context. The purpose here is to understand the notion of dread from a Platonic perspective.

This is not merely a verbal disagreement with Bigger. To stress a radical separation is at once to state that the only relation between the two is that of difference. And this precludes the notion of participation as exemplification or imitation: a fundamental point of the theory. Aristotle thinks that participation as imitation is a poetical metaphor, and he is correct.⁸ Metaphors are not empty expressions, but denote a relation of similarity. Bigger's criticism neglects this, and, to this extent, is ill-founded.

Extreme separation is bridged by participation. Indeed, the notion of extreme separation is inconsistent in every respect with Plato's cosmology. Particulars owe their existence to Form both as formal and final cause. There exists a direct relation between Form and particulars: the relation of cause and effect. Therefore, radical separation would be consistent only with the view that there were no particulars, which is an absurdity. The theory of participation unifies facts with Form in the way an effect is unified with cause, i.e., as owing its nature and character to it.

At bottom, cosmological participation involves three things. It first of all involves a dichotomy of internal and external relations. Particulars, or facts, are internally related to Form, but Form is only externally related to particulars. Basically, an internal relation is one which makes a

⁸Metaphysics, Book 1, Chapter 9.

difference to the object standing in that relation, and an external relation is one that does not. The internal relation of a particular to Form makes an essential difference to the particular. If particulars did not stand in this peculiar relation to Form, then, strictly speaking, there would be no particulars. More clearly, the existence of particulars is dependent upon Form. If they were to move out of their relation to Form, they would, at the same time, cease to exist. But Form itself remains unaffected by the flux of relations in the world. It makes no difference to the Being of Form if a particular no longer stands in an essential relation to it. The just man requires the form of Justice to be the moral man he is, but if he falls into bad company and becomes the oligarchic individual described in the Republic with appetites reigning supreme, Justice itself remains secure, while the individual, parting its company, has become other than he was.

Now, it is true that particulars stand in internal relations to other particulars in space. Whitehead pointed out correctly that other particulars may enter into the internal constitution of an entity. But the internal relation of a particular to Form is more basic to the formal structure of that entity. For the Form, of which the particular partakes, gives being to the particular, whereas the internal relation of one particular to another may alter the structure of that entity, but not obliterate its existence if it moved out of that relation. This, however, does not devalue the importance of

internal relations at the level of emergence. Whitehead thinks that the flux of relations among particulars constitutes its adventures, and are important since they affect their being as they enter into and step out of various relations. Another process philosopher expresses the same idea in this passage.

Actualities are caught up in adventures, subject to conditions, qualified in multiple ways. Each bears the marks of its encounters with other Actualities. ... The operations of other Actualities make a real ... difference. An Actuality is what it has worked itself out to be in the face of the insistencies and resistances of other Actualities. 9

This raises the second point of the theory of participation. Particulars are contingent beings, while Form is necessary Being. From an epistemological point of view, the necessity of Form consists of the ability to conceive it in and through itself. Spinoza, once again, proves to be helpful in understanding Form, with his definition of substance.

By substance, I mean that which is in itself and is conceived through itself: in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception. 10

Particulars, in contrast to Form, cannot be conceived in this way. In order to conceive of a particular, or rather 'know' a particular, one must conceive of its causes in addition to the particular. In Spinoza's terms, particulars cannot be conceived through themselves, but only when one

⁹Paul Weiss, Modes of Being, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), p.231.

¹⁰Spinoza, The Ethics Part 1 def. 3 trans., Elwes

brings in other conceptions.¹¹ Those other conceptions are Form, as formal and final cause, and other particulars to which it is internally related. This brings to the fore the metaphysical issue of this point of the theory of participation. The necessity of Form consists in its simplicity, its perfection, and the contingency of a particular consists in its complexity as a conjunction of creativity and eternal objects (Whitehead); essence and matter (Santayana). Plato writes,

Well, now isn't anything that has been compounded or has a composite nature liable to be split up into its component parts? Isn't it incomposite things alone that can possibly be exempt from that? ... And isn't it most probable that the incomposite things are those that are always constant and unchanging while the composite ones are those that are different at different times and never constant?

12

In a later dialogue, Plato calls the unity of Form a 'monad'; simple and unchanging, "subject neither to generation nor destruction."¹³ That which is subject to generation and destruction is the compound individual, and is, because of this, contingent.

The third point to be noted in the theory of participation is that particulars 'exemplify' Form. The unity of a particular thing in space expresses a more fundamental meta-

¹¹Cf., Theaetetus, 153c.

¹²Phaedo, 78c.

¹³Philebus, 15b.

physical unity. Plato also calls this idea 'imitation'. An imitation is not an original unity, but a derivative one. But there are various kinds of imitation. Some imitations may be representations of an original, as when a painter represents a particular landscape on canvas. However the imitation of Form by a particular is not, strictly speaking, a representation of Form. Representation is a perceivable relationship between the original and the copy. And the relation between Form and particular is, of course, not perceivable but conceivable. Plato has an interesting comment to make on the idea of representation.

The art of representation, then, is a long way from reality; and apparently the reason why there is nothing it cannot reproduce is that it grasps only a small part of an object, and that only as an image. 14

Representation deals with the object qua appearance (image), and hence is situated in the lower stages of the divided line. But participation points to the heart of an object--its formal structure--and brings together the lower and higher stages of the divided line. Plato says in one dialogue: "what is meant by participation of other things in the Ideas, ¹⁵ is really assimilation to them." The assimilation of particulars to Form ensures that the former have a measure of value, otherwise the attribution of worth to moral actions

¹⁴Republic, 598b.

¹⁵Parmenides, 132d, trans., Jowett.

and objects is meaningless. With this in mind, the charge of ontological bifurcation against Plato is clearly indefensible. Think of exemplification and imitation in terms of the allegory of the cave, where the puppets cast their shadows on the cave wall. The shadows would be nothing without the original puppets which cast them. And yet, as insubstantial as they are, the shadows have a degree of reality, in addition to pointing beyond themselves to the puppets which cast them. They participate in the puppets and exemplify them, even though most of the prisoners remain ignorant of this. There is certainly no bifurcation between shadow and puppet in this respect; to suggest this would be ludicrous. Plato does, in a mythical and pictorial context, present particulars as separated from Form; but one must remember to keep one's perspective on the dialogue and the way in which Plato expresses his insights.

In summary, Form is the conditio sine qua non of particulars. The latter are contingent beings, internally related to Form which they express and exemplify to a certain degree. This answers the question of the meaning of spatial form, or derivative actuality.

The form, or intelligible structure, an entity in space possesses is ontologically derived from Form itself. In this way, just as the one Form (the Good, the Pattern, the Beautiful) contains all the reality of the many forms, so also it contains all the reality of the many particulars in space and time. From a different perspective, all the reality expressed in time

and space by spatial form per se is contained eternally in the infinite essence of Form. In the philosophy of Kant, this idea of Form is akin to what he calls the unconditioned ens realissimum: the final and ultimate sanction of reason in its creative search for unity.

The concept of an ens realissimum is, therefore, of all concepts of possible things, that which best squares with the concept of an unconditionally necessary being. ... It is declared that it possesses all reality.

16

The ens realissimum for Kant is that absolute unity which is the identity of all possible perfections, and, for the Socratic inquiry, is that alone which " can complete the series of conditions when we proceed to trace these conditions to their ground."

Spatial form is the particularization of this unity. It is the multiple differentiation of pure actuality into derivative actuality in a spatial setting. While this answers the question of what spatial form is, it raises another question. The problem raised was answered very briefly, and perhaps cryptically, earlier, but now demands a more explicit treatment. The problems centres around Plato's theory of creation.

How is it that Form, which is static, can express itself in space? Form is the teleological and formal cause, not an efficient cause. A cause outside of Form would seem to be

¹⁶Kant, Critique of Pure Reason trans., Norman Kemp Smith, pp. 497 et seqq.

necessary in order to account for participation.¹⁷ It must be a moving principle which can in some way function as an efficient cause. This problem becomes the ever-increasing issue of the later dialogues, until we reach the latest dialogue, the Laws, in which is given an elaborate analysis of the principle of motion. Perhaps Plato's reasons for his emphasis on motion in the later part of his life was an awareness of the incompleteness of a metaphysics of rest, as is presented in its most mature form in the middle dialogues (especially in the Phaedo and Republic). Whatever the reasons, an attempt to construe Form as an active efficient cause ultimately leads to a contradiction. Some have conceived of the Good in the Republic as active. There is a danger in this--although the Republic does lend itself to that interpretation--in that it blurs the distinction between the theory of Form and the theory of Soul. A certain passage in a later dialogue¹⁸ has also been taken by some¹⁹ as indicating that Form is active to some extent.

The Sophist contains a dramatic statement that reality does not consist solely in the realm of Form but also in a principle

¹⁷Cf. ante, p.51

¹⁸Sophist, 247e. Cornford's examination of this passage eliminates its ambiguity.

¹⁹See, for example, Paul Elmer More, The Religion of Plato, p.203.

of motion.

Then the philosopher, who has the truest reverence for these qualities, cannot possibly accept the notion of those who say that the whole is at rest, either as a unity or in many forms: and he will be utterly deaf to those who assert universal motion. As children say entreatingly, 'Give us both', so he will include both the movable and the immovable in his definition of being and all. 20

The Friends of the Forms are those individuals to whom Plato refers when he says that there are some who admit of no other reality than the changeless. Plato was also faced, as we are in the twentieth century, with those who, in contradiction to the Friends of the Forms, admit of no other reality than that which is in perpetual motion; i.e., process philosophers. Cratylus was one such philosopher, and it is most likely that Plato has him in mind in the above quote. Cratylus would admit of no stasis, or spatial form, in nature. Henri Bergson, a twentieth century philosopher, maintained a similar position. But just as the theory that reality consists of Form only cannot account for participation, so the theory that reality consists of the élan vital (Bergson) only fails to account for order and relations. Insofar as you have a principle of motion, you have an ethically neutral spontaneity which cannot express itself in any formal way. Stated succinctly, you cannot get a world from either pure Form or pure motion. Like children, we must ask for them both.

²⁰Sophist, 249c-d trans., Jowett.

In the splendid myth of creation in the Timaeus, Plato pictorially conveys the relation between Form and Soul. The divine Demiurge, or God, by fiat introduces Form into the Receptacle. But it is not a simple matter of looking to the Pattern and creating copies in space. The Demiurge must 'persuade' the Receptacle in its indeterminacy (necessity) to receive Form and "guide the greatest part of the things that become toward what is best." ²¹ Partaking of Soul, the Receptacle is errant in its motions. Its motions must be tied down to specific regions. This is accomplished by the Demiurge who, in his goodness, imposes limit upon necessity. ²² The Demiurge here is somewhat similar to what Anaxagoras meant by Mind. Mind, for Anaxagoras, causes and orders all things, and it "must do all its ordering and arranging in the fashion that is best for each individual thing." ²³

The Demiurge, although presented in a mythical context, should not be construed as a mythical figure himself. He is described as the 'best soul', and this is the motif which ought to be taken literally. The necessity of a moving cause as that principle by which the world of becoming partakes of

²¹Timaeus, 48a.

²²Ibid, 29e - 30c.

²³Phaedo, 97c.

the realm of Form is the essential meaning of the figure of the Demiurge. The Demiurge 'shadows forth' Form in the world just as the fire shadows forth the images of the puppets on the wall of the cave. The Socratic inquiry is similar to the creative activity of the Demiurge. But there the activity of the soul takes place in a different way and a different direction. Socrates does not wish to instantiate Form in the world as the Demiurge does, rather his objective is to withdraw it, in an intellectual way.

In the Philebus the how and why of creation are answered in much the same way as they are in the Timaeus. The mixture, as that which becomes, cannot be explained by itself, nor by Form alone. We are compelled to acknowledge the existence of a cause which unites the discrete elements of the mixture. The explanation of efficient causality belongs to a rational cause who imposes Form on the Receptacle qua indeterminacy. The result of this activity is extended spatial form in relation to itself and other particulars.

A particular is the unity of two spatial sides. It is composed of its internal space and its external space. Paul Weiss perceived this most clearly in recent times when he wrote: "An Actuality is a unification of a private and public side. " ²⁴ The internal space of an object is the limited extent of its form. Plato expresses this in an analogy.

²⁴Paul Weiss, Modes of Being, p. 37.

Now, what conditions are always present when anything is produced? Clearly, an initial impulse grows and reaches the second stage and then the third stage out of the second, finally (at the third stage) presenting percipient beings with something to perceive. 25

Notice that Plato's analogy conceives of objects after a mathematical fashion. This means that their internal structure is formal. This is true, but perhaps misleading. Objects are not formal only, but rather are 'in-formed' motions. Objects in space have a tendency to break up, as was pointed out, in virtue of being a mixture. The motions of the Receptacle, in its indeterminate aspect, need to be tied down--'in-formed'--in order for there to be the existence of particulars. This is what Plato means by persuading Necessity in the creation of the world. The analogy above becomes clearer with this in mind. The internal space of a particular is the geometrical ordering of its motion.

The external space of a particular is the relations it possesses with other objects. The experience an object has with other particulars enables it to adjust to its environment. That is, the character an object has in its social setting is what it has worked itself out to be in its relations with other particulars. This is the external space of a particular; its social and dynamic aspects. Hence we can see that the activity of an object plays just as an important a role in its life as an emergent particular as does its formal reality. A multiplicity

²⁵Laws, 894a. -

of different kinds of relations exists between particulars. They need not be listed here. The important point is that particulars actively relate themselves to other particulars. Whitehead terms this activity 'prehension'.

So, the internal space of an object is the object as it stands in relation to the metaphysical factors comprising its existence, and the external space of an object is what that object is in its relations to other derivative actualities. The external space of an object ensures that it is not an isolated individual. Aristotle correctly stated that, "The world is not a collection of isolated individuals; all are somehow connected with another."²⁶ The world looked on as a whole, comprised of a system of ordered relations, is an emerging organism. The unity of the whole is received from two sources: Form and Soul, but its direction is toward Form only. Form accounts for the co-operation of all particulars by being that final cause to which it is moving. Aristotle has an important passage which is relevant here.

The unmoved mover ... has no contingency; it is not subject even to minimal change (spatial motion in a circle) since this is what it originates. It exists, therefore, of necessity; its being is good, and it is in this way that it is a principle of motion. 27

The motion of the universe toward Form involves the notion of time; what Plato calls 'the moving likeness of

²⁶Metaphysics, Book 12, Chapter 10.

²⁷Ibid, Chapter 7.

Eternity'.

Now the nature of that Living Being was eternal, and this character it was impossible to confer in full completeness on the generated thing. But he [Demiurge] took thought to make, as it were, a moving likeness of eternity; and at the same time that he ordered the Heaven, he made, of eternity that abides in unity, an everlasting likeness moving according to number--that to which we have given the name Time. 28

The co-operation of individual objects with one another, as a whole, moves in time to the final sanction of all motion (including the rational motion of eros). The whole partakes of Form in this way, and this is what Plato means by Time as the moving likeness of eternity. The generic unity of the world, as the co-operation of objects in time, is what has been called to this point, Space. Space, in this sense, is like what Paul Weiss had in mind with his theory of the 'field'. "A field (Existence viewed from the standpoint of other beings),²⁹ ... is a domain of comparative relations [and] ... is dynamic.

What has this to do with the Socratic inquiry? Individuals are like objects; they have both an internal space and an external space--i.e., they are at once individuals for their own sake with their own peculiar relation to Form, and are social animals. The task of the Socratic inquiry is to achieve a communion with the internal space of individuals. This can be achieved only by an acknowledgement of the individual qua individual with a peculiar relation to Form. That is, the

²⁸Timaeus, 37d.

²⁹Paul Weiss, Modes of Being, p.33.

individual is not to be acknowledged as a social creature first, but as unique. The social reality is contingent upon individuals. Communion, in the dialectic of the inquiry, is the creation of a social space in which one becomes educated up from ignorance, and thus, as a result, excels in himself.

By way of summary, the Socratic inquiry, as a task in space and an existential adventure, was found to have a number of presuppositions. Form and Space were singled out and isolated in the course of these deliberations as the presuppositions for analysis. Form was found to be metaphysically prior, and space derivative. Hence although it is true to say that the latter is a presupposition of the Socratic inquiry, it is not true to say that Space is a metaphysical presupposition. For a metaphysical presupposition is a principle of explanation, and Space, of course, does not have that status. But Form does have the status denied of Space and is a metaphysical presupposition. One of the tasks of the Socratic inquiry is to arrive at this understanding, which is, at the same time, the final banishment of the dream-like sense we have that everything that exists is necessarily in Space.

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