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*Plato's Theory of Forms
and the Doctrine of Imitation*

(From the Times of the Analytical Preoccupation)

Introduction

The doctrine of *imitation* purports to be a solution to the problem concerning the relationship or connection holding between Ideas and concrete particulars. It is often taken nowadays as an intrinsically bad answer, and moreover one that was abandoned, or abandoned in all or in most of its essential characteristics by Plato himself, presumably after his becoming conscious of apprehending the intrinsic defects of the doctrine.

Now, of course, the abandonment of a particular account of the relationship, or lack of connection, between A and B need not of necessity entail a substantial change in one's understanding of A and/or B themselves. A new, alternative account may be sought for, which will preserve all, or most, of the important essential features of the two connected entities or Worlds of entities. Thus, in our case, seeing the inadequacy or defectiveness of the imitation theory need not necessitate a radically altered conception either of both the Ideas and the concrete particular, or of any one of them, or indeed even of the one *or* the other. Naturally, one may *psychologically*, so to speak, expect some change in the understanding of A and B to follow upon a change in the conception of their connection, and the more so the less *accidental* is their connection vis-à-vis their intrinsic nature. But the expected change may be a change in emphasis, may consist in the subordination of a certain feature and the making prominent of another, or in the re-arrangement of the already discerned features in an altered series of fundamentality. There are doubtlessly very many ways in which a changed construal of a relationship may affect the understanding of the relata short of a substantial change of this understanding in the form of the abandonment of any of its essential features. In particular, it does *not* of necessity follow from the abandonment of a particular account of the relationship between A and B that their *separateness* as two distinct entities is to be suppressed.

In what I have just said, my point is the very modest one that one is not entitled to infer immediately from the fact, or rather the *alleged* fact, of the abandonment of a certain account of the relationship between Ideas and concrete particulars, or indeed of seeing the inadequacy of any *available* alternative

explanation, the abandonment of the Theory of Forms in any of its intrinsically substantial determinations. On the contrary, one must sufficiently and appropriately analyze the given (any given) account of the relationship and isolate not these features in the upheld theory of Ideas and concrete particulars which provide the framework within which the attempted account is *understandable*, nor those features on which the working or function of the attempted account is based (for its efficaciousness as such an account), but *those features whose retaining is incompatible with the falsity of the proposed account in the respect in which it is false or it fails*.

Nothing short of such a precise and exact investigation can ascertain what and how important changes did the Platonic theory of forms suffered during Plato's lifetime.

I am emphasizing this obvious point only because all too often one encounters only too easy ways or short-cuts adopted by many modern commentators.

But this having been said, it is anyway clear that the examination of any one proposed theory purporting to explain the connection between concrete particulars and Ideas must be undertaken in essential conjunction with the study of Plato's theory of Ideas and concrete particulars themselves. One cannot properly understand any such theory unless one knows what the point of the Theory of Ideas is, and what conception of concrete existence underlies the whole enterprise.

Therefore I shall in the first part of this paper try to discern the *role* of the theory of Ideas in the Platonic system or World-view (which role, needless to be said, may comprise, or even consist in, a multiplicity of *coherent* and compatible *functions*) and find *what* this role *exacts* from the Ideas, what must be their essential characters in order to be able to perform the desired role; in the second part, I shall then try to state *how* their function is accomplished, how, that is, they must be connected with this World here in order that, given their already ascertained nature, they are capable of performing the role exacted from them. The division is, of course, of a purely methodological character; from the point of view of the actual content the two enquires are essentially tangled, how the two issues are essentially interwoven and stand in continuous interaction (both systematically and, one may reasonably expect, psychologically).

A

Socrates searched for definitions. He wanted to know, given any item X, *what it is to be X, what does being-X consists in*. How Plato conceived of this enterprise?

To answer this question we can do nothing but look at the so-called Socratic dialogues. There we have the nearest approximation to Socrates' actual discourses. It must, of course, be frankly admitted that we there observe such discourses with Plato's eyes. But this is exactly what interests us in the above question. What is Plato's *immediate* construal of the Socratic search for definitions? (By '*immediate*' I do not wish to imply that the first interpretation was *superseded* by later more mature considerations; I prefer to leave this open, and not beg the question; for it is quite possible that the first view of the matter was coherently *incorporated* into the latter developments).

There may be a plurality of things (I use 'things' very generally in place of 'something'; indeed a thing is something which has properties, *is this and that*), all of which, let us say, are X. These things may differ in a variety of ways; yet they do not differ *qua* being X; indeed in this respect they are similar, the same. Of course the things may differ with respect to the extent or the degree of their acquisition and exhibition of that common property (if, that is to say, the property in question admits of being assumed in various degrees of *intensity* as it were, admits in effect of $\mu\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu$ and $\eta\tau\tau\omicron\nu$), but this is irrelevant; for then the things differ not in their being X *simpliciter*, but in the degree (thus in *quantity*) of X-ness which they exhibit [*Ἰππίας Μείζων 299d*; cf. *Λάχης 191e-192b*, *Μένων 7a*].

In a case like the above, all the things in question have something in common: namely, *being X*. Indeed, in a certain sense they are all $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$ (one and the same) in this respect [*Μένων 72b*]; which means that if they are not one and the same it is not X-ness which causes its diversity, it is not their being X which is the ground of their multiplicity. The extreme significance of this we shall see in the sequel. But this, in itself, is neutral enough, as a description of our envisaged case. We enter the precincts of Metaphysics when we consider the case in the following way.

Take anything which is X. Then ask: *Why* is it X, i.e. by reason of what is it X, what is the *explanation* of the fact that *it* is X?

One should with extreme care distinguish the explanation sought for here from any ordinary or scientific (in the modern sense of science) explanation. The causality involved here (when we ask for the *cause* of something's being X) is neither ordinary, nor scientific, nor quasi-scientific explanation. This can be seen very easily: suppose that we answer the question as follows: a, the given thing, is P *because* x is Q

(where x is either the same or another thing) and L (laws) are valid. Clearly this is *not* the explanation we wish for here: it is an explanation but it is a different *kind* of explanation than the one we require here – and this can be shown by the fact that it does not satisfy us. And it does not satisfy us on two main counts:

(a) We can repeat similar questions with regard to x 's being Q and to the validity of L .

(b) We can say: we do not inquire about what brought about that a is P , but rather about how P -ness was at all *available* for a to be able to be brought to have P -ness and be P .

I shall call the peculiar kind of explanation or account required by asking the above question, *metaphysical* explanation, and causality etc. correspondingly.

In asking the above mentioned question and expecting a significant answer we in fact operate with a certain metaphysical principle which can be formulated thus:

If something is X and does not consist solely (has not its being exhausted) in being X , then there must be an explanation of its being X .

Now let us supplement the principle with the following one:

If something is X and does not consist solely (has not its being exhausted) in being X , then it is X by reason of something which is X and does consist in being X .

This then is the answer to our question. And by operating these metaphysical principles we can formulate our envisaged case in the following way:

In the plurality of the concrete things all of which are X (and no one of which just consists solely in being X), there is something in virtue of which all these X -things are X . Let us call this something *Form of X* (I am not as yet saying *the* Form of X).

Now the above ideas are exactly the gist of what is to be found in the so-called earlier dialogues [*Πηρίαξ Μείζων 294b, 299e, 289d, 300a-d, 302c – and the Μένων passages; Ευθύφρων 6d-e; 5c-d; Λάχης 191e-192b*].

It is to be remarked that the above indicated metaphysical doctrine is accompanied by what, if naturally interpreted, is an account of how does that by virtue of which the many X things are X brings about that the many X -things are X . The phraseology suggests *inherence, ἐνυπόσταση, presence, παρουσία*. [*Γοργίας 497e*]. We observe clearly the full implications of the composite state of affairs in the formulation of Ευθύδημος 301a: *καλὰ ἕτερα αὐτοῦ τοῦ καλοῦ - παρέστιν γέ τι κάλλος*. The many and multifarious beautiful things and events are other than beauty itself (*αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν*), and they are beautiful by reason and virtue of some beauty (*κάλλος τι*) that inheres in them. However, in conformity with the methodological procedure indicated at the beginning of the paper, I separated the

mode of the Form's working or operation, from the result or the work which it is expected to accomplish.

There is something by virtue (reason) of which all X things are X [*Ἰππίας Μείζων 294b*; *Εὐθύφρων 6d-e*]; this is κοινόν [*Ἰππίας Μείζων 300a-b*]; ἐν πᾶσι [*Λάχης 192b*]; ἐν πᾶσιν ταὐτόν [*Λάχης 191e*]; τὸ αὐτό [*Ἰππ. Μ. 300a-b*]; ταὐτόν ἐν πᾶσι αὐτὸ αὐτῷ [*Εὐθύφρων 5c-d*]; ἐν κατὰ πάντων [*Μένων 73d*; *Μένων 74b*]; ἐν διὰ πάντων [*Μένων 74a-b*]; ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ταὐτόν [*Μένων 75a*]; αὐτὸ τὸ X [*Ἰππίας Μείζων 289d*]; ταὐτόν εἶδος [*Μένων 72d-e*]; ἐν τι εἶδος ταὐτόν ἅπαντα (τὰ X) ἔχουσι [*Μένων 72c*]; it is the οὐσία of X [*Μένων 72a*; *Ἰππίας Μ. 302c*; *Εὐθύφρων 11a-b*; cf. *Μένων 71b*]; τῷ προσγένηται ἐκεῖνο τὸ εἶδος (makes it to be X) [*Ἰππίας Μείζων 289d*]; ὁ παραγενόμενον ποιεῖ ἕκαστα εἶναι X [*Ἰππ. Μ. 293e*].

This is the παράδειγμα which everyone must use when judging of its various manifestations or exemplifications, seeing whether something is *similar* (τοιούτου) to it [*Εὐθ. 6d-e*].

In conclusion then:

When many things are X (none of which consist in just being X, none of which has its subsistence exhausted in being X), then there is something by virtue of which they all are X, which something, is one (and yet present in all X's) and identical with itself, it is the εἶδος and the οὐσία of any X – and *implicitly* it is X, and must be used as the paradigm in judging of various particular cases of alleged X-things.

These points should also be noticed:

a) The above doctrine is not restricted in its application to so-called *difficult predicates*. Indeed explicitly Plato says in *Εὐθύφρων [7b ff.]* that heated controversies arise in cases where we cannot arrive at an adequate judgement – and cites as such cases ethical and aesthetic notions. But examples in the “early” dialogues include mathematical notions and physical ones (velocity, physical power, health – even bees in *Meno [72a]*). There is not the slightest indication, I take it, of any restriction being implied, and indeed reason enough that no such restriction is required *in general*. (I mean, exceptions must be made for *particular* reasons). If there is any prevalence in discussing ethical and aesthetic concepts – this can be easily explained by their overwhelming *interest* (not to speak of their context, i.e. the direction of the Socratic discourses).

b) If we speak of universals in Plato (“subsisting universals”, Zeller), we must speak very cautiously. For we see, that considerations of a similar kind to those which might induce us to pose existentially harmless universals (say as concepts or even conceptual realities) are straight from the beginning *ontologically laden* – in Plato. Which is only in tune with the whole tenour of Ancient Philosophy.

c) In connection with (b), we see that from the earliest attestable time, Plato's thoughts in developing the Theory of Form were, at least partly but to a significant

extent, *ontologically* orientated. We search for the definition of something partly, of course, in order to apply it in disputed or disputable cases, in order to secure for us certainty in our beliefs and thus rationality in our general behavior, in order to judge competently etc. But the definition is nothing but the account of that, by reason of which various things may be determined in a certain identical way and respect. And the primary necessity for its positing is metaphysical, not epistemological. It is not the latter primarily, since we cannot argue from our having a definition of X to that there must be something which will answer to our definition (given that particular things fail to completely meet it) – simply because in most of the important cases we have *prima facie* at least no such definitions. That there *must* be definitions and that Socratic inquiry is not futile are to be inferred from the positing of forms for mainly ontological reasons; not vice versa.

Let us pass now to the so-called “middle-dialogues”. What has become of our *Form of X*? It has become a full-blown *idea*. Its essential characteristics are admirably summed up in *Symposium [211a]* with reference to the Idea of Beauty. It is well to enumerate these essential features.

The idea, which is of course *αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν*, is:

- a) absolutely in and by itself – it is in nothing else but in itself and itself, “it”
itself
- b) eternal (not everlasting) in subsistence
- c) unchanging (in all ways)
- d) not partly *καλόν* partly *αἰσχροόν*
- e) always *καλόν* (not sometime *καλόν*, some other time *αἰσχροόν*)
- f) not *καλόν* in certain relations only
- g) or in certain surroundings or context in general
- h) not depending on subjective factors for its absolute existence
- i) *μονοειδές*.

Also *θεῖον, καθαρόν; εἰλικρινές [Φαῖδων 67a]* (tentatively equaled to *τὸ ἀληθές*); *65e*], *ἄμεικτον [Συμπόσιον 211e; the same doctrine in Φαῖδων 78d-e]*.

We may supplement this description with that of *Φαῖδρος [247c-e]* where it is said that the eternal substance about which we speak does not have *any sensible qualities (size included explicitly)* (also *Φαῖδων 65d*) (*ἀειδές* etc., *Φαῖδων 80d, 81a, 81b, 83b*).

We are entitled to generalize from these descriptions to all Ideas in general. (In *Φαῖδρος* it is already about the sum-total of the Ideal World). And we are, I think, not entitled to restrict the extent of the World in Ideas in any general way. (I mean again that specific exceptions must be made, if at all, for specific, particular reasons). This not only because of the multifariousness of and apparent indifference towards,

the examples selected and used by Plato. (A full reference of relevant passages is given by Zeller); but also because of the general formulations in *Πολιτεία I* (in the middle Books of the *Πολιτεία* as well) and *Φαίδων* [e.g. 65d] [better 75c-d] (also 76d-e).

We may summarize the doctrine in some such terms as these: the Idea of X is an eternal, unchanging (indeed unchangeable) being, being *unqualifiedly* X and *only* X (εἰλικρινές, μονοειδές), subsisting in and by itself alone, i.e. absolutely severed, separated from everything else – or at any rate from the sensible World - , not having any sensible quality at all.

The doctrine of the Idea of X as eternally being identical with itself in content of being, being in *unmitigated purity and unqualified absoluteness* X, is also the doctrine of the central Books of the *Republic*. [There is a certain difficulty with Book E. By the way, the content of this Book does not clash with that of, say, the *Sophist*, as regards μὴ ὄν. For the ὄν and the μὴ ὄν as applied to the World of Forms is distinct from that which differentiates the World of Forms from that of particularity. ὄν is used by Plato in various ways, cf. *Φαίδων 79a*].

In *Phaedo* we have explicit mention of what is to be inferred from this doctrine.

There is no *exactness* in the world of concreteness as we apprehend it through our senses (οὐδέν ἀκριβές, *Φαίδων 65B*); things here *ἐλλείπουν* (are in a condition of want, are deficient and defective) if compared with Ideas [which presupposes some kind of ὁμοιότης holding between them, as is quite clear from the context and other places in *Phaedo*] (*Φαίδων 74a*); ἐνδεῖ τι ἐκείνου, ἐστι φαυλότερον, ἐνδεεστέρως ἔχειν (*Φαίδων 74d-e*); things here desire to be ἴσα but fail (*Φαίδων 75a-b*).

In *Phaedo* also the formula «ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν» [In *Republic*, I noticed the similar but weaker formulation: τὸ ἀεὶ ὅμοιον (*Πολιτεία Θ 585c*)] becomes prominent as a description of the Ideal being (by contrast things here ἄλλοτε ἄλλως ἔχει καὶ μηδέποτε κατὰ ταυτά. (*Φαίδων 79a, 78c, 79c-d, 80b*).

This is important because this formula is compatible with a relaxed *unicity* on the part of the forms, with a possible compositeness of their being. But on the other hand Plato claims in *Phaedo* (78c) that that which is eternally identical is ἀσύνθετον, whereas that which is continuously changing must be σύνθετον. To the seeming incompatibility there are two answers: one easier and standing nearer to the surface, the other speculative but going to the core. I may indicate the former here: Plato seems to mean by σύνθετον here what came to be as the result of a σύνθεσις *in time*. Then Ideas are ἀσύνθετα even if they do comprise various *moments* beside their intrinsic core, i.e. beside their nature (Φύσις) in the sense of the *Sophist* and the *Parmenides* (second part). In fact, emphasis and insistence on that formula (“ἀεὶ κατὰ

ταὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν”) can be seen as preparing the way for such a use of *μονειδής* as not any and every Idea is *μονοειδής* (*Φαῖδρος* 270d-e; cf. 271a). But on the other hand in this same dialogue Ideas are described as *simple* (250c-d), which must make us hesitate to postulate one more change in Plato’s doctrine! Examples like this show clearly the advantage of attempting to provide an overall coherent interpretation of the totality of the Platonic corpus (evidently, making enough room for particular developments within the unified pattern). In the present connection, we note that even in an “early” Dialogue like *Euthyphro*, Plato distinguishes the nature of an idea from any (eternal) predicate of it, to which he refers by exactly the name which he will use in the *Sophist*: *πάθος* (*Εὐθύφρων* 11a-b).

To recapitulate: The Idea of X is an eternal, unchangeable being, which is unqualifiedly X and, in its nature, only X, subsisting in and by itself alone.

The following points should be made on this doctrine.

a) It does not exclude that the Idea of X may be something else as well, say Y. But then it is not *unqualifiedly* Y, nor is it in its nature only Y. Its Y-ness is carried by its X-core, as it were. Nor does it subsist in and by itself alone and in absolute separation qua being Y; on the contrary qua Y it depends on the Idea of Y for its being Y. Yet, in such a case, X is eternally and unchangeably Y.

The absoluteness of the subsistence of Ideas is more seriously endangered when we consider those Form-communions which consist or are reducible to species-genus connections. For if X is a species of Y then the very core of the Idea of X is composite and dependent for *part* of its being on Y; it is true still that only the idea of X is unqualifiedly X and only X, in its nature. Yet a *dependence* has been introduced which threatens the self-sufficiency of the Idea, in a similar way like the one in which the dependence of the concrete things on the Idea rendered them non-self-subsistent, receiving their being from *outside their existential core*. This is not the place to treat of this matter, but I may just say that this is exactly why Plato proceeded to *pose principles of his principles*.

Anyway, we see that the doctrine of the ideas as eternal, unchangeable beings whose core being is exhausted in being solely a definite form is perfectly compatible with the theory of the communion of Forms, as this is advocated in the *Sophist*. Indeed, both theories are expounded in metaphorical shape in *Phaedrus* (on which account¹ I should place it between middle dialogues and late ones); cf. e.g. *Φαῖδρος* 247c-e and 265c-266c].

b) I spoke of ‘The Idea of X’. Is it one and why?

¹ For another similarity with *Politicus* this time cf. *Φαῖδρος* 250b, c, d, and *Πολιτικός* 285d-286a.

The answer to this question is given (in the middle dialogues) in *Πολιτεία X [597c-d]* (And cf. *Τίμαιος 31a*). It turns on the distinction κλίνη ὄντως οὔσα / κλίνη τις. Whatever is not αὐτὴ ἡ κλίνη, ὅ ἐστι ἡ κλίνη, but nonetheless is κλίνη, must be a *certain* κλίνη (κλίνη τις) [And cf., with Cherniss, 158a].

To generalize and use the language of the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*.

If there is a being which is X, it is either αὐτὸ τὸ X or something which receives its being X from the source of X-ness, i.e. the Idea of X [cf. e.g. *Φαίδων 100c*]. That is, either it has as its total foundation X or not. If it does have it, it is the idea of X whose core or φύσις is just being X; if not it is X by participation in the Idea of X. Now if its foundation (ὑπαρξίς) in subsistence is provided by being X itself, this being which is X would be the unqualified X; if it is X by participation it needs a foundation or core in order that the πάθημα from the participation may be appended to it. But now this latter case is susceptible of a further division: for this foundation may be either the φύσις of another form, in which case we have an eternal πάθημα; or it may be something radically different. This is the space of Timaeus.

Be that as it may, we see that the crucial distinction is that between ἐν αὐτῷ εἶναι / ἐν ἑτέρῳ εἶναι. This distinction is not topical or spatial; it is metaphysical in nature. (It occurs already in *Φαίδων 83b*).

c) The fully developed theory of Ideas incorporates the results of the early dialogues as it is evident from the above, and as it is explicitly stated in *Phaedo* and elsewhere. The Idea is that by reason of which things here are what they are.

But this brings us to the second part of our inquiry: how exactly does it come to be (is it effected) that something else than the Idea receives (specific) being from the Idea? (For we saw that this is the crucial distinction).

d) Before going to it let it be remarked that the so-called critical dialogues contain nothing to justify us in claiming a radical change in the theory of Ideas. In *Sophist 253d-254b* the description of the World of Forms is reminiscent of *Phaedrus* (ἐν τοιούτῳ τόπῳ, εἰς τὴν τοῦ μὴ ὄντος σκοτεινότητα, τῇ τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ προσκειμένος ἰδέα, τὸ θεῖον). In *Philebus 59a-c* (quite apart from the metaphysical discussion at the beginning of the dialogue) the object of dialectics is described in the same terms as in the so-called “middle dialogues”. Not to mention *Timaeus*!

We saw that in the earlier dialogues the tendency (at least in a natural reading of the relevant passages) is towards *immanence*, presence of the Form in the concrete thing (Eudoxos' theory is relevant here). The same is true of the four first books of Republic (cf. e.g. *Πολιτεία Δ, 434c-435c – esp. ἰὸν τὸ εἶδος*).²

In the rest of the Republic, Phaedo, Symposium the *transcendence* of the Idea is manifest. In this connection the formulation in *Φαίδων (where mark the ἔτι) (100d) and Συμπόσιον (211b) is significant*. (The Cratylus provides, as I said, the bridging way: in it many essential attributes of the Ideas are formulated, *necessary for their transcendence*). In Phaedrus, as in Republic VI, VII, the structure of the Ideal World comes to the fore – and to this end Parmenides (preliminarily) and Sophist and Politicus are directed. But the problem of the connection of the Ideal World with the perceptible one retracts its importance, and so we have Philebus and Timaeus contributing to its solution.

The solution lies in affirming *both the immanence and the transcendence of the Idea*. And this is made possible by means of the theory of imitation.

When in the middle dialogues there occurred the promotion of the Form to an absolutely transcendent Idea, what became of the Forms as immanent formative principles of the concrete particulars? The answer must be that they were retained side by side with their promoted counterparts. This is manifestly shown in **Phaedo 102d and 103b**. It is also implied in the *Republic*, when the rather immanent forms of the first four books are allowed to remain by the side of the fully transcendent Ideas of the later books. (The point is valid even if *Republic* was composed during a long period of time, or in it more than one treatises were combined). The distinction between *ἐνυλα εἶδη* and *transcendent Ideas* is, of course, explicit in *Parmenides*, where the force of the last argument against the theory of the Forms depends on it.

Thus we have traced the source and origin of the εἰσιόντα and ἐξιόντα εἶδη of Timaeus. What of the doctrine of their being μιμήματα etc. of the transcendent Ideas?

The notion that when one is asked for the definition of X one should *look at*, direct his attention, be able to see, the unity of the one and the same εἶδος which makes the many X-things X, is quite early (cf. *Μένων 72c*). Very early also is the notion that the Form serves as the *παράδειγμα* in passing judgment on the various particular cases, in the sense that we then compare as it were the Form with the particular thing in question and see whether the latter is, and to what extent, *similar*

² The *Κρατύλος* formulation in *386D ff., 439c ff.* (cf. esp. ὁ ἔγωγε πολλάκις ὄνειρώπτω) seem to me to fit exactly if it was placed at the transitional period from the first group of dialogues to the middle period.

(τοιούτον) to the Form (*Εὐθύφρων 6d- e*). This notion is taken up in the Middle Dialogues [*Φαίδων 74a, d-e, 75a-b, 76d-e* (ἀπεικάζομεν); *Πολιτεία Γ 402c-d* where the distinction αὐτά / εἰκόνες αὐτῶν is rather meant to distinguish genuine cases of virtue from, say, simulated ones – the distinction between πράγμα / εἰκῶν being reproduced within this World as well; similarly *Γ 402b*; but the full notion is present in *Πολιτεία Ε 472c, 473a; Ζ 540a-b; Ι 617d* (βίων παραδείγματα); *618a, ΣΤ 500e* (θείῳ παραδείγματι χρώμενοι ζωγράφοι); *Θ 592b* (ἐν οὐρανῷ παράδειγμα), *Ι 596* (Idea of bed etc.); *510d-e* (with αὐτὸ τετράγωνον and διάμετρος αὐτή); *484c-d* (ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παράδειγμα = their knowledge of αὐτὸ τὸ Χ; and so *Γ 409c* :πρὸς τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ παραδείγματα ἀποσκοπῶν – being is accurately reproduced in nous, the intelligibility of being as an inherent essential attribute of it grounding its clear intellectual vision in a properly prepared soul; and see also my last observation infra³; *Φαῖδρος 250b; 249e-250a; 250d; cf. 273d*].

The notion of imitation is taken up in *Theaetetus (176e)* (where cf. the παραδείγματα βίων in the Republic) and in *Politicus (285d-286a)*⁴.

In *Laws (IB, 959a-b* where σῶμα πρὸς ψυχῇ ὡς εἶδωλον πρὸς οὐσίαν; *962a* (σκοπὸς οἱ βλέπειν δεῖ τὸν πολιτικόν; *962d* (εἰς ἓν βλέποντα – which is ἀρετή, *963a*); ὡς ὄντως ὄντα οὐ πολλὰ ἀλλ' ἓν τοῦτο μόνον, ἀρετή *963d; cf. 964a ff., 965d*) we have *implicitly* the same ideas.

We conclude that the paradeigmatic function of Forms vis-à-vis particulars was always present in Plato's thought, perhaps with some modification of emphasis. If anything it came more and more in prominence (and in this I agree with Jackson, only my interpretation of the fact differs widely from his) as it was seen to provide the solution and the uniting point of many distinct requirements. Among such basic factors which brought it into its central position are the three following:

1) Cf. supra pp. 8 - 9. If something is X by participation, it must have some other foundation which "suffers", undergoes, (πάσχει) the πάθημα of being X. Now in the case of Ideas this foundation is provided by the φύσις, the essential core, of another Idea (say, by an absolute Z). But this cannot be the case with mundane particulars. Neither could we say that the required foundation is provided by the X-particular's being Y, Z, etc. For these predicative particular beings themselves need a foundation, since they are not absolute beings, beings solely and eternally being the same form of being. Nor is it possible for X to be founded on Y, Z, etc. and for Y to be founded on X, Z, etc., and so on. Thus we must have a radically different kind of

³ In the Allegory of the Cave, of course, sensible things are related to their ideas *as* the images and shadows to the material things and *as* the copy to its paradigm.

⁴ In the same language the identical thought as in *Phaedrus 250b, c, d* (cf. supra p. 9 n. 1).

substratum. And this is *χώρα*, the Platonic *ύλη*. We come for a second time to this conclusion. Things platonic and real fit absolutely together.

Notice that this deduction was made without recourse to the notion of change, *γίγνεσθαι*, flux etc.

This absolute substratum is mediately the principle (ground, source) of change, and immediately the principle of multiplicity. It is the second because it provides the means of having a *τί* X beside the one *αὐτὸ τὸ* X, and if a *τί* X, then *τινὰ* X.

But then this multiplication finds a precise analogue in the many images of a thing (and in the many copies of an original archetype). This is the only consistent solution in the problem generally formulated in *Philebus (15b)*. The form can preserve its absolute⁵ unity and transcendence and yet particulars can be said to partake in it, only if they do partake in it by having *reflected* upon their *ύποδοχή images* of the one Idea.

[I must emphasize that I hold this analysis to be the last word of Plato as regards the things and processes of this World. In the Ideas, the multiplication of an Idea in its many instances in the various form which hold communion with it is rather to be analyzed in terms of the part-whole relationship. These then, exemplification and integration, are the two crucial connections in Plato's *Metaphysics*].

2) Concrete exemplification means for Plato *degradation*. The Idea of X is, of course, *preeminently* X in a superlative and *unique way* [to say "*degree*" here would be incorrect; degrees (*μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον*) are introduced by the matter, not by the Idea. The Idea is perfectly what it is (which is another way of formulating the doctrine of the unqualified being of the Idea as found in the Middle dialogues]. But nothing which *receives* being can be perfect, for this would amount to an impossible reduplication (triplication etc.) of the Idea. (What is unqualifiedly and absolutely X cannot but be one, as in *Republic I*). Other impossibilities would follow: what is self-sustained would be supported by something else, etc.

Now, of course, the difference in the *degree* of a perfection achieved or achievable in this world of relativity cannot be assimilated to that of the difference of the exemplar and the copy or the image. But precisely this is *not* the case here: differences in degree are between mundane things. Between any of them and its exemplar there can be no mere difference of degree; it is rather a categorical difference in grade, or status or level. And this radical difference is aptly expressed by the *analogue* of paradigm and copy. Plato far for considering particulars and Ideas

⁵ Absolute, vis-à-vis *the particulars*. Not quite *absolutely* absolute ! Again the question of the first principles and of the Platonic Ἄγραφα Δόγματα.

as belonging to one and the same logical category (as the assault against him is usually formulated esp. in the analytical era) sharply distinguished their metaphysical status.

And this brings in another consideration I have already hinted upon: Republic E. We interpreted it above as conforming to the Symposium's unqualified being of the Ideas. And this is correct. But there is also another dimension in it – that there are two *levels* of reality.

For documentation cf. *Sophist 240a-b*, where the εἰκών, in its essence (as it were!), is οὐκ ὄντως ὄν and οὐκ ὄντως οὐκ ὄν, i.e. ὄν (οὐκ ὄντως) and οὐκ ὄν (οὐκ ὄντως). Since ὄντως ὄν for Plato means unqualified and perfect being, our interpretation above is amply confirmed.

3) A third factor in the dominance of the paradigm theory in the later Plato is a sui generis (ultimately Pythagorean) Creationism, his conception that this World and things in this World were somehow *made*, that is really a ποίησις involved in their generation (which assimilates them to human production), and the idea that every production is in some sense a copying process. [Cf. *Laws B 668a6 ff.*; *Sophist 265b ff.*; *Philebus* where the γιγνόμενον and the ποιούμενον is one and the same].