BEYOND THE HYPOTHESIS: THE UNITY OF THE SOUL IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

By

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(Under the Direction of Edward Halper)

ABSTRACT:

Plato has Socrates give a formulation of the Principle of Non-contradiction (PNC) in book IV of the *Republic*. The principle is used as a premise in an argument which divides the soul. Plato's use of the principle has convinced most scholars that he endorses PNC. However, the endorsement in the text is qualified. Socrates refers to the principle as one that he and his interlocutors will *hypothesize* and he warns that if it be shown to be false all that follows from it will also be refuted. We view principles like PNC as belonging solely to logic. Plato does not. He does not have a realm for logic separate from those of being and becoming. This allows Plato to effectively reformulate the problem of the justification of PNC. The question for Plato has to do with scope: To what thing or things does PNC apply? In my dissertation I argue that Plato takes the principle to follow from and be grounded in the unity of form. The application of PNC presupposes the existence of some *one* thing to which to apply the principle and to which the principle in some sense belongs. As the oneness of things is in all cases a consequence of form, this would make PNC dependent on form. Yet, although PNC follows from form it cannot, I argue, be applied to form itself by itself. Rather, I will argue that PNC applies most properly to soul. This means that an investigation into PNC is also an investigation into the unity of the soul. That the soul in question belongs to the one capable of doing the hypothesizing is of no small relevance.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Talya and Barry Bloom, in gratitude for their support and inspiration.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is in one sense an inquiry into Plato's use of and attitude towards the Principle of Non-Contradiction (PNC) and in another sense an inquiry into the unity of the soul. As even this brief introduction will show, the two are closely connected.

There is a major inconsistency between the account of the soul in book IV of the *Republic* and the argument for the immortality of the soul in book X. In book IV Socrates argues for the division of the soul into three parts. However, in book X Socrates attributes to the soul a unity that is incapable of being broken apart or divided. The soul's indivisibility, I will argue, is the crux of the book X immortality argument; the argument depends entirely upon the soul's being a unity that cannot ever be broken apart. Thus the inconsistency: the first passage actually divides the soul into parts while the second undermines the very possibility of such a division. The incompatibility of these two passages is not one that has been paid particular attention in the scholarly literature. Even once noticed, it might seem that the problem is superficial. Of course, we might claim, the soul is ultimately a unity. Even claiming that the soul has parts assumes that there is some one thing that, remaining one, includes within itself some number of parts. In addition, it is quite clear from the text that the soul being discussed in book IV is the embodied soul while that discussed in book X is the soul in its disembodied, true state.[1] Yet, this does not actually eliminate the inconsistency. What is the relationship of the true soul to the soul in its embodied state? How does the soul, as a unity, maintain itself even when "deformed" (611c1) by its association with the body? Though Plato's formulation of it is perhaps unusual and it will require some philosophical work to see that this is a real issue for him, the issue itself is not

[1] That the book IV soul is embodied is implied by the nature of the examples used; the examples of thirst and hunger for instance. (437d2) That the soul in its true, immortal state is *not* embodied is stated explicitly in the text. (611c1) Unless otherwise specified, all references are to the *Republic* and all translated *Republic* passages are from Sachs, *Plato's Republic*.

unfamiliar to contemporary readers. It is the problem of the unity or identity of the person. What is it that makes the human being, the agent, one thing? What is the underlying and indestructible unity of the soul?

Plato, I suggest, is well aware of this issue. If we think about it with the question of the soul's unity in mind, the argument for the division of the soul in book IV begins to take on a new significance. Though it is necessary for preserving the central analogy of the text (that between the soul and the state), Socrates is hesitant about the division of the soul. The division, as he makes clear, is merely *hypothetical*. This follows from the fact that the PNC, the central premise in the argument for the division, is itself only a hypothesis. The PNC is in fact the *only* explicit hypothesis used in the *Republic*.[2] In fact, Socrates makes clear not only that the principle itself is hypothetical but also that all conclusions derived from it are just as tentative as the principle itself. This is as much as to say that the soul's division, at least as it is given in the text, is merely hypothetical. That it is the PNC itself that is hypothesized in the argument for the division of the soul also connects the question of the unity of the soul directly to that of the use and justification of the PNC.

The hypothetical nature of the division of the soul might suggest that the division itself is overturned in book X when the soul is seen to be immortal. Yet, if this is the case, it is unclear why Socrates makes the division in the first place. Even more unclear is why he allows it to occupy so central a position in the account as a whole. I suggest that there is something more sophisticated going on. To see what it is will require taking up the issue of *hypotheses*. Hypothesis is something of a technical term in the Republic. It is used in the divided line

[2] There is another important use of the root of the term. In book X Socrates suggests that the forms of artifacts be "posited." (596a5) The term Socrates uses here is *tithesthai,* the root of the word for hypothesis. Though he avoids using the exact term in question by leaving off the prefix *hupo*, the passage is significant. I will consider it in some detail in chapter four of this dissertation.

passage to distinguish between two types of knowledge. (e.g., 510b3-8) *Dianoia*, the lesser of the two forms of knowledge, is based on or follows from hypotheses and, therefore, deals with less "real" entities, while *nous*, the stronger form of knowledge, does not base itself on hypotheses and grasps the most real of entities: the forms themselves. Thus, the use of hypothesis in the *Republic* IV passage is significant. It suggests that the division of the soul is *dianoetic* and, in addition, that the soul in its divided and embodied state is less than completely real. As a corollary, it leaves open the possibility that the soul in its "true" state, as a unity, is an object of *noesis*. This is exactly what I will argue.

Reading the text in this way gives the reader an interesting opportunity. Once we identify the divided soul as *dianoetic* we are in a better position to ask after the nature of the thing that is allowing for its very possiblity. What is the *noetic* entity that underlies or grounds the divided, embodied soul? That is, what is the internal, immortal unity of the soul? In addition, by examining the relationship in these terms, I suggest, we can come to understand how it is that the unity in question accounts for and holds together the parts as a whole.

That the hypothesis in question is the PNC is significant, as is the fact that the thing being hypothesized about is the soul. I will argue that this particular hypothesis is not simply one hypothesis among many. Rather, the PNC is implicit in the hypothetical method itself. PNC is *the* hypothesis, not just in the text but in general. It is fundamental to and implicit in the hypothetical method itself and, therefore, fundamental to any *dianoetic* knowing. Thus, the justification of this hypothesis is in some sense the justification of *dianoetic* knowledge in general. Equally significant is the application of the hypothesis to the soul itself. I will argue that the internal principle of unity which makes the soul immortal, and which underlies its division into parts, is the soul's embodiment of the form of the good. This embodiment of form,

that soul has an internal form that is complete, is what separates soul from sensible things. This internal unity is closely associated with the rational part of the soul. It is responsible both for the application of the PNC to the soul and, as I will argue, for the application of the principle by the soul to other things. That is, form, by being an internal principle of unity, is responsible for both the being and the knowing of the soul.

I suggest that it is central to Plato's account that both being and knowing are types of unity. That is, to be, to be known and to know are all ways of being one. In general, I will argue that the application of the PNC depends upon some unity, some oneness, to which to apply the principle and by which the principle is grounded. However, this unity, though it allows for and grounds the application of the PNC, is itself outside of the scope of the principle. Thus, the PNC, not unlike the embodied soul, depends upon a unity which transcends it. I will argue that, as the divided line description itself indicates, this unity is form, specifically that of the good, and that the whole account being given in the *Republic* depends upon the apprehending, or glimpsing, of a principle that is beyond both being and knowing though it is the source of both. (509b5-9)

Division of Chapters

Chapter one is an overview of the account of the dissertation as a whole and will largely serve as a second, and more detailed, introduction. In addition, this chapter will argue for the strong connection between the PNC and the hypothetical method mentioned above. That is, the chapter will argue that the PNC is implicit in any hypothesizing. I will also suggest that Plato has a different way of thinking about knowledge than the contemporary reader is perhaps accustomed

to; one that connects knowing with the being of the thing known and, especially, the being of the knower.

Chapter two will focus on the division of the soul in book IV into desiring and rational parts. This chapter will focus on the nature of these parts as well as the need for attributing a unity to the soul that is preserved, somehow, even in its partitioned state. This chapter will also begin the argument for associating this unity with the rational part itself by establishing that this part is in some sense the *whole* of the soul as well as the *end* around which the soul as a whole is ordered.

Chapter three will focus on sensible things. First of all, this chapter will attempt to explain why it is that Plato seems to think that these entities are inherently contradictory. Doing so will involve a discussion of some of the fragments of Heraclitus. Second, this chapter will argue that Plato's theory of imitation, that things are imitations of separate forms is uniquely suited to explain the contradiction inherent in the nature of sensible things. This discussion is relevant to the discussion of the PNC. It is also relevant, by way of contrast, to the discussion of soul. Sensible things, I will argue, are contradictory because the form that they are is external to them. Thus, this chapter will help to establish that soul, in having the PNC be applicable to it, has its form internal to it. A central concern of this chapter will be to show that forms like those of the good and the just are responsible for the very *being* of their participants and not merely for their possessing certain attributes.

Chapter four will combine the work of chapters two and three by showing how the lack of unity on the part of sensible things leads us to affirm a strong unity for the soul. This chapter will begin with a discussion of artifacts, the only allegedly substantial forms mentioned in the *Republic*. I will argue that these "forms" belong more to the soul than to the sensible things that are taken to embody them. This, I will argue, is because soul has a closer connection to the

good, the form that makes the "forms" of artifacts possible. I will argue that its internal good is the root of both the knowing and the immortality of the soul.

The last chapter is a short conclusion that focuses on the PNC. Is the principle in any way justifiable or does it remain hypothetical? The question resists any straightforward answer.

CHAPTER ONE

"For *the same* is both to know and to be." (Parmenides, fragment B 3, my translation)

I. Introduction

It might seem that the primary question for a philosophical inquiry into a principle as fundamental as the PNC is one of justification. How, we might ask, can one give a justification of a principle implicit in the act of justification? Any attempt to do so would necessarily be circular. For Plato however, the fundamental question is one of scope. PNC, for Plato, is not an abstract logical principle. There are no such principles in Plato. Rather, PNC is essentially connected to that to which it applies. Thus we need to ask after what thing or things the principle applies to. Plato's answer, I suggest, is unity. Not just any type of unity however. Although it does *depend* on form for its application, the principle does not actually apply *to* form. That is, form, though it *grounds* the application of the principle, is itself beyond, outside of, the principle's scope. Nor does the principle apply to sensible things. When we try to apply the principle to these entities we end up with contradictions. While form is too one and complete to warrant application of the principle, appearances are not one enough. What the principle applies to rather, is the sort of unity that incorporates plurality in some way: PNC applies to wholes. These entities, as I will argue in chapter four, are essentially mathematical. They are the orders or structures that make things the particular things that they are. Though this may seem to limit the application of the principle considerably, and in fact does do so to some degree, once we see how significant the entities in question actually are, we will see that we are still dealing with an essential principle. Though they are themselves dependent, these entities are causal in relation to

the existence of particular things. The entities that PNC applies to are wholes that remain the "same" as themselves even in plurality. Most fundamentally, the principle applies to and is applied by the most unusual and significant of these wholes: to the soul in its embodied state.

The connection between PNC and the sort of discursive unity in question is not uncommon in Greek Philosophy. The claim that PNC as well as the unity to which it is applied are hypothetical, a claim actually made about both in the *Republic*,[3] is unique to Plato. It is a significant claim. The connection between PNC and the hypothetical method is one that has not been fully appreciated. Neither is self-grounded but each is grounded, rather, in form and in *nous*. Again, although PNC is grounded in form, the principle does not apply directly to form. Calling the principle hypothetical is a sort of shorthand for this on Socrates' part. Thus, PNC applies to participants in form and not to form itself, and even to these only in a certain way, as I hope to make clear.

This chapter is an overview of the account of the dissertation as a whole. Some of the content of this chapter will not be fully argued for until later. The reason for doing this is to give the reader some sense of the way in which the parts of the account are to fit together. The parts do not stand alone. This is itself a consequence of Plato's attitude to PNC. Knowledge of the sorts of things that PNC helps us to know is by nature holistic. Yet, in addition to being an overview, this chapter does three important things. The first is to show the connection between PNC and *dianoia* being made both textually and philosophically in the Republic. The second is to show the connection between PNC and the soul, the only entity to which the principle is explicitly applied in the text. Both these points entail manifold other important points. Thirdly, this chapter should give some sense of the connection between knowing and being that emerges from

[3] PNC is stated as hypothetical in the division of the soul passage of book IV. (437a5) The particular forms of artifacts are explicitly posited, or "thesized," in book X. (596a5)

Plato's account. The heart of the connection, I suggest, is that both depend upon form. In fact, it is the soul's possession of an internal principle of unity, or internal form, that allows for both its knowing and being. This internal unity, a unity that remains even in the soul's embodiment and "partitioning," is the ground of the applicability to the soul of the PNC as well as the application by the soul of the principle to other entities.

II. Hypothetical Knowing

It is a limitation of discursive reasoning that its first principles and axioms can never be justified by discursive reasoning. This is because discursive reasoning must assume its first principles to be true so as to make use of them to ground the truth of everything else. To prove something as true by such reasoning amounts to deriving that something from some set of first assumptions and, perhaps, according to some set of given rules. The assumptions and rules, because they are assumed in any act of reasoning, cannot themselves be justified, in a way that is non-circular, by an act of reasoning. Thus, these assumptions and rules necessarily remain unjustified according to the very criterion of truth they ground. Since any possible conclusion based on such reasoning is only as true as these assumptions, and in fact derives its truth entirely from the truth of these assumptions, these conclusions too are fundamentally unjustified. This is as much as to say that everything justified by reasoning is, fundamentally, unjustified by reasoning. If there were in addition a principle or axiom necessarily assumed in any possible act of reasoning, that principle or axiom would be entirely unprovable by any possible act of reasoning. This, in turn, would render all that follows from that principle or axiom, which is everything justified by discursive reasoning, to be equally unprovable.

This is the problem of first principles and would seem to be the state of affairs one is lead to consider in thinking about the PNC. PNC, it seems, is just such a principle or axiom. Argumentation necessarily assumes the principle in any act of deductive reasoning. Consequently, we cannot provide a non-circular, deductive argument for the principle. The historical fact that the principle is almost universally assented to does nothing to resolve this problem. If anything it reinforces the imperative to deal with it in some meaningful way. Plato, perhaps the first to give a complete formulation of the principle,[4] has much to offer us in our thinking about PNC and any sort of reasoning that can't help but assume it as a principle.

Plato, I suggest, does not so much solve this insoluble problem as *use* it to reorient any and all knowledge claims that assume PNC, which is perhaps all knowledge claims. This sort of reorientation is typical of Plato. In fact, although PNC is a principle that we do not seem to be able to look past or avoid assuming in our reasoning, it is not a first principle for Plato. The first principles, of thought as well as of being, are forms, and especially that of the good. If PNC is to be a principle, in fact if it is to be at all, it must relate, in some way, to form. This is exactly what I will be arguing in this dissertation. There is a twist however. We cannot expect a discursive argument. In fact, discursive argumentation is exactly what is forbidden in this case. It would be circular. What we find when we examine the text is not such an argument per se, but something more interesting. We cannot give a straightforward argument or inquire directly into form. To do so would entail the sort of circularity always entailed by arguing for first principles. In this respect form stands in the position in which PNC seems to stand. What we can do, however, is see how form is presupposed by the arguments that we do give. This is what I take

[4] This claim depends on what constitutes a complete formulation. See: Thom, "The Principle of Non-Contradiction." Thom cites two previous statements of something like PNC, or perhaps the principle of identity, in the writings of Gorgias and Parmenides.

Socrates' strange description of *noetic* reasoning in the divided line passage to be indicating. In making *dianoetic* arguments, we reveal ourselves to be presupposing something that cannot be understood through those arguments. PNC, as the fundamental hypothesis, gives us a chance to see how this works. In the soul passage especially, we will see that what is being presupposed is a unity that stands beyond the principle. This unity is form. Form, I suggest, is not knowable as something that we can delimit in any ordinary way. This would make form, and thereby PNC, subject to PNC. Form is transcendent.

At any rate, that Plato is cognizant of this issue and concerned about the justification of first principles is, I believe, indicated by the disclaimer he has Socrates make before formulating the PNC. The formulation is in book IV of the *Republic*. (436b8-c3) Outside of an apparent restatement of the principle in book X (602e8; 604b2), this is the only explicit mention of PNC in the dialogues. Before we turn to the text's interesting formulation and use of the principle it is worthwhile to see how Plato frames what he intends our reception of the principle to be. Plato's use of the principle seems to have convinced most scholars that he endorses PNC. However, the endorsement in the text is qualified. Although his interlocutors accept the principle, Socrates himself makes a point of mentioning that the principle has not been justified. Rather, he refers to the principle as something that they will "hypothesize" (*hupothemenoi*), gives a few (somewhat peculiar) examples in support of the principle, and notes that "if these things should ever appear otherwise than that, *all our conclusions from it* will have been refuted." (437a) It is not so surprising, perhaps, that no argument is offered in support of the principle. Again, any attempt to justify so fundamental a principle of reasoning is bound to be circular. At any rate, the principle is stated and, with this disclaimer, is used in a central argument in the text.

Socrates *uses* the PNC to argue that the soul is a plurality. This claim, that the soul is a plurality, a claim that is only as true as the hypothesis that grounds it, is necessary for the application of the definition of justice to the soul. It is therefore necessary for answering the central question of the text: is justice good for the soul?[5] If all that is based on PNC is merely hypothetical and the account of how justice is good for the soul is based on PNC it seems we have to conclude that Socrates has given a merely hypothetical answer to the text's central question. This much, that the division of the soul and therefore the application of the account of justice to it are hypothetical, is all but explicit in the text. However, this is the tip of the iceberg. The acknowledgement that PNC is hypothetical would seem to have effects that reach much further. Plato could not expect his reader to believe that the four books of arguments and determinate statements made before the explicit statement of PNC did not assume this fundamental principle. The acknowledgement that PNC is hypothetical casts doubt on far more than PNC and the division of the soul, it casts doubt on the text as a whole, of all texts in fact. It might even cast doubt on the possibility of making a meaningful statement. In emphasizing the hypothetical nature of a principle that we seem to need to use and, therefore, can't justify, Plato is calling our attention to a major problem in our knowledge. He is doing so, in addition, in the very argument used to differentiate reason and desire in the soul.[6]

Over and above the mere fact of a disclaimer attached to PNC is the nature of this particular disclaimer. Hypothesis (*hupothesis*) is a word that carries some weight for Plato; especially in the *Republic*. The word is used in the text to distinguish between the two subsections of the intelligible section of the divided line. *Dianoia*, the type of thought that belongs to the lower,

[5] The conversation that is the *Republic* from book II on is motivated by Glaucon's insistence that Socrates praise justice as intrinsically good for the *soul*, regardless of its consequences. (358b6-7)
[6] The argument differentiating desire from reason runs from 436a6-439d8. It will be discussed in detail in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

less real or true portion of the intelligible is distinguished from *nous*, the thinking of the highest and truest section, by its relationship to hypotheses. *Dianoia* is based on, or follows from, hypotheses. In his description of *dianoia* Socrates emphasizes that it is the *soul* that is *forced* to make "use of presuppositions, not going to the source, because it doesn't have the power to step off above its presupposition…." (511a5) *Nous,* on the other hand, makes "its presuppositions not sources but genuine standing places, like steppingstones and springboards" and, mysteriously, frees itself from the perceptible and "ends at forms." (511b4-c2)[7] It is notoriously unclear what is to be made of this bizarre description of *nous*. The description of *dianoia* is strange as well. Yet, leaving aside the many peculiarities of the descriptions of the two types of thinking, this much at least is clear: thinking that is based on unjustified hypotheses is *dianoetic*. Thus *nous* cannot be based on PNC in any straightforward sense; at least, not so long as the principle remains hypothetical. *Dianoia*, on the other hand, corresponding loosely to what we might call discursive reasoning, could very well be based on PNC, even if the principle remains an ungrounded hypothesis. This would make the PNC a structural principle in the text, differentiating the forms of knowing from one another. It would perhaps even entail that most, if not all, of the Republic, if taken in a straightforward way, is *dianoetic*. Thus, Socrates' careful and explicit insistence that PNC is hypothetical, a point he makes on his own without any prompting from his interlocutors, suggests that the account of the divided soul and everything entailed by it is *dianoetic*. It is unfortunate that so little attention has been paid to this fact.

This issue, it seems to me, requires us to view the passage in the context of the work as a whole and especially in terms of the claims about knowledge made in the central books. That is, unless we can justify the PNC, we are left with a major problem concerning any and all discursive knowledge claims made in the text. Yet, it seems unlikely that the hypothesis can be

[7] Sachs uses "presupposition" to translate *hupothesis*.

justified, or even that Plato thinks it can. I will not give an argument against the former any more than has been done above. Such an argument has been made. It can be found in chapters 4 and 5 of book gamma of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Plato himself gives us no straightforward, explicit textual motivation suggesting either that he believes PNC can be justified or that he thinks it cannot. What we are told is that, for the purposes of the specific inquiry taking place in the *Republic*, it is hypothetical. This coupled with the fact that, as I intend to show, taking the principle's hypothetical nature seriously helps us to more fully understand the text as a whole, should be sufficient motivation for taking the claim seriously. Another way to state the same problem would be to ask how, or if, Plato can deal with Aristotle's observation about the inherent unprovability of PNC. [8] For interpreters who prefer not to attribute any concerns to Plato that are not stated explicitly in the text we can rephrase the issue as a possible problem with Plato's account: Can Plato overcome or in some way creatively use the unprovability of the central assumption he is using in his argument dividing the soul into parts? This is no small problem. Again, the central analogy of the text (that between soul and state) and, therefore, the answer to the central question of the text (why is justice better for an individual than injustice) depend on the division of the soul and, therefore, on PNC. I suggest that he has a far more sophisticated way of doing so than has been appreciated by the scholarship. Indeed, the scholarship has failed to notice that he is even dealing with the issue.[9] At least this much is clear: Plato does not take the issue of PNC's justification to be a matter of insignificance. Socrates' explicit emphasis that PNC and everything based on it is merely hypothetical is a clear sign of his concern.

[8] It is worth mentioning that Aristotle is obliged to mention that he takes PNC to be non-hypothetical (*anhupotheton*) in his discussion of the principle. (*Meta.* 1005b17)

[9] For example, Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic,* and Kenneth Sayer, *Plato's Analytic Method*, each commit entire sections of their books to discussions of the method of hypothesis. Neither discusses PNC in any detail.

Aside from the first PNC passage in IV and the divided line passage in VI, there are two other significant, for our purposes, use of the word *tithemi*, the root of the word translated as hypothesis. The next use occurs in Book VII in a passage that separates philosophy from geometry (533c) and matches with the use of the term in the divided line passage. The last occurs in book X when Socrates introduces the forms of artifacts which, as is their "custom," Socrates and Glaucon "posit," or "thesize." (596a6) The latter use, which describes Socrates' attitude towards particular forms, will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. It will, among other things, help us to see that PNC is a structural principle for *being* as well as for knowing. That PNC, or contradiction itself, is used to differentiate degrees of being is clear from the text.[10] What is unclear is what to make of it. This aspect of Plato's metaphysics has not been overlooked so much as lamented.

At any rate, if we do take the claim that PNC is hypothetical seriously we are left with a unique hypothesis and, therefore, a unique opportunity. PNC is not merely one hypothesis among many. It is essential to the hypothetical method as a whole. The hypothetical method, when we look at it, would seem to rest on the assumption, or hypothesis, of PNC. In affirming any hypothesis we are necessarily affirming the negation of the opposite of that hypothesis. To hypothesize, for example, that all things have a cause, if this hypothesis is to have any meaning or carry any significance, is to simultaneously deny the negation of that claim, that something can come to be without a cause. For any hypothesis to have meaning as a hypothesis would require our assumption of PNC along with the hypothesis. Thus, PNC is not simply one hypothesis among many. It is implicit in the method of hypothesis itself and must be hypothesized alongside any hypothesis that is to have any meaning. In other words, PNC is a

[10] Forms and sensible things are distinguished by the fact that the latter always appear to embody opposites. **(**479a-b) The distinction will be considered in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

first principle of sorts in relation to the method of hypothesis. This makes the significance of Socrates' concession that PNC is merely hypothetical hard to overstate. On the one hand, PMC, as hypothetical, is grounded in the method of hypothesis. On the other hand, the method of hypothesis is grounded in PNC.

Socrates actually illustrates this aspect of the hypothetical method with his discussion of *dianoia* in the divided line passage. Using mathematical examples he illustrates how mathematicians, starting from unquestioned hypotheses, go on to make inferences one after another until, "they arrive at a conclusion in agreement with (*omologoumenoos*) that from which they set their inquiry in motion." (510d) We assume the principle in making the hypothesis in the first place by implicitly denying the negation of that hypothesis. Then we assume it again in making inferences that follow from the hypothesis. We assume it at the end by settling on a conclusion that is in agreement with that hypothesis. This agreement is the acceptance of all that is consistent with our hypothesis and the rejection of all that contradicts it. Although the argument of this dissertation does not depend upon the interpretations of any other dialogues it is interesting that the description of the hypothetical method here matches the way in which Socrates describes the method in the *Phaedo.* The description, again, seems to imply a dependence on PNC: "However, I started in this manner: taking as my hypothesis (*hupothemenos*) in each case the theory that seemed to me the most compelling, I would consider as true, about cause and everything else, whatever agreed (*sumphonein*) with this, and as untrue whatever did not so agree." (*Phaedo* 100a)[11]

[11] Unless otherwise specified all translated passages from the *Phaedo* are from Grube, *Plato's Phaedo*.

The language of the *Phaedo* passage is slightly different,[12] yet the point is recognizable as the same one just made. The hypothetical method works by assuming, hypothesizing, that something is the case and then affirming all that is consistent with (or in agreement with, or sounding together with) the hypothesis while denying all that contradicts it. This makes PNC implicit in the hypothetical method. If PNC is intrinsically hypothetical then so too is the very method of hypothesis! That is, in hypothesizing PNC we are hypothesizing the very ability to hypothesize. The two, PNC and reasoning based on hypotheses, are intertwined. A study of PNC is a study of the hypothetical method itself and an inquiry into this particular hypothesis is one that takes account of hypothetical knowledge in general. Thus, in seeking some sort of a ground for PNC we are seeking a ground for hypothetical knowing itself.[13] It is no secret what Plato takes this ground to be, though to make sense of how it works is no small endeavor. Hypothetical knowledge is *dianoia*; it is grounded in *nous*.

Thus, in one sense at least, any inquiry into PNC is an inquiry into the relationship between *dianoia* and *nous*. It examines the relationship by investigating the relationship in conjunction with this particular hypothesis; one that is not really particular at all. It is clear that Plato thinks *nous* somehow grounds *dianoia*. Hence, for Plato, asking after the justification of PNC is asking after this somehow. PNC is not actually a first principle for Plato. His first principle is form or whatever the object of *nous* is. This would seem to leave us exactly where we started, only in

[12] The divided line passage uses *homologein* where Socrates uses *sumphonein* in the *Phaedo. Dianioa* begins with a *hupothesis* and ends in a *homologein.* (510c9-d2) On the other hand, the musical, perhaps Pythagorean, language of the *Phaedo* passage actually fits quite well with the *Republic*. The just soul, the one which is not contradictory, is made to be one out of many and is moderate and harmonized (*hermosmenon*). (443e2) Moderation, also a proper relating of the potentially contradictory parts of the soul, is described in musical terms as the "singing the same song together" (*sunaidontas*) of the three parts. (432a4)

[13] So too, in a more complicated way perhaps, in the *Parmenides* the method of hypothesis involves hypothesizing both that something is the case and that the same thing is not the case and examining the consequences for both on either assumption. (see: *Parm.* 135e8-136c2) There the method is necessary, according to Parmenides, as a "preliminary training" for understanding the separation of forms (*Parm.* 135d1-2) and for not letting the truth "escape." (*Parm.* 135d8)

relation to form rather than in relation to PNC. However, we actually have a clue. If we can figure out how to ground PNC, how the principle is even possible in fact, we will be figuring out something about form. Part of what we will find is that form is a first principle of a different sort than we are perhaps accustomed to. Form is not simply a principle of thought, it is a principle of being. We might expect the same to be the case for PNC. If the hypothetical nature of PNC, a point underappreciated if not entirely overlooked by the literature, allows for a radical reformulation of the problem of justification, this reformulation can only be appreciated fully in conjunction with another underappreciated—at least among modern interpreters— aspect of Plato's account. This is the connection between knowledge and being in Platonic philosophy. Along with the distinction between *nous* and *dianoia* is a parallel distinction between their objects; just as *nous* is more powerful or clear than *dianoia*, so too the objects of *nous* are more real than the objects of *dianoia*.

Aristotle suggests that we cannot be mistaken about PNC. (*Meta.* 1005b24) When Socrates describes *dianoia* in the divided line he makes a point of mentioning that, "the soul is *forced* to make use of presuppositions" (511a5, italics added). The connection to force and that to the soul are crucial. An enabling fact with respect to knowledge for Aristotle, that this principle is one that we cannot be mistaken about, is actually a major problem for Plato. This principle, PNC, is one that we cannot help but assume in our thinking. Yet, it is one that does not help us, in fact stands in the way for us, in our attempt to understand the highest realities. We can't use PNC to examine form. If it is the case that we can't avoid using the principle, then it would seem that we can't get away from *dianoetic* knowing; we can't *not* use a principle that we don't understand the justification for. What we can do is use it to understand that we can't use it to understand

form. That is, PNC, or *dianoia* in general, seems to be able to see this lack in itself.[14] In doing so, it allows us to get some small idea of form.

III. The Soul that Knows

Plato's strange disclaimer that the PNC is hypothetical is significant. So too is the way in which Socrates formulates and applies the principle. His formulation is as follows:

δηλον ὅτι ταὐτὸν τἀναντία ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν κατὰ ταὐτόν γε καὶ πρὸς ταὐτὸν οὐκ ἐθελήσει ἅμα, ὥστε ἄν που εὑρίσκωμεν ἐν αὐτοῖς ταῦτα γιγνόμενα, εἰσόμεθα ὅτι οὐ ταὐτὸν ἦν ἀλλὰ πλείω.

It is clear that the same [thing] will not be willing to do or suffer opposites with the same [part] and towards the same [thing] simultaneously. Such that, if we should ever find these same [things] occurring in ourselves [lit: in the sames], we will know that we are not dealing with the same [thing] but with a plurality. (*Rep.* 436b-c, my translation)

Probably the most striking aspect of the Socratic formulation of PNC is the overuse of the word *autos*, "same." The word is used six times in Socrates' formulation of PNC. At least the last three uses are awkward in a way that is somewhat striking.[15] The last time *autos* is used it is

[14] See: Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought*, 69-79. Klein argues that the role of *dianoia* consists entirely in the uncovering of contradictions. He does so, apparently, without noticing, or at least without mentioning, the peculiar hypothesis in question here.

[15] An adjective with an article is normal in Greek. "The red" could refer to something that is red or it could refer to redness itself. The latter use is common in Plato. It is the way he refers to the forms of the good, the just and the beautiful. The following is one hopelessly literal translation of the passage: "It is clear that the same will not be willing to do or undergo opposites, according to the same and with respect to the same, together; such that, if we should find the sames happening in sames, we will see that it is not the case that the same is but rather a plurality." The fact that the passage is in indirect discourse makes identifying a definite subject even more difficult. Is it giving Plato too much credit to wonder if he is not making the finding of a subject that is not "the same" a problem because it mirrors the problem of identifying a unity that stays the same in a thing that is contradictory?

explicitly opposed to plurality. Socrates seems to be suggesting that a thing that is not the *same* as itself, a thing that is contradictory, is not *one* thing. This makes sameness a type of unity, or so Socrates seems to be implying. Being contradictory, on the other hand, results in the splitting of the thing into a plurality. The claim that Plato takes sameness to be a type of unity is suggested by the wording and use of the principle in the argument in question as well as by the account as a whole.[16] In fact, seeing the importance of this concept, that of sameness, will, among other things, help us to link this issue with that of the distinction between forms and sensibles. Socrates bases the distinction on the fact that the former are consistent, are what they are, while the latter are contradictory. I will argue, in chapter three of this dissertation, that sensible things, which are imitations of form, are not the same as themselves.

Not surprisingly, the phrasing of the principle suggests that there is no such thing as a contradiction. Either we have some one thing that is the same as itself and consistent or we have a multiplicity of things that are disconnected. That is, a plurality alone does not give us a contradiction. Two different things that are doing or undergoing opposites at the same time is not a contradiction. It is simply two different things behaving differently. A contradiction, as Socrates' phrasing indicates, would be for the *same* thing to do or undergo opposites at the same time and in the same way and so on. To have a contradiction would be to have the sameness and the multiplicity together and this, it seems, is what the principle excludes. Without both the unity (the sameness) and the multiplicity there is no contradiction and the gist of asserting the principle is to claim that there is no such thing. Of course, in Plato's case this claim is only

[16] The second statement of the principle, like the first an application to soul, presents itself as a restatement: "Didn't we say that it's impossible for the same [thing] to have opposite *opinions* about the sames [same things] simultaneously?" (602e8, my translation with italics added) And again: "With opposite tendencies arising together in the man towards the same [thing], we say that it is necessary there be two sames [same things?]." (604b2, my translation) Note: this last use of *autos* is in the dual which forbids translating the passage as something like "two which are the same." The critical apparatus suggests change to the dative singular or nom/acc singular. Anything, apparently, seems preferable to the dual.

hypothetical. At any rate, according to the principle either we have a consistent unity that is one and the same or we have what appears to be a unity but, upon further investigation, is seen to be a multiplicity and not a unity at all. A group of distinct things that are a plurality is not a contradiction; it is a group of different things. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to even conceive of what a contradictory thing would be or be like. This itself might be taken as evidence of the truth of the principle. Yet, it could also be taken as evidence of the deficiency of our knowing; we are unable to look beyond a principle that we cannot justify. Plato helps us avoid this dilemma, for now,[17] by giving an example. His example is that of a thirsty person not drinking. That is, his example is the soul, the very thing to which PNC is applied.

When PNC is finally stated, in book IV, it is stated as a premise in the argument which divides the soul into parts; specifically a rational part over and above an appetitive, or desiring, part. Socrates divides the soul by analyzing the apparently mundane example of a thirsty person who, for whatever reason, refrains from drinking. Since it is the appetite for drink, thirst, that is impelling the person towards drinking and the same thing cannot impel someone towards something else while also simultaneously repelling that person from it (at least not in the same way and with the same part of himself) Socrates and Glaucon conclude that there must be some other part of the soul, over and above the thirsting part, that is responsible for the repulsion. They conclude that this other part is the rational part of the soul. (439d1)

The very success of this strange argument raises a problem that is more fundamental than any of those concerning its validity or soundness.[18] The problem is the problem of the unity and sameness of the soul. Once we have established that the soul has parts, that, as the language in which PNC is phrased suggests, the soul is a plurality, we are left with the question of what it is

[17] Ultimately, Plato, unlike Aristotle, will choose the latter horn.
[18] The argument will be discussed in some detail in chapter 2.

that unifies these parts into *one* soul. What is the unifying principle of the soul that allows all the parts to belong to the *same* soul?[19] That is, once we have divided the soul into parts, what is it that accounts for the soul's unity? What is the *thing* to which PNC is being applied that we are concluding is a plurality?

The problem, to be clear, is not whether or not there is a principle of unity. In fact there must be a unity to the soul for us even to arrive at the sort of conflict that leads to the soul's partition. Again, if we simply had two separate parts without a unifying principle, whether they are thirst and reason or anything else, and one of these parts is drawn to drink while the other is repelled, one part would pursue the drink while the other did not. This would not result in a contradiction. As we have already noticed, it would result in two distinct things moving in opposite directions. In other words, the existence of a conflict in the soul of the sort that Plato is noticing proves, in addition to the explicit conclusion that the soul is a *plethos*, that the soul we are dealing with is one soul. Or rather, the argument does not so much prove the unity of the soul as show itself to be assuming it. The fact that we have a contradiction at all is a sign that there is some *one* thing that, while remaining the same, has conflicting parts. The argument that the soul is a plurality necessarily assumes that it is also a unity; it is *one* plurality. What is the one thing that has parts? Even more puzzlingly, how it could unify these apparently conflicting parts without itself becoming contradictory. If, that is, the principle of unity of the soul is somehow present in the thirsting as well as in the reasoning parts, as it would have to be to keep them united, then *it* is both pursuing and avoiding drink. It seems that Plato has to say that the application of PNC to soul requires the existence of a unity in the soul that cannot be destroyed by, broken apart by or

[19] This question is overlooked by almost all the literature on *Republic*. A significant exception is Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, 6. Although he does not emphasize the problem of unity, Roochnik also sees the reason for the limitedness of the tripartite account of the soul in the argument's unquestioned allegiance to PNC (or, as he calls the principle, PNO).

understood through contradiction. He has to say this because it is this unity itself that is actually embodying the contradiction. It is this principle of unity that appears to be contradictory but cannot be.

This problem is implicit in the division of the soul. Soul (at least *embodied* soul) is the principle of unity of the body. Once we undermine *its* unity, as exposing it as contradictory would do, we are left seeking a principle of unity for the soul. Aristotle makes an analogous argument against the division of the soul in *On the Soul*. If we divide the soul we are left in the bizarre predicament of seeking a soul for the soul.[20] Of course we might think that Plato's account is fundamentally different from that of Aristotle's. There is some truth to this. Plato does have a principle of unity for the soul: Justice; the issue of the unity of the soul connects PNC to the overarching issue of the text. Yet, simply calling this principle justice doesn't solve the problem. Justice, the unity of the parts, would have to be in all the parts.[21] This would make it be both pursuing and avoiding drink. In other words, the principle of unity and sameness of the soul would be the only part that was contradictory. This would make the unity itself a plurality and we would be left seeking a principle of unity for our principle of unity.

It will also not do us any good to say that justice is not there in the soul in which reason and appetite are opposed. Although there is perhaps some truth to this as well it does nothing to explain why it is that the soul that is unjust is still one soul. Again, a soul with a conflict is still a *something*. There is an "it" that is unjust or is in conflict with itself. Injustice assumes the existence of a unity, of justice. This is explicit in the text. Socrates claims in book I that justice

[20]The passage begins evocatively enough: "Now some people say that [the soul] has parts, and thinks by means of one part but desires by means of another." (*On the Soul* 411b5*ff*) Of course, Aristotle also speaks about rational and non-rational sides of the soul in the *Ethics.* However, he makes it clear that the division is one that is made for the sake of an inquiry into ethics and not one that should be taken to reflect the nature of the soul itself. (*Nic. Eth.* 1102a20-1102a31)

[21] Justice, like moderation, is in all the parts of both the state and the soul.

is what allows for the possibility of injustice.[22] He will claim this again in book X when he argues that the soul is immortal. There the argument depends entirely on the assertion that the soul has a unity that cannot be dissolved by injustice.[23] This, again, seems to be exactly what is being assumed in the book IV passage in question. The unity of the soul is somehow beyond the contradiction between the parts. The *dianoetic* argument with which the soul is divided, an argument based on the hypothesizing of the PNC, both presupposes and fails to understand the unity of the soul that makes the division, and the argument itself, possible.[24] It seems we must conclude that the applicability of PNC to the soul, to any one thing, requires the attributing of some inherent unity to that thing; a unity that cannot be destroyed by contradiction. What this unity is seems to be impossible to say. At least, it cannot be understood using PNC.

This problem fits exactly with the problem of *dianoia*. *Dianoia*, as we have noted, is not a complete knowing. We should expect it to fall short in some way. The fact that it does so in a way that presupposes some sort of unity that it itself cannot comprehend is interesting and promising with respect to an attempt to understand the relationship between *dianoia* and *nous*. This seems to indicate that we are on the right track in locating the "justification" (whatever that term could mean) of PNC in *nous* or in the object of *nous*. In other words: looking at Plato's account of the soul's division runs us into the same problem we noticed before in seeing that PNC is the primary principle of *dianoia*- that the principle requires something beyond itself. We have now gotten more information about what this something is- it is the principle of unity.

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[22] This is the central premise of the elegant "band of thieves" argument from book I. (351a-352a) Justice is more powerful than injustice because even injustice is powerless without justice. This argument will be discussed in some detail in chapter 4.

[23] 608c-611a. The immortality argument will be discussed in chapter 4.

[24] All of this is only an issue in so far as it is in fact possible for the soul to be thirsty and not to drink. This is an entirely empirical claim. We should be suspicious of it. Or, to put this in a way that will foreshadow what I take Plato's account to be, the soul is only divisible within the realm of the empirical or sensible. On its own it is just the unity.

What this unity is, what the oneness of the soul amounts to, cannot be comprehended *dianoetically* although *dianoia* does reveal to us that it is there.

It seems that PNC applies to unity but only in so far as it is a plurality or to a plurality only in so far as it is a unity. When we try to grasp plurality in so far as it is plurality, it disappears before our eyes; we cannot apply PNC to it because there is no "it" to apply to. If we try to grasp unity in so far as it is unity we have a different problem. We have just seen this in relation to the soul. There must be some unity there but we cannot grasp it using PNC. In fact, when we try to do so we end up asserting a contradiction. The soul, as one soul, does indeed seem to be pursuing and avoiding drink at the same time. Yet, this unity must be there. The application of PNC shows itself to be presupposing it. The unity that grounds the application of PNC is one that is beyond *dianoetic* reasoning.

Thus the connection between PNC and the soul proves to be as significant as, and harmonious with, that between PNC and *dianoia*. I suggest that soul, at least embodied and divided soul, is both paradigmatic and unique as an object of the principle. It is *the* paradigmatic case in the *Republic* of a unity that remains itself even within plurality, of a whole composed of parts. This is why Socrates emphasizes in relation to this very entity, the divided soul, that the account we are getting is hypothetical. (437a5) Nowhere else in the text is this disclaimer made as conspicuously. The soul is unique as an object of *dianoia*, perhaps even as something that is more than an object of *dianoia*, because the order that it has it has in relation to itself. That is, whereas other objects of dianoetic reasoning are ordered around a principle that is external to them, the soul is ordered around itself; the soul has an internal principle of order. This principle of order is the end or work of the ordered whole. The soul, on this account, has an internal end. I will argue that this internal end is the rational part of the soul. I suggest that this unity is that of

form which remains *the same as itself* even in the embodied soul.[25] If, as I will argue in the next chapter, this rational part, as the ruling part, aids in or is essential to the ordering of the soul, we have this same point of distinction between soul and other *dianoetic* wholes repeated in another way. The soul has the principle of unity around which it is ordered within itself.

Once we see that this internal principle is associated with the rational part of the soul we can also see how and why it is that the soul is able to pick out unities in the world; this although, as chapter three will argue, there are no actual unities in the world. The rational part of the soul not only makes the application of PNC to the soul possible, it also enables the soul to hypothesize other forms in material; it is able, perhaps even compelled, to see unities in the world. We are able to identify "things" everywhere we look. These things appear to us to be one way and not the opposite, to have unity and self-sameness, and to have identifiable forms. This, as chapter four will argue, says as much about us as it does about these entities. In the *Republic* the entities explicitly identified as "posited" are the alleged forms of artifacts.[26] (596a4-6) We hypothesize, or *thesize*, a form for each artifact that corresponds to some whole that *we* want or need to isolate as one thing. These are forms that we identify as "things." The fact that they are posited brands them as objects of *dianoia* and not objects of *nous*. This textual sign reveals an important philosophical distinction. These entities are not "themselves by themselves." Indeed, Socrates

[25] The argument that reason, or the rational part, is the principle of unity of the soul is complicated. The argument will begin in chapter two by noticing that reason is connected to all the desiring parts of the soul in a way that they are not connected to one another and that the other parts just *are* reason, albeit in a limited way. This makes reason in some sense the *whole* of the soul. The argument will be completed in chapter four culminating in the argument for the immortality of the soul. There it will appear to be more true to say that the rational part is a simple unity and not a whole.

[26] The forms of pruning knives, tables, beds, bridles and rudders are never unequivocally affirmed in any of the dialogues. Forms of artifacts are never mentioned in the *Phaedo, Symposium* or *Phaedrus*. Socrates expresses serious doubt about the existence of natural substantial forms such as "human being" and "fire" in the *Parmenides*. (*Parm*. 130c1-3) The possibility of a form of table or bed is not even considered. In the *Timaeus*, where these *natural* substantial forms are mythologized, the same thing happens to them as we will see happening to artifacts in the *Republic*: these "forms" pass into one another, a sure sign that they are not forms in the proper sense, and reduce to soul.

never uses the *auto kath hauto* formulation, the formulation with which he distinguishes forms, in reference to these alleged forms. This is because they are, as we will see, essentially relational. What makes an artifact one, the artifact's principle of unity, is outside of the artifact. This is the end that the artifact serves.[27] Ultimately, I will argue, that which they are for the sake of, in relation to and understood through is the soul. Soul's uniqueness as an object of *dianoetic* reasoning is that it can be understood in and through itself; it is, in some sense, *auto kath hauto*; it has an internal form. As both the account of artifacts and the identification of form with the good suggest, this is as much as to say that the soul is an end in itself. Thus, the account of artifacts actually supports the account I will be offering of the soul.

At any rate, the soul stands in an interesting dual relationship to PNC and to the hypothetical method in general, at least in so far as they are used to understand the soul as they are in the *Republic*. In an inquiry into soul, soul is both the object being inquired into and the subject conducting the inquiry. This is significant in the PNC passage, the passage with which the direct inquiry into soul begins. Not only is the soul being hypothesized about, it is also the thing doing the hypothesizing. This is the uniqueness of soul as an object. In relation to the soul, we can ask about what it means for the principle to be applied to the soul and we can also ask what it means for the principle to be applied by the soul. In both cases, giving an answer will depend upon understanding the unity of the soul.

IV. Thinking and Being

Knowledge itself becomes the focus of the inquiry towards the end of book V in the so-called "argument from opposites." The argument is controversial. At least part of the reason for the

[27] Thus Socrates, speaking of these "forms" in an interesting and significant passage in book X, makes the claim that the user, the one who knows, rules the maker. (602a1)

controversy is that Plato's conception of knowledge is foreign to us in many ways. We think of knowledge, especially issues surrounding the justification of first principles, primarily in terms of **certainty**. For us, the issue of a starting point or a first principle amounts to the discovery of something that is certain and beyond doubt and can therefore ground the certainty of all that follows from it. Thus the imperative with respect to the PNC is for an abstract universal justification that is demonstrably true on its own outside of and prior to any connection to that to which the principle is to apply. If, as follows from what we have noticed already, straight forward, abstract justification is impossible in this case, the ability to circumvent the need for it, or at least transform it in some significant way, is itself a major motivation for taking Plato's view seriously. Plato's account doesn't require justification in any straightforward sense and actually seems to rail against it in the abstract, universal way in which it is usually put forward.

Whereas we see knowledge as concerned primarily with questions of certainty, for Plato, for any Ancient philosopher in fact, knowledge is primarily concerned with **being**.[28] The connection between knowing and being can be understood in two related ways. The first is that knowledge is always *of* being, while nonbeing is not in any way knowable. Thus, Socrates' assertion in the "argument from opposites" that the one who knows, knows something that "is," is an assertion that is natural to him and to his interlocutors in a way that it is not to us.[29] The second way in which knowledge is concerned with being is that knowing is itself a state of being; it is the highest state of being of the soul. Knowing, for Plato, is never as concerned with the possession

[28] This is not an unequivocal claim that certainty is not a criterion of knowing only that it is not the primary criterion. Rather, it follows from the connection between knowing and being. Just as real being is unchanging, so too the knowledge that is set over it has a dependable character that we could refer to as certain. Thus, certainty as a criterion of knowing follows from the connection between knowing and being. (Knowing as a state of being would likewise be more "certain" in proportion to the degree of immutability of the state.)

[29] 477a *ff.* There is debate about the nature of the "what is" in this assertion. I will consider the debate and the assertion in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation. The connection between knowing and being assumed in this passage, as well as the parallel degrees of both, is far from anomalous. Other equally important examples: *Republic* 509d-511e (the divided line), *Timaeus* 29b-d (the "likely story"), *Parmenides* 133a-135b (separation argument), *et al*.

of some information as with the knower's soul coming to possess a certain state of character. This aspect of Plato's account pervades the *Republic*. It is one of its central themes in fact. At any rate, the two connections between knowing and being ultimately coincide in what is the highest form of both knowing and being. This is the good itself. There is good reason to take the good as some sort of self-knowing. Much of the motivation for thinking so comes from the sun image. Just as the sun is responsible for both the being visible of the visible thing and the seeing of the eye, the most "sunlike" of the senses (508b3), so too the good is responsible for both the being of things and the knowing of the knower. That the good is the *cause* of both knowing and being would suggest that it has both of these qualities to a higher degree, and perhaps in an entirely different way,[30] than the things it causes to have them. The book V passage and the divided line both appear to offer an account on which degrees of truth reflect and run parallel to degrees of reality. I am suggesting that the lines are not so much parallel as convergent, meeting, in a way that is not fully intelligible to us, at the top in *nous* and form. That is, the very relationship itself between knowledge, or apprehension in general, and the being that is its object transforms as the knowledge or apprehension gets more powerful and this transformation is itself an important part of the account. Whereas sensation and opinion, for example, depend upon a strong distinction between power and object,[31] knowledge, in the highest sense, overcomes the distinction. You actually can't have an opinion about your "self" any more than you can see yourself. The self is not the body but the soul. It can only be truly apprehended by a knowledge that is made possible by the soul simultaneously becoming both

[30] The good, though the cause of both being and being known, is itself beyond being. (509b5-9)
[31] You actually can't have an opinion about your*self* any more than you can see yourself. The self is the soul and is only properly apprehended by reason.

knowing and knowable. This state of character, the being of the soul, is justice.[32] Justice, it seems, is the soul's principle of unity. When, in chapter two, we see how closely connected to the rational part this unity is, the question of their connection will become central.

This aspect of the account is perhaps why the good has seemed to some, to the Neoplatonists for example, to be thought thinking itself. Yet, a thought that thinks itself is not intelligible to us and Plato never refers to the good as such; for good reason. Doing so is thinking of it *dianoetically*. It results, for our thinking, in an apparent contradiction. A thought that thinks nothing but itself is empty; it is not a thought in any normal sense. Similarly, the sun is only an *image* of the good. The sun, a physical thing, is not capable of the reflexivity required to be an eye seeing itself. In fact nothing is. This is an essential aspect of what I take Plato's account to be: the lower forms of comprehension are not capable of the reflexivity of the higher forms.

From this perspective as well the soul stands at an interesting point in the account. Although the soul is a self-knower this self knowledge is limited and the way in which the soul knows itself takes on a decidedly negative character. The soul has a sort of self-knowing that separates it from inanimate things and even, perhaps, the non-rational animals. Yet, the self-knowledge of the soul, at least the embodied soul, is always something of a beyond. Just as we have already seen in outline here that the divided soul depends upon an abiding unity, so too does the understanding of that division, hypothetical as it is, depend upon an understanding of unity that cannot be comprehended in the same terms as the division and, as this dissertation will argue, the very internal principle of intelligibility and of unity that is presupposed by the division is also the principle through which the soul knows. This unity is responsible for the being of the soul, as we have seen (in outline at least), by allowing the soul to remain *one* soul. In addition, this unity is

[32] That knowledge is synonymous with virtue is perhaps more obvious in the early dialogues. I hope to show that it is equally important in the *Republic*.

responsible for the soul's ability to know.[33] In both cases the unity in question is form; a form that is internal to the soul in a way that it is not internal to other things. Knowing, like being, is the knower's coming to embody some form.

Of course, I cannot argue for this account of the good here. In fact, since it is not *dianoetic* in nature, it can't be argued for in any normal sense at all. The argument for this interpretation is based largely on the way it solves problems in the text as a whole- specifically those associated with the unity of the soul and the PNC. Most significant for the current train of thought is that this account gives the soul an internal end; one, moreover, that is to be connected to the rational part of the soul. In fact, the end is the rational part of the soul. The soul, properly speaking, is ordered around its own self knowing. This aspect of the account will come out repeatedly throughout this dissertation as it does, I suggest, throughout the *Republic*. Reason *is* the good of the soul. As such, it is set over itself. As the account as a whole will argue—especially the accounts of the soul in chapters two and four—its taking itself as an end makes the soul more like form than sensible things. It makes the soul more like the good.

Ultimately, I will argue that justice is the stand in term for the order of the soul and reason, or thinking, is the end. This means that for the soul to *be* fully, the two would have to be the same. This is not possible in the embodied soul, in the soul that is divided by desires. However, the impossibility itself is, in Plato's hands, a positive aspect of the account. It provides a sort of secondary internal end. As the soul becomes more just and more ordered, as the desires cease to oppose reason as much as this is possible, the distinction between the reasoning part and the order of the other parts is lessened. As such, the contradiction between order and end, a

[33] The "Theory of Recollection," in both the *Meno* (81e-86c) and the *Phaedo* (73c-76d), identifies this same unity with the immortal soul. The *Republic* expands on the views of those two dialogues by trying to comprehend how this immortal unity of the soul connects with the mortal plurality of the body. It does so by becoming many while remaining one.

contradiction which makes the soul less than an end in itself, is overcome. That is, for the embodied soul, forced as it is to relate to a world outside itself, this ideal of self-knowing is always a beyond; a beyond that we must grant is there in some way, as it makes our ordinary comprehension possible, even though it itself escapes our comprehension. Yet, this turning outward, worsened in proportion to the strength of the desires, is both a disorder and an unintelligibility in the soul as well as an impediment to knowing on the part of the soul, and these to just the same degree. Thus, as the soul becomes more just and thereby more ordered, consistent and knowable, at the same time it also becomes more able to know. Both result from the same unity. This is the position that I will ultimately argue for in chapter four of this dissertation.

V. Transition

The PNC stands at an interesting point metaphysically. The principle, it seems, applies to ordered *wholes*. These are particular types of unities. They are not, however, pure or independent unities. Wholeness, like PNC, requires an external principle of unity. The order of a particular whole is dependent on the end or good that the whole is ordered around. For most ordered wholes, perhaps all save one, this end or good is external. It is perhaps only the soul that has this good in itself; the soul takes an internal end. This makes soul a fundamentally different kind of entity than other ordered wholes, one that has its principle of unity in itself. I will argue that this internal end, the principle of unity of the soul, is reason itself. When Socrates claims that justice, or the just state, depends upon philosophy, or the rule of the philosopher[34] he has this very idea in mind. Justice, each part doing its part, is the ordered unity of the parts of the state.

[34] The claim that the just state is only possible if philosophy and ruling coincide is what motivates the "argument from opposites." (473d1-e2)

This unity is only possible, the state can only come into being, if the philosopher provide the state with an internal end. The philosopher king *is* the end of the just state. This part, the ruling part, is the unity of the state and of the soul in a more fundamental way than even the unity of all the parts together.

Although this chapter is an overview, even in outline it is clear that an inquiry into PNC is in some sense an inquiry into knowledge itself. Certainly it is an inquiry into *our* knowledge. It is also, as its actual application in the text suggests, an inquiry into the soul of the knower. The problem of the unity of the soul underlies the inquiry into the PNC in every way. Soul, at least the embodied rational soul, is the paradigmatic case of a unity in a plurality or a form in a matter. This unity is essential for the application of PNC *to* the soul as well as for its application *by* the soul. As the ground of both, this internal unity or form is the principle of both the knowing and the being of the soul.

Lastly, this account allows for a sort of "justification" of PNC, although it is clear at this point how inadequate this word is, with all its modern baggage, to describe what Plato is trying to do. In relation to artifacts, the justification involves seeing the appropriateness of a hypothetical principle as applied to certain entities. More significantly, in relation to the soul, the justification involves seeing that the unity of soul which transcends the principle is what makes the hypothesizing of PNC possible in the first place. Thus, the internal principle of unity of the soul underlies questions of justification, use and scope of the principle.

CHAPTER TWO

"And what about this? Isn't it clear that many people would choose the things that seem to be just and beautiful, and even when they aren't, would still do them, possess them, and have the seeming, though no one is content to posses what seems good, but people seek the things that *are* good, and in that case everyone has contempt for the seeming?"

"Very much so," he said.

"So this is exactly what every soul pursues, for the sake of which it does everything, having a sense that it's something but at a loss and unable to get an adequate grasp of what it is, or even have the reliable sort of trust it has about other things; because of this it misses out even on any benefit there may have been in the other things." (505d4-e7)

I. Overview

Socrates argues that the soul is a plurality in *Republic* IV. Although the subject of the soul's division has received some scholarly attention,[35] a major overarching problem has been neglected. The problem is that once we divide the soul, once we determine that the soul is a plurality, we need a way of understanding what it is that makes the soul remain *one* soul. If the soul is not itself a unity, what is it that unifies the soul?

The particular arguments with which Socrates argues that the soul is many hinge on the possibility of conflict within the soul. Briefly, the same one thing cannot both pursue and avoid the same object at the same time with the same part of itself. The soul does sometimes pursue and avoid the same object at the same time, or so it seems. Socrates illustrates this point with the

[35] See, for example: Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, chap. 5; Bobonitch, "Akrasia and Agency," 3–36; Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation," 3-21; Ferrari, "The Three-Part Soul," 165-201; Kahn, "Plato's Theory of Desire," 77-103; Lorenz, "Desire and Reason," 83-116; *et al*.

example of a thirsty person who chooses to refrain from drinking. Since one thing cannot pursue and avoid the same object at the same time with the same part of itself, the soul must have at least two parts. Therefore, the soul is a plurality. The structure of the argument is relatively straightforward. We have some thing, the soul, which is able to be in conflict with itself. This conflict cannot result entirely from one thing as that would violate the Principle of Non-Contradiction. Thus, we must conclude that the "thing" in question is a plurality. However, although the argument concludes that the soul is a plurality, it can only do so, I suggest, by simultaneously assuming that the soul is a unity. The very fact that there is a conflict at all must mean that there are two connected things, things that in some way belong to the *same* one thing, that are in opposition. If we simply had one thing pursuing an object and something else avoiding the same object and the two were in no way connected, the one would go towards the object and the other would go away from it. This would not result in a conflict. Thus, the very same conflict that compels us to conclude that the soul is a plurality also assumes that the soul remains one soul.

The claim that the soul is a unity may perhaps seem to us too obvious to be doubted. There must, after all, be some unity, some *thing*, under investigation if we are even to have something to which to apply the PNC; in this case, there must be one soul that is being divided. I am not suggesting that we doubt the unity of the soul; just the opposite in fact. It seems to me that the very argument for the division of the soul illustrates that even the alternative, the claim that the soul is a plurality, presupposes the soul's unity; even as a plurality the soul is still *one* plurality. This leaves the fact of the soul's unity in some sense beyond question. If the soul *is* at all, it is a unity of some sort. What is not beyond question, what is, I believe, very much in question, is *how* a soul composed of parts which are able to oppose one another could be understood to

remain one soul. In essence, the problem is that this oneness, whatever it is, is able to oppose itself. In order for the soul to remain a single unit it must necessarily be present in all of its parts. This entails that it stand on both sides of any conflict. If it did not, then we would not have a single thing in conflict with itself. Rather, we would have two disconnected things moving towards opposites. This would not result in a conflict. Thus, we have an impasse. If we do not allow the soul, as a unit, to admit of a contradiction by being present on both sides of the conflict, we lose the connection between the two parts. Yet without the connection there is not even the possibility of a conflict. On the other hand, if the very thing in the soul that makes it one soul is on both sides of the conflict, this oneness itself will indeed be pursuing and avoiding the same object. If this is the case, the very aspect of the soul which makes it one soul, the aspect of the soul in or by which the parts are united, will be the aspect that is contradictory. Yet, according to the very principle of division in question (PNC), that which is contradictory is a plurality. Thus, the very principle of unity of the soul will be a plurality and we would be led to seek a principle of unity for it.

Socrates is aware that his division of the soul is problematic. In the text he refers to a "longer and more rigorous road" through this very issue. (435d) In addition, as emphasized in the introduction, the principle of division (that of contradiction) and all that follows from it are *explicitly* hypothetical in the text. In other words, the division of the soul is hypothetical.[36] The fact that the Principle of Non-Contradiction is an explicit premise is interesting; that it is hypothetical still more so. Perhaps the hypothesis can be justified and the argument can be made to stand unhypothetically. Socrates, however, makes no such suggestion. I suggest that Socrates

[36] Again, a comparison between this passage and the divided line passage from the end of book VI locates the divided soul as an object of *dianoia*, the lower type of knowledge, and not of *nous,* the higher type. This follows from the fact that Socrates distinguishes the two types of knowledge by the way they relate to hypotheses. *Dianoia* is based on or follows from hypotheses, while *nous* is beyond hypotheses. (510b-511e)

has reason to insist that the principle is hypothetical. On my interpretation taking the principle as actually hypothetical tells us something significant about the soul. Specifically, it leaves open the possibility that there is a deeper way of understanding the soul. This way of thinking about the soul, one that is not hypothetical or *dianoetic*, would not necessarily see the soul as divided. In fact, there is reason to think that this way of understanding the soul would see it as fundamentally unified. We have already seen some of the argument for this in the previous chapter. We will see more in what follows. Essentially, the argument involves seeing how the unity of the soul is presupposed by its division.

This chapter will examine the first division of the soul in *Republic* IV into rational and desiderative parts. My account will have something to say about the spirited part as well. I have left this for the end of the chapter. As in the introductory chapter, I will focus on the problem of the unity of the soul implied by the success of any such division. This examination will go further than the introduction by looking at the details of the argument and the natures of these two parts. In addition to the problem of the soul's unity what is essential in these passages, I suggest, is what we are learning about reason and desire from the way they are used in the argument. If we go into the investigation with preset ideas about what these "parts" are, we stand to misunderstand the passage. The question of what these parts are is very much up for grabs in the text at this point and is closely connected to the problem of unity.

The problem of the unity of the soul is not one that is emphasized in the current literature on Plato.[37] As far as I can tell, the default and generally unstated assumption in the literature is that the unity of the soul is obvious. Insofar as it is even questioned it is enough, it seems, to base the

[37] Christopher Bobonitch is an interesting counterexample. See: Bobonitch, "Akrasia and Agency," 11. Bobonitch phrases the problem in terms of agency. If each of the three parts is itself a separate agent, what is the agent that is choosing between the agents? He seems to see the problem as insoluble, at least in so far as the account in book IV is concerned.

soul's unity on that of the body. Thus, for example, Julia Annas claims that, "the Principle of Conflict [PNC] is used to show that despite our everyday assumption that a person is a unity (after all, he or she comes in a single body) none the less the facts of human behavior compel us to treat a person as containing more than one motivational source."[38] Annas is one of the few scholars who even hint that there may be a concern here. Yet, just noticing the problem should be enough to remind us that, for Plato at least, viewing the body as the source of unity for the soul is backwards. It is rather the soul that is the principle of unity of the body. The most emphatic and unequivocal statement of this is the third argument for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*.[39] The argument asserts, that it is the soul that is noncomposite, while the body is composite.[40] It is perhaps possible that Plato changed his mind on this central point. There is, however, no strong evidence that he did so. On the contrary, the argument for the soul's immortality in *Republic* X hinges entirely on the claim, made in similar language to that of the *Phaedo,* that the soul is fundamentally a unity that cannot be dissolved (*dialusein*). (609a5, c1) In fact, although the literature does not confront this issue directly, many of the problems dealt with in relation to the soul's division reflect the problem of unity. Scholars have focused on the ability of each part of the soul to motivate action and have seen each of these parts as agent like. Many of the concerns that arise from this picture revolve around how to understand the relationship between these mini-agents. The question of how they relate to one another is one such concern.[41] I suggest that this problem and others like it can all be subsumed under the larger problem of what to make of the agent itself. That is, what do we make of the whole soul?

[38] Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 137.
[39] *Phaedo* 78b2-81c4
[40] In language consistent with that of the *Republic*, the argument connects this unity to the soul's being the *same as itself* and *intelligible* while the body is multiform and unintelligible. In fact, this connection between self-sameness, intelligibility and unity is exactly what I am arguing that the *Republic* affirms.
[41] Bobonitch, "Akrasia and Agency," 16, asks the question in terms of agency. Each part seems to have its own. This actually allows him to notice the problem of unity. He seems to think that the problem is one that is beyond Plato, at least in the *Republic*.

If each part motivates action independently, what is it that motivates the decision of the whole soul to choose one motivation over another?[42] What is the motivation that decides between motivations? If there is such a thing, it will stand in a privileged relationship to the whole.

As we will see in the next chapter, sensible things, unlike the soul, lack just the sort of internal principle of unity in question. If our bodies are unities at all, it is as a result of being ensouled. This makes accounting for the unity of the soul itself essential. The soul is a unity in a much stronger sense than sensible things are. It is not one by simply being a heap or conglomeration of separate parts. It is fundamentally one. Yet, there is something intrinsically unintelligible about a soul, or anything else for that matter, in conflict with itself. Dividing "it" into parts only disguises the problem. What is the "it" being divided? In this case, the "it" is the soul as a whole. Yet, although Socrates divides the soul into three parts and discusses and labels each of the parts he says nothing about the whole. What is this whole? Is it something over and above the three parts? If so, what is it? Or is it perhaps the case that one of the parts includes and incorporates the others? This latter possibility is strongly implied much later in the *Republic* by the image of the so-called homunculus. (588c1-e3) This strange image suggests that it is the reasoning part of the soul, which in the image is the man within the man, that is somehow identical with the whole. In this chapter I will argue that the same identity is operating implicitly in the division in book IV.

[42] Contemporary scholars have tended to understand the relationship between reason and desires in Humean terms, even if often in contrast to Hume. For example, scholars have focused on the necessity of giving reason a way of independently motivating the soul as a way of making it more than a mere go between for the desires. In doing so, scholars have felt compelled to make reason desire like in some way, with its own set of concerns and motivations. Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation," is a prime example. Interestingly, reading the text in this way leaves Plato with the same problem as Hume- the absence of any way to account for the unity or identity of the person. If the reading I am proposing is correct it is not only of historical interest but is also valuable as an alternative account that can make sense of how it is that a person is in fact *one* person.

II. Towards the Principle

We might think that all the stuff about longer roads and hypothetical divisions is mere posturing on Plato's part. It's obvious to even a casual reader of the *Republic* that it is justice that holds the parts of the soul together. Justice, each person doing its own work without interfering with that of the others, (433a) is what allows for the unified functioning of the whole. In fact the arguments which divide the soul occur almost immediately after the justice of the city is identified.[43] Socrates states and restates the definition several times. The crux of it seems to be the "doing of what's properly one's own," provided this, "comes about in a certain way." (433b2-4) The certain way in question is, presumably, without meddling in what is properly someone else's. (see 433a9) Armed with this definition, Socrates plans to turn to the soul and look for the same form (*eidos*) of justice there.[44] (434d1) If the central analogy of the text is to hold, the just man and the just city should not differ with respect to their justice. Socrates does not seem entirely confident in the analogy. He mentions that if the justice of the individual and that of the city are the same, "it will turn out beautifully." If the justice of the individual turns out to be different, however, we will have to play the two definitions off of one another, "rubbing them together like sticks" so as to make "justice flame forth from them." (434e2-435a3) At any rate, from this desire to compare the justice of the state with that of the soul comes the attempt to locate the same three parts of the soul as were seen in the city. This requires the soul to be divided into three parts and, therefore, requires the argument in question. We might perhaps be led to conclude, therefore, that the division of the soul is safe precisely because we have a

[43] The group's hunt for justice ends with Socrates finding it "rolling around" at their feet, "the way people holding something in their hand sometimes look for the things they are holding." (432d7-e1) Apart from being something of a joke, the passage suggests that justice has been there all along as something that has been present, and perhaps active, since the beginning.

[44] The use of *eidos* is suspicious. Although the presence of the justice in question from the beginning would seem to suggest that it is some sort of form as it is necessary for the being of the thing that is just, the description of the justice in question as "rolling around" suggests that it is anything but a form. Forms don't roll around.

principle of unity: justice. This answer is fine as far as it goes, and I don't intend to disagree with it. The problem, again, is that it is not clear *how* justice unifies the parts of the soul or even *what* the single thing is that justice is unifying. It is not difficult to see why these same questions persist.

An outline of the answer to the "how" question can be found in the final passages of book I. There Socrates argues that the just person is happier than the unjust person. (352e-354c) Briefly, the argument begins with the claim that, for each thing that has a work, the *virtue* of that thing is what allows the thing to accomplish or complete its work in the best possible way; for example, a virtuous pruning knife is one that is able to prune vines well. Justice is the virtue of the soul. Thus, the just soul is the soul that is able to do its work well. Since the soul's work is living well and living well is being happy, the just person is the happy person. The argument rests on an analogy. The virtue of the pruning knife allows the knife to prune well and so the virtuous pruning knife is the knife most capable of accomplishing whatever end a pruning knife is meant to accomplish in the best possible way. So too justice, the soul's cardinal virtue, enables the soul live well, to accomplish its end in the best possible way. In other words justice, like any virtue of a thing, unifies the thing in relation to some *end*. In this important case the end is the good life.

It is, in one sense, quite easy to harmonize this picture of justice with its definition in the text which emphasizes the harmonious functioning of the parts of the thing that is just. The knife works well if all its parts are functioning properly in relation to one another. Conversely, if we want to get the parts of the knife to function harmoniously together we can do so in terms of the work that the whole is to be doing. A craftsman makes a pruning knife by organizing the parts of the knife in whatever way will allow for the pruning knife to accomplish its work in the best

possible way. The same holds true, it seems, with justice. To make the soul just we need only order the parts of the soul in whatever way will allow for living well. This is all simple enough except for one small problem: we don't actually know what living well means. In fact this or something like it is supposed to be what Socrates is famous for showing us that we *don't* know. Here, in his own argument he is leaving the notion empty.[45] What we are told in book IV, that being just entails following reason, the part with wisdom, (443e9) is incomplete. Why follow reason and not desire or spirit? And what, exactly, is reason telling us to do?

This last question is not as simple as it may seem. In fact, given the strictures imposed on Socrates by Glaucon's challenge, the challenge that motivates the discussion from books II on, it is unanswerable. Socrates has been tasked with arguing that justice is good, "itself by itself." (358d2) Socrates must argue that justice is choiceworthy even if stripped of any and all possible external rewards. If justice were an ordering in a way that is analogous to the ordering of other things, we would need it to be good for something *external*. This would make it instrumentally good. Socrates has agreed not to argue for the goodness of justice in this way. He doesn't do so. Instead, he tells us that the just action, the action done by the harmoniously functioning state, is the action that preserves and helps to complete the justice of the state and that *this* is what reason directs us to do. Socrates is following the plan he has laid out for himself but his account is about as informative as telling someone to make a pruning knife by ordering the parts in the way in which a pruning knife's parts are ordered.

To put this in another way, justice, the harmonious ordering of the parts of the soul, is not merely the means to living well. Rather, the order that is justice is the living well itself. Being just *is* what reason is telling us to do. I suggest that the obvious circularity of the account is an

[45] The account we get in books VIII and IX suggests that the different parts of the soul define living well differently. It is unclear how we unite all of them under one definition if they don't share one definition.

intentional and positive feature. Firstly because the conclusion that the end of being just is being just is exactly what Socrates has agreed to argue for, and secondly because, as we will see, the fact that the just soul has itself as an end is closely connected to the unity of the soul. The problem is that the account of justice thus far is not only circular but also empty. It will be no small argument in favor of my reading if it can fill in this circle and explain why it is that justice is good in itself- the central puzzle of the text. To fill it in we need to give content to reason's command; to understand how justice unifies the soul we need to understand reason. Doing so will require us to differentiate between reason and desire which is exactly what the first argument that divides the soul does. It is no small part of the equation that it is reason that is charged with filling in the content.

Before turning to the argument it is worth considering a certain interpretive stringency that has been brought up in the literature recently by interpreters sensitive to the text's more subtle "dramatic" aspects like David Roochnik and G. R. F. Ferrari.[46] The stringency rests on the observation that the *Republic* represents a conversation, albeit perhaps a fictionalized one. What follows from this observation is that we cannot bring forth as evidence things said later in the text as a way of understanding things that occur earlier. That is, just as one would not use a point that has not yet been made in a conversation with a friend to support a claim that one is making now, so too Plato would not presuppose our acceptance of something Socrates says in a later book of the *Republic* for the understanding of something being said in an earlier book.

I am, in spirit, entirely in agreement with this interpretive stringency. A not insignificant part of Plato's genius is his ability to use the dramatic settings and dialogical structure as a positive feature of his expression of philosophical ideas. If we ignore or misrepresent the setting or the structure we stand to obscure or contort the ideas being expressed. However, this stringency

[46] See, for example, Ferrari, "The Three-Part Soul," 166; and, Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, 17-19.

seems to me to motivate almost the exact opposite of what Roochnik and Ferrari suggest. A conversation, especially a philosophical conversation, should question its own earlier assumptions. In fact, this is the very direction a good philosophical conversation should take. In so far as the conversation is in fact philosophical, the interlocutors involved would be most interested in uncovering what, if anything, they are assuming in making their arguments. This is, it seems to me, one of the primary reasons that dialectic takes its name from a word meaning conversation and that Plato favors the dialogue form as a means for the expression of his philosophical ideas. Good philosophical discussions move towards first principles; at least, they can do so.[47]

Plato, as Aristotle tells us, was always careful to determine whether the argument was moving towards or away from principles.[48] There is at least a sense in which the *Republic* is quite clearly moving towards principles for most of the text. It should not be particularly controversial when we get to, or as close as possible to, the text's first principle. Nor should it be all that controversial what that principle is. The principle is the good, itself by itself. We reach it, or its most proximate offspring, towards the end of book VI. Thus, the passage in book IV is still very much a part of the ascent.

If this is the case we should expect that that the discussion of books II-IV (leaving aside V and VI for now) is backwards, or towards principles. I suggest that the discussion of the city and soul is not only backwards, it is backwardly *dianoetic.* By backwardly *dianoetic* I mean that the

[47] My sense is that Roochnik, at least, would agree with this point. He is most concerned with excluding interpretations that use later passages to explain earlier ones and then continue to insist on referring to the earlier ones as Plato's "doctrine." His primary concern is that interpreters do not "fail to ask what sort of book it is whose later stages contain material that supplements or improves upon earlier ones. (*Ibid*, 18) Roochnik's emphasis on the dialectical character of the text seems to me to demand the text move towards uncovering and examining its own assumptions. Thus, we should expect earlier passages to be explained by later ones in just the way I'm suggesting here.

[48] "For Plato rightly raised this question, and he used to inquire whether the road is from first principles or up to first principles, just as on a race course, the run is either from the judges to the boundary or back again." (*Nic. Eth.* 1095a3-b2) Which of the two came up with the excellent image of judges and boundaries is anyone's guess.

text at this point, though *dianoetic*, moves in the opposite direction from that in which *dianoia* is supposed to move. *Dianoia*, as we learn in the divided line, begins with a hypothesis and ends in agreement (*omologein*) with that hypothesis. (510d2) The operative hypothesis is the first principle of any *dianoetic* account in so far as it is *dianoetic*. Thus, the movement of *dianoia* described in the line passage is a movement down from principles. The discussion of the city, on the other hand, begins with an agreement and, only in book IV as we turn to the soul, reaches up to its hypothesis. The city was founded on the agreement (again *omologein*) that it is better for each person to practice only one job. (374a3) The hypothesis is PNC. Thus, the text is moving towards the first principle of the *dianoetic* account, which is found, it seems, in the discussion of soul and perhaps also in the soul itself.

At any rate, the more general point, that in fact it is the parts of the soul that explain the parts of the city and not vice versa, is made explicitly in the text. Socrates describes, somewhat ridiculously, the way in which the three parts of the city can be traced back to these same traits found in certain peoples. "Because," he says, "presumably they didn't get there from anywhere else." (435e2) Spiritedness, we are told, comes to be in cities from people like the Thracians and Scythians, love of money from the Phoenecians and Egyptians and love of learning from, "the region round about us." (435e3-436a3) Although the description is tongue in cheek, the point, if I am correct, is significant and supports, in a typically lighthearted way, the important structural feature of the text just mentioned namely, that in turning from the discussion of the city to that of the soul we are moving towards principles. It is no small benefit to this interpretation if it can explain why this must be the case.[49] If we are in fact getting to the end of a backwards, and

[49] Cooper's is an example of an influential account that affirms (without questioning) the weaker point that the soul explains the city and not the other way around. This issue and passage, as an example of the way in which Plato is able to make a point in different ways, reveals a probably reason why it is so difficult to attribute a single structure

therefore upwards, movement through dianoia, things are somewhat promising. The hypothetical, and therefore *dianoetic,* account is the division of the soul. As I have suggested, the unity of the soul is exactly what is presupposed by that account.

III. Passages

The next section of this chapter will work through the text leading up to and laying the foundation for the argument separating reason form desire. I want to emphasize certain peculiarities and problems in these passages that I believe point us away from a simple, face value reading and, thereby, force us to find the sort of underlying assumptions, and contradictions, that allow us to work our way out of the *dianoetic* account and get a glimpse of its *noetic* foundation. One important aspect of this transition is seeing that the soul is not a static conglomeration of parts. Rather, it is intrinsically active.

436a6-b8: The Statement of the Question

"But this now is difficult: whether we act each way by means of the same thing, or in the different ways by means of different things, of which there are three- whether we learn by means of one of the things in us, become spirited by means of another, and feel desires in turn by means of a third for the pleasures having to do with nourishment and procreation and as many things as are closely related to these, or whether we act by means of the whole soul in each of them, once we're aroused. These are the things that will be difficult to determine in a manner worthy of the discussion." (436a6-b5)

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to the text. The text has multiple overlapping structures. There are multiple principles of unity. This is not unlike the situation of a state full of souls. Or a soul made of parts for that matter.

This is far from a straightforward statement of the question of whether or not the soul has the same parts as those of the city, the alleged focus of the text. The question, stated in terms of the *actions* of the individual, actually hints at what seems to be a major difference between the soul and the city. The craftspeople of the city can quite easily and obviously function independently of the soldiers and rulers, at least temporarily. The cities carpenters can practice their crafts while the philosopher philosophizes even if the ends of their actions do not harmonize. Yet, it is not clear that the soul can reason properly while the desires are desiring, even less so while they are actively pursuing their ends. At the same time, the language of this passage is significant. As we will see later in this chapter, the language will be echoed in book VII in Socrates' description of the *action* of the part with which we learn. This part, explicitly, cannot act in isolation but only along with the "whole" of the soul. (518c8) Thus, the text will actually later come down on the side of unity, at least with respect to the rational part of the soul.

Even if we don't place the action of the soul in the physical pursuit of drink but, seeing as it is an action of soul in question, in the desiring itself, it is still a puzzle how one soul, while remaining one, could feel two different impulses at the same time. If it could, this could only be because both are present to some one thing at the same time. That is, whatever the agent is that is deciding between thirst and reason or what have you, must have both impulses present to it at the same time. By Socrates' hypothesis this should mean that the part in question is itself a plurality and we should have the same problem repeating itself.

436b8-437b1: Socrates Hypothesizes PNC

"It's obvious that the same thing isn't going to put up with doing or undergoing opposite things in the same respect and in relation to the same thing at the same time, so presumably if we

find that happening in the things in question, we'll know that they're not the same but more than one thing." (436b9-c2)

PNC is an explicit premise in the first argument for the partition of the soul. I have already commented in some detail about Socrates' strange formulation of PNC in the introductory chapter, as well as about Socrates' concession that the principle, and all that is based upon it, is merely hypothetical. (437a7-9) It is worth noting in addition, that after emphasizing the hypothetical nature of the principle, Socrates offers two examples of sensible objects purportedly for the sake of providing some illustration of the principle. The examples are that of a man standing still while moving his hands and head (436c7-d1) and that of a spinning top, or, "anything else going around in a circle in the same spot." (436d3-e5) It is perhaps unclear why he would feel compelled to provide support for the principle right before conceding that it is hypothetical. Less clear is why, if he is to do so, he would use examples of sensible objects given that he will later claim that such entities do in fact violate, or perhaps fall outside the scope of, PNC![50] Thus, if anything, giving such examples do more to problematize the principle than to provide support for it.

These examples are unlikely to be striking to most scholars. Most of us assume the unity of the body; in some cases even to the point of being willing to base the unity of the person and of the soul on it. At least, in so far as the unity of the soul is considered. The next chapter, by showing that sensible things do not conform to PNC and are not actually independent unities, will show that this is not a possibility for Plato. This makes the use of examples of sensible things to justify PNC a strikingly bizarre move on Plato's part. In addition, and this could very

[50] 478e10-479d4; 524a1-3. These passages will be discussed in chapter three.

well be Plato's intention, seeing the problem of identifying unities in the sensible world emphasizes and deepens the issue of the soul's unity.[51]

A more scholarly issue, perhaps, is that of what to call the principle in question. Julia Annas suggests "Principle of Conflict." Her reason is that the principle is not concerned with "propositions and their logical relations," which is what PNC is usually taken to be concerned with. Rather Plato is concerned with "whether a certain thing can have a certain property. Furthermore, he is concerned with opposites in a very broad sense, not just contradictories."[52] David Roochnik, "granting her basic point but preferring a negative in the formulation," suggests the "Principle of Non-Opposition."[53] I too grant both their points. In fact, I think both parts of Annas' claim are essential. First of all, that the principle is metaphysical and concerned with things, not logical and concerned with propositions is one that would be hard to over-emphasize even if also hard to grasp adequately. Second, and this is perhaps as important a point, it is unclear what an opposite (*enantion*) is for Plato. In fact this is the point to which the text turns next.

As far as naming the principle goes, "Principle of Non-Opposition" is probably as good a term as any in my opinion. I have stuck with Non-Contradiction though. It is surprising that nobody has suggested that the principle is actually a statement of the principle of identity seeing as a thing's violation of the principle is a sign that the thing is not the *same* as itself. The blurring of this distinction, the distinction between the principle of identity and that of contradiction, seems to me to be intentional and systematic in the text. It is coordinate with

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[51] I suggest that Plato's choice of examples is striking for another reason. The inclusion of "anything else going around in a circle on the same spot" in the spinning top example seems to me to be an allusion to the cosmos. This is striking because human beings and the cosmos are the only two entities with rational, embodied souls according to Plato. Thus, as if to illustrate the applicability of the principle to the rational soul, Plato includes these two examples. Obviously my argument will not depend upon this observation, but it does seem to me to be relevant.
[52] Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 137.
[53] Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, 13.

another distinction that is blurred by Plato: that between the substance and attribute (or subject and predicates). The problem of attributing any sort of straightforward subject/predicate distinction to Plato is in some sense the central topic of chapter three of this dissertation.

437b1-437c10: Opposites (*enantiai*)

"Well then, would you place nodding 'yes' as compared to shaking one's head 'no' among things that are opposite to each other, and having a craving to get something as compared to rejecting it, and drawing something to oneself as compared to pushing it away, and everything of *that sort*?" (437b1-b3, italics added)

After stating the principle and conceding its hypothetical nature Socrates goes on to give examples of opposites as a means, we might suppose, of illustrating what he means by the term. The examples, however, blur rather than clarify what we might take to be the central distinction between types of opposites- namely that between contraries and contradictories. The passage above would seem to suggest that we are dealing with contraries. One cannot both nod one's head in agreement and shake it in disagreement at the same time but one can, it seems, abstain and do neither. We can crave, we can reject or we can simply be indifferent. Shaking one's head no would be rejecting. This would seem to be what is required for the sort of conflict Socrates has in mind. Yet, after a brief description of a desire as a nod of assent to itself of the soul, "as if it had asked some question," (437c5) a description to which I will return below, Socrates seems to switch to opposites that are more like a presence and an absence, more like contradictories:

"And what about this? Won't we place not wanting and not wishing and not desiring in with pushing away and banishing from itself and in with all the opposites of the former things?" (437c8)

Wanting and not wanting, wishing and not wishing and, in general, desiring and not desiring seem to be more like contradictories. Either the want is present or it is not. There is no middle ground in this case. Socrates lumps this set of opposites in with the former set. The argument, however, requires a *desiring-not* that is active and not simply a passive *not-desiring*. The soul, to oppose its thirst, will have to shake its head "no" and not simply remain indifferent. There is no noticeable conflict in the soul if the soul both desires drink and is indifferent to drink at the same time. The conflict Socrates needs for the argument is akin to the simultaneous pushing and pulling of a bow. (439b8-9) Thus, the inclusion of examples of contradictories here seems conspicuously out of place.

In addition, there will be some examples of *enantiai* in book V to consider. The beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad and the just and the unjust are also lumped together with the examples above under the blanket term of *enantiai*. (476a1) These will be discussed in the next chapter. Although these appear to be examples of contraries, I will argue that they are far more similar to contradictories. These opposites, I will argue, are more akin to a presence and an absence or a being and a non-being. This would appear to be different to the passage here; at least, if the passage is taken at face value.

437d1-438c3: Desires

Socrates compares a desire to the soul's nodding in assent as if in answer to a question that it is asking itself. This is an interesting description of desire. It suggests, cryptically, that Socrates

takes desires to be knowledge-like in some way. It's easy to skim over this point. In fact, it's easy to skim over this argument. Socrates doesn't really need an argument to convince his interlocutors that desires and reason are different; that they are different is what most of us already intuit. Yet this description, and any argument that emphasizes the ability of desires to oppose reason, actually points to some sort of similarity and point of connection. We have already seen that any argument that separates by noticing a conflict also assumes a unity. We could add that these desires, if they are able to oppose reason, must also have some share in reason. This is, of course, Aristotle's point about desires, like hunger and thirst, which are able to oppose reason. (*Nic. Ethics*, 1102b15*ff*) The contemporary literature allows for the opposition, again, by making reason desire-like.[54] The Ancients seem far more inclined to make desires reason-like. In one sense it is easy to see why: the very act of reasoning about them assumes that they have some rationality.[55] At any rate, for now the focus is on exactly what it is about desires that will allow Socrates to *distinguish* them from reason. Socrates' "most conspicuous" (437d3) examples are thirst and hunger.

"Now to the extent that it's thirst, would it be a desire in the soul for anything beyond that of which we say it's a desire? For instance, is thirst a thirst for a hot drink or a cold one, or a big or little one, or in a word, for any particular sort of drink? Or, if there is any heat present in addition to thirst, wouldn't that produce an additional desire for cold, or if cold is present, a desire for heat? And if by the presence of magnitude the thirst is a big one, that will add a desire for big drink, or of smallness, for a little one? But being thirsty itself will never turn into a desire

[54] Much of the literature has felt compelled to make knowledge desire-like as a way of explaining how reason can motivate action and, thereby, oppose desire. Examples include: Cooper and Kahn as well as Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, 192-195. If desires are themselves already reason-like, this will prove to be unnecessary.
[55] The account as a whole, in connecting the principle of intelligibility with that of being, will further strengthen this point.

for anything other than the very thing it is naturally for, for drink, or being hungry in turn for food." (437d4-e8)

This passage begins a fairly long description of a particular aspect of desires; their single-mindedness. Just as he did in creating the state, which began with human needs (369b7), in separating the parts of the soul Socrates begins with the most basic parts: those which are directly connected to physical necessity. He assumes the existence of desires. It is the other two parts of the soul, apparently, that are to be derived. However, if we are moving towards the principle this is actually a sign that the desires, and the physical necessities themselves, are less real than what we are deriving. At any rate, what we learn about these desires, over and above the fact that they exist to some degree, is that they are what they are in direct proportion to what they are for, or set over. Each desire is only for that of which it is the desire. It nods its assent to one and only one thing and takes no further questions on any other topic. This point establishes a one to one correspondence between a desire and its object. Thirst, and only thirst, is set over drink and it is set over nothing but drink. A desire for a complex object, such as the desire for hot drink, is, just like its object, complex. It is a composite of desires: thirst and coldness, or whatever it is that we call the desire for warmth. In general, the clear overall point of the passage is that "particulars kinds are related to particular kinds… while the sorts that are just themselves are related only to something that is just itself." (438b2)[56] As we will see when we turn to the argument, this exclusive and coordinate relationship between each desire and its

[56] The claim that Plato is signaling a shift from the old Socratic position by denying that desires like thirst are always for *good* drink seems to me, as it has recently seemed to others, to be beside the point. For two refutations of this view see: Hoffman, "Plato on Appetitive Desires," 171-174, and: Kahn, "Plato's Theory of Desire," 85. Socrates does not actually deny that that thirst is for good drink. He just emphasizes that we should not be unprepared to deal with any such claim: "Then let's not be unprepared and let someone get us confused, on the ground that no one desires drink, but decent quality drink, and not food but decent quality food, since everyone, after all, desires good things. So if thirst is a desire, it would be for a decent quality of drink, or of whatever else it's a desire for, and the same with the other desires." (438a1-6)

object is crucial for the distinguishing of the rational part of the soul from the desires. It establishes that a desire cannot conflict with another desire.

When Glaucon complains that he doesn't understand the point that Socrates is making, Socrates changes the example. He leaves behind the "conspicuous" examples of hunger and thirst on which he had been focusing and turns to a set of examples that is not clearly the same. The new examples are greater and lesser instances of one another such as hot and cold or big and small. Socrates' point is used to illustrate the connection between a thing, like a desire, and what that thing is related to. What's greater, Socrates tells us, is greater than what is less, while what is much greater, is much greater than what is much less and so on. (438b4*ff*) In each case that which is simple and particular is related to that which is simple and particular while that which is complex is related to that which is complex.

Although the examples are brought out to explain the way in which desires are related to their objects, the relationship in this particular example appears to be different from that between thirst and drink. The presence of heat, the passage (437e) quoted above affirms, is or results in the desire for cold and cold results in the desire for heat. How would this work in relation to thirst? Thirst is the desire for drink, but drink is not the desire for thirst. Unless, that is, we say that thirst in the soul is simply the recognition on the part of the soul, as if asking a question, of a lack of fluid. The feeling of thirst, like the feeling of cold, is the feeling of too little drink, just like the feeling of cold is that of too little heat or heat of too little cold. In this case the example fits quite elegantly with the others. The only difference is that bloatedness, or whatever the over-abundance of drink in the body would be called, is not as common as thirst.

One interesting feature of this set of examples is that the desires in question are, in one sense at least, metaphysically identical with their objects. The desire for cold is simply the presence of

heat and the desire for heat the presence of cold. Yet, certainly this is not all we can say about the desire. There must be something more to the desire. The coldness of a piece of metal, for example, is not a desire for heat. What is the difference in the case of the soul's coldness? In fact Socrates has already given us the answer. The desire is not simply the presence of this coldness, or absence of heat, but the self-*recognition* of this presence or absence. That is, the soul desires heat as if it were asking itself a question. This self-recognition, this reflexive character on the part of the doings and undergoing of the soul, is necessary to understand the difference between a soul, even in so far as it merely desires, and an inanimate object. It is essential that the desire for heat, for example, is not only the presence of coldness but an *awareness* of this presence. Without the awareness we have no desire but only absence of heat. Socrates, perhaps so as not to be derailed from the central analogy and the topic of justice, merely hints at this in a typically lighthearted way, by describing the desires as self-questioners. His account, however, presupposes it. That desires have this aspect to them, an aspect that is unmistakably reason-like, has not been noted in the literature.

However, the self-recognition on the part of desire is, like its object, particular and focused. It is not that desires are blind – what makes them desires is just some sort of awareness that inanimate objects do not have – it is more to the point to say that they have blinders on; they are not un-minded, they are single-minded. This entails that they cannot take account of one another. Yet, this inability to see one another is also an inability to see themselves correctly. They fail to see that they are, somehow, connected. The examples of thirst and hunger are, in this respect, not so different from the examples of heat and cold or big and small. Hunger, like cold, is an awareness of a lack of some sort in itself. Again, like heat and cold, hunger identifies this lack, answers the question of how to overcome it, single mindedly. The lack is overcome

with food. This is the only answer that hunger can provide for any lack. Because hunger is so single minded, the soul that is controlled by its hunger will attempt to overcome any perceived lack in the same way – by eating. Such a soul will eat even when eating is not what is best for it. That is, its desire is not for good food but simply for food. Or rather, food *is* the good as far as hunger is concerned.

Perhaps even more importantly, and along the same lines, there is a conspicuous absence from these examples. That is the absence, or apparent absence, of the "right amount." What is it that the cold soul desires? We can give two answers. The first is heat, which is what the soul desires in so far as it is aware simply of the presence of coldness. The second answer is that the soul desires or wants the *right amount* of heat. In fact, although no explicit mention is made of a right amount in the text, the examples of contraries presuppose that there is an amount. Although the desires themselves, as desires, are unaware of it, the right amount is what the soul, even in its desiring, is actually seeking. The soul, even the one that is aware of the body's being cold, doesn't desire for it to be hot. This is evidenced by the fact that as soon as it achieves hotness and becomes aware that it is hot it has a desire for cold. Yet, it doesn't desire cold either, for the same reason. What the soul is actually seeking is to be neither hot nor cold; it is seeking a balance of the right amount of heat and coldness. A clear sign of this is that when the soul achieves this balance, it has no need of or desire for anything with respect to temperature.

The last observation is significant in another way as well. A soul that possesses the right amount has no desire. The desire that corresponds to temperature is only present when the soul, or composite of soul and body, is *lacking* either the heat or coldness to be at the right temperature. This is significant for two reasons. First of all, each desire is essentially connected

to some lack. The question it asks and answers is entirely concerned with that lack.[57] Second, when the right amount is fully present, the soul has no desire. Although the presence of desire presupposes the existence of some right amount in the soul in some way, even if only potentially, the presence of the right amount is independent of the desire. Again, this is not a conclusion so much as an implicit assumption that must have been present already. Although the examples of desires in question actually presuppose a right amount, the type of "questioning" that these desires do is not able to perceive it. Their answer to the question is in the object they lack and not in that object's relation to the soul as a whole. The inability to perceive this right amount is a major flaw in the desires and in their ability to understand themselves (or answer questions about themselves) properly. A desire, for example, is unable to see that, in seeking its good it seeks its own eradication. That is, the true good of the desire is for it to cease to exist. This inability to see itself properly is, again, because the desire has no conception of the whole soul of which it is a part but only of itself. The ability to recognize a right amount, on the other hand, presupposes that this amount be right *for something*. Whatever recognizes this whole, this will of course turn out to be reason, has an understanding of desire that desire does not have of itself.

As we will see when we turn to the argument itself, that some sort of knowledge of the whole is exactly what is required for an understanding of the right amount is a good sign that it or something like it is what allows knowledge to oppose thirst. Socrates' ambiguous use of the term *enantiai* is relevant here. We recall that what is required for the argument is an opposite that is *actively* opposed to thirst in a way that simple indifference is not. At the same time, the contrary will not work either. We now can see why. The contrary of a desire is another desire.

[57] I will suggest an even stronger way of understanding this question and answer below- the desire is a sort of opinion about the good. An analogue is Aristotle's account of how people define happiness: "… when sick one says it is health, when poor that it is wealth, and when they are conscious of ignorance in themselves, people marvel at those who say it is something grand and above them." (*Nic Eth*. 1095a25)

We need an opposite that is actively opposed and yet is not the contrary desire. The motivation towards the right amount is just such a thing. In addition, it is able to oppose any of the desires in question and is "opposite" to both of any of the sets of contraries.[58] There will be no question that this is the opposite Socrates has in mind once we see that this is what reason seeks.

438c4-438e9: Two "Kinds" of Knowledge

In a continued effort to explain the relationship between a desire and its object, Socrates now turns to knowledge. That he does so not as an example of reason opposing desire but rather to further explain the same point is another sign of the similarity between knowledge and desire. Knowledge, it seems, is another example of the same point Socrates is continuing to attempt to explain about the relationship between a desire and what it is for.

"And what about the kinds of knowledge? Aren't they the same way? Knowledge just by itself is knowledge of what's learnable just by itself, or whatever one ought to set down knowledge as being of, while a particular knowledge or a particular sort is of a particular thing or a particular sort of thing. I mean this sort of thing: when a knowledge of constructing houses came into being, didn't it differ from the other kinds of knowledge so that it got called housebuilding?" (438c4-c9)

Firstly, in relation to this passage, we should note in passing what a strange thing knowledge "just by itself" is as well as what a strange distinction the distinction between a non-particular knowledge and all the particular knowledges is. We have here a "kind" distinction between things which are each a particular kind and a thing which is not a particular kind at all. The distinction is not so much between kinds as between those that are kinds and that which is not a kind at all. It is a distinction between the distinct and that which is indistinct. This strange

[58] See also *Nic. Eth.* 1108b10-15.

distinction will be mirrored in the middle books by the central distinction of the text and perhaps of Platonic philosophy: that between the good, itself by itself, and all other things. The good itself, then, if Socrates is right to claim that knowledge too follows the pattern set for desires, should turn out to be the object that knowledge just by itself knows.

Although this is an argument being used to distinguish reason and desire, Socrates is blurring any simple intuitive distinction between them. We have desires which are just themselves for objects which are just themselves and desires of a particular sort that are for objects of a particular sort. Knowledge too, it seems, works similarly. Knowledge itself is of the learnable itself,[59] while particular knowledges are of particular things. What would desire itself be of? It is hard to come up with a better candidate than the good itself.

In regard to the argument in question, we might wonder which "type" of knowledge, the knowledge just by itself or one of the particular knowledges, opposes thirst? If what has been noticed thus far is correct, the knowledge that opposes in each case would be the knowledge of the right amount of the object of the desire in question. This is always some one of the particular knowledges. In fact, even if it were knowledge of the soul as a whole that is in opposition to thirst and hunger, the knowledge in question would still seem to be a particular knowledge. It is unclear how an all encompassing knowledge could stand in opposition to anything. If there is a role for this all encompassing knowledge it will have to be derived. Again, this will be a derivation of a principle that is already being assumed.

[59] The, "or whatever one ought to set down knowledge as being of" demonstrates nicely the way in which Plato is being careful to leave open issues that will be important in the coming books. He will set down the good as what knowledge itself is of.

IV. The Argument Distinguishing Desire and Reason (438e10-439d9)

Once these points have been established, Socrates gives his argument dividing the soul into a rational part over and above the desiring part. The argument attempts to divide the soul into desires and reason by examining the apparently mundane example of a thirsty person who refrains from drinking. The soul of the thirsty person, to the extent that he is thirsty, wants nothing else than to drink and sets itself in motion towards drink. (439b) At the same time, if, as the example assumes,[60] the soul of the thirsty person were to hold itself back from drinking, this could not be a result of the soul in so far as it is thirsty. This, of course, is because the same thing cannot do or undergo opposites in the same way and in relation to the same thing and so on. (436b9-c2) Thus, we must conclude that there is another part of the soul of this person other than the part with which he thirsts. That is, if we admit that the soul in so far as it is thirsty is setting itself in motion towards drink, and that this *same* soul can and does sometimes stop itself from its motion, we must, so as not to be guilty of contradiction, claim that *this* soul has something in it, or is in some way, that is not thirsty.

We might note, in passing, that the soul being determined to be a plurality by this argument is the soul *in so far as it is thirsty*. Socrates continues all through the argument to refer back specifically to thirsty people who don't drink and to their souls. This is significant as it leaves open the possibility that both the soul which is not thirsty and the soul which is thirsty but is not in opposition with itself over drink are not pluralities; at least, they are not pluralities in the same way as this soul. It is possible, it seems, that different souls have different degrees or expressions of unity.

[60] We should note that this claim is empirical. I suggest that the only reason that it is acceptable to Plato to use an empirical observation in an argument about the soul is because the soul in question is the embodied soul. This allows for evidence that is empirical due to the relationship between knowledge and its object that has been outlined in the introduction and will be developed below in coming chapters. Again, we are moving towards principles.

Returning to the argument, we should notice that we have not said what the something else that is keeping the soul from drink is. All Socrates has shown is that there is *something* else; there is another part or aspect to the soul other than thirst. It is surprising therefore, that he immediately goes on to conclude that the soul's preventing itself from drinking comes about from reasoning on the part of the soul. (439d1) This point, which is the crux of the entire argument, is not argued for; it is simply asserted. While what has actually been argued is that the soul of someone who is thirsty and is not willing to drink has a separate part that is not thirst, Socrates claims to have argued that the soul has a separate reasoning part.[61] Why does Socrates conclude that the part or aspect of the soul that opposes thirst is rational? For instance, why not attribute the conflict to another desire that is interfering with thirst? Or, even if it cannot be a desire that gives rise to the conflict, why attribute reason to the soul as a result of this argument and not, say, spirit or something else entirely.[62] The answers to these questions are connected to each other and to the overarching issue of the unity of the soul. All hinges on an understanding of what these parts actually are. I want to see how much of an answer to this question we can draw from the passage itself. Although the parts are somewhat underdefined in the text, I think Plato has given us plenty to work with. The rest of this chapter works through these issues. Why is can it not be another desire that is opposing thirst? What does this tell us about the nature of desire? What do we have to say about reason if it can oppose this (and any other) desire? What does this tell us about the unity of the soul? Lastly, I will consider briefly the

[61] Socrates resists using the word "part" (*meros*). It is much easier to do so in Greek than in English. Although I will use the word I think my interpretation will do as well as any other in explaining Socrates' reticence.
[62] An issue sometimes raised by the literature is that *spirit* seems to be just as able as reason to oppose any of the desires. Why should we assent to the conclusion that it is reason in this case? For an example of someone who raises this problem see: Ferrari, "The Three-Part Soul," 165-201. I will not deal with this issue in as much detail as I would like to. My account will, however, provide a way to answer the question. See the end of section V below.

question of spirit. Why not conclude that it is spirit opposing thirst? Or, if it could be, why conclude that there is a rational part of the soul? I will begin with the first question.

If the argument is to work in the form in which it's presented, Socrates must hold that desires cannot conflict with one another; at least, not in any straightforward way. If desires could conflict we could explain the thirsty person not drinking as an instance of one desire, thirst, in conflict with some other desire, whatever that might be. We would then have no argument for asserting the existence of another, non-desiring part of the soul. Yet Socrates is attempting to prove the existence of a part of the soul that is *not* desire; the existence of the rational part of the soul. His argument cannot do so conclusively if another desire could oppose thirst. It is significant therefore, that Socrates has already eliminated this possibility by establishing an exclusive relationship between each desire and its object. We have seen that he spends some time emphasizing this very point. Two desires, we recall, cannot be *for* the same thing. Thus, there is no other desire that can oppose thirst's compulsion towards drink because there is no other desire that concerns itself with drink. There is no desire that can conflict with thirst because no desire asserts or denies, pushes or pulls or seeks or avoids, the thing that thirst seeks. No other desire, to use Socrates' strange description, even asks itself the question of whether or not to drink. Desires, on this account, are what we might call atomistic. What then can we say about the person who wants to drink and doesn't do so? It can't be thirst that is stopping him. That would violate the principle of non-contradiction. Nor, we now see, can it be another desire because no two desires are concerned with the same object. It also cannot be simply the passive not-having of the desire. Thus, it must be *something other* than desire. There is some other part to the soul that is not desire. Notice that we still have not said what this other part is, just that it is not another desire.

It is worthwhile to look at a possible example of conflicting desires brought forward in the literature. There are several benefits in doing so. First, the argument depends upon the claim that desires cannot conflict. If they can, we will either need a different argument or we will have to reject the claim. Second, the issue is closely related to that of the unity of the soul and, third, seeing how the apparent conflict is explained will help to clarify the nature of desire.

John Cooper, among others, maintains that desires can conflict. Although, as we will see, there is a sense in which they can, Cooper does not confront the issue that the possibility of conflicting desires actually undermines the argument we get in the text for the existence of the rational part of the soul; he does not address how to understand the argument. It seems to me that the reason he feels no compulsion to do so is because it is simply so intuitively obvious to him, as perhaps it is to the rest of us, that there is a part of the soul that reasons and that this part is clearly distinct from the part that desires. We don't really need an argument to be led to this view. The same seems to be the case for Glaucon and the rest of the interlocutors. They would perhaps have been quite content had Socrates based the existence of these parts and his city/soul analogy on the assertion that the parts of the city could only get their virtues from the parts of the soul. Why then give this particular argument?

Cooper's example of allegedly conflicting desires is that of a thirsty person who chooses not to drink water that he knows has been boobytrapped so as to give anyone who tries to drink it an electric shock.[63] The example is interesting, but is it an example of conflicting desires? Although there is a conflict of some sort in his example, these desires do not conflict in the sense in which the argument requires. There is no intrinsic contradiction in desiring not to be shocked while also desiring to satisfy one's thirst (fortunately enough). Although these desires seem to

[63] "For suppose I am thirsty but the only available water is boobytrapped so that I'll get a painful electric shock upon coming into contact with it." (Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation," 96.)

conflict by being set over the same object - the boobytrapped water – in fact their object is not the same. Socrates has been very careful to clearly delineate the object of thirst. The object is not hot water, cold water, fresh water, boobytrapped water or non-boobytrapped water. The object of thirst is just water itself. Similarly, the object of the desire to avoid shock is not the boobytrapped water but rather the shock itself- in so far as the avoidance of a thing makes it an object. Although the (contingent) fact that these two objects appear alongside one another in his example might seem to imply that they are one object, Socrates has made it clear that he does not take them to be one.[64] The argument requires that the same soul both pursue and avoid *drink*. Cooper' example is of a soul that pursues drink while avoiding shock. This is not the same conflict. Yet, there does seem to be a conflict of sorts here. The soul cannot fulfill both desires at the same time and in the same way in this particular case. Certainly, it is fair to expect Plato's account to be able to explain this conflict as well.

The conflict is not a result of the boobytrapped water. Again, first of all, the boobytrapped water is not a single thing.[65] Second, even if it were a single thing, it is still unclear how this would result in a conflict within the soul. The desire that is set over the water would simply go towards it while that which seeks to avoid the shock would move away. For a conflict we need these desires to be united in one soul. That is, the conflict presupposes the unity of the soul. If the only water available *to me* is boobytrapped and *I* don't want to get shocked, I can't satisfy my thirst. It is only that both of these desires cannot be fulfilled at the same time and in the same way *by the same person* that results in a conflict. The conflict is indirect. It is not between the

[64] This is clearly the case for the argument in question. To understand why Socrates takes these objects to be many will involve an inquiry into the nature of sensible things; specifically, that these things don't fall within the scope of the principle of non-contradiction. This will be undertaken in the next chapter. It will confirm exactly what this argument requires- that the boobytrapped water is not a single thing.

[65] In fact, even drink turns out to be a multiplicity for Plato. We view it as one because of thirst. Its unity is only for us and hypothetical. As that for which the desire is, it is one object. Cooper's example, on the other hand, has a complex set of distinct desires set over a complex set of distinct objects.

desires in and of themselves. The conflict is in the individual just exactly in so far as he or she continues to be *one* individual with a multiplicity of desires. On its own, this assertion should not be particularly controversial. Even Cooper seems to allude to something like this claim, although he draws no consequences from it. What may be controversial is the claim that it is unclear to Plato, and should be unclear to us, what this unity is. Desires do not conflict directly. They conflict as a result of belonging at the same time to one thing. Again, if desires can only conflict by belonging to the same one thing, we need to ask what this thing is. In fact, it seems to me that this is the first thing we can say about this one thing- it is not a result of desire. If the soul as a whole was a desire it would have to be one that is fundamentally different from the ones in Socrates' examples as these are entirely separate and distinct and take no notice of one another. In other words, the *indirect* conflict among the desires is a result of them all belonging to *one* soul. That they all conflict with reason directly is itself a significant argument in favor of associating this unity with reason.

However, there are, it seems, desires in the text that are set over the same object. These are the desires set over the hot and the cold. Self-aware coldness, or whatever we call the desire that pursues heat, also, by the same token, rejects cold- the very object which self-aware hotness, or whatever we call the desire that pursues cold, pursues. Here is perhaps an actual opposition of desires that do both pursue and reject the same object. In fact, given Socrates' account of the relationship between desires and their objects, it is the only possible example. If one has a desire that is focused on a particular kind of thing one either seeks or rejects that thing. Each of these is its own particular desire on Socrates' account. Thus, in a sense, there are exactly *two* desires set over each object- one that embraces and one that rejects. This is the same as saying that each desire has an exactly contrary desire for the exactly contrary object, which is the way Socrates

says it. At any rate, here is our only example of conflicting desires. Why doesn't this conflict undermine the argument for the existence of a separate rational part? It leaves us, apparently, with an example of conflicting desires.

This example, that of the conflict between the desire for heat and that for cold, can't be analogous to what is occurring in the case of the thirsty person's not drinking as this is the very possibility that PNC excludes. The same thing, in so far as it is the same, cannot be hot and cold in the same way, at the same time and in the same part of itself. It is impossible even to conceive of such a scenario. We can imagine, perhaps, a situation in which a person has one part of their body that is hot and another that is cold, but what Socrates' argument requires is that the soul tells us that the same part of the body is both hot and cold at the same time. Although my soul can perhaps be mistaken and think, or feel, that a body part is cold when it is actually hot, as supposedly occurs in extreme cases of hypothermia for instance, it cannot feel the same part to be both hot and cold at the same time.[66] Socrates' example of thirst, at any rate, does not seem to be such a case. For it to be such a case we would, again, have to have *two* desires set over drink. What seems to actually be the case is that we have one desire set over drink that pursues or rejects drink based on its feeling in relation to the body. That is, the pursuing and avoiding are actually opposite expressions of the *same* desire.

At any rate, unless we are willing to claim that the soul opposes its thirst by lacking and having an excess of fluids in the same way and at the same time, a *direct* conflict of the sort Socrates is looking for cannot be a result of desire. We do in fact need something else, some

[66] Despite all the illnesses that cause people to fluctuate between feeling hot and cold, or to feel hot when one should feel cold, there are none, that I am aware of, that result in feeling both hot and cold in the same way, at the same time and with respect to the same part of oneself.

other part to the soul.[67] What is this other part? The answer presents itself immediately after reviewing the criteria. We need an opposite motivation that is set over the same object. We see now that the opposite cannot be a contrary, as the contrary is another desire and this conflict is not possible nor is it what Socrates seems to have in mind. Yet the opposition cannot come from the simple absence of thirst, the contradictory, as this is not significant enough of a motivation and is too indifferent to actively oppose the desire. There is, it seems, only one candidate remaining: the motivation for the right amount of drink. We have, in the motivation for the right amount, a sort of opposite that is neither a contrary nor simply a contradictory. In addition, the right amount of heat or cold is actively opposed to both the disproportionate desire for hot as well as that for cold (or any other disproportionate desire for that matter) in the same way and at the same time. Unlike the desire it opposes, this motivation is not for the object itself, but rather for the correct proportion of that object. It is "for" the object in that it is set over drink, but it is neither for nor against the object itself. Rather, it is set over the object only in so far as the object stands in a particular relation to the soul, or soul and body. In other words, this motivation is set over the soul itself. There is no abstract right amount of heat or drink that the soul could be seeking. What is necessary when determining a right amount is a perspective that takes into account the *whole* of the thing that the amount is an amount for. That is, unlike desire which sees only itself (and even that not very well), the motivation for the right amount of something, to be a motivation for the right amount, must have an understanding of the whole which the amount is right or wrong in relation to. The right amount is determined in relation to the individual taken as a whole. It is significant, therefore, that deciding in terms of and thinking in relation to the whole is the salient characteristic ascribed to reason at this point in the text.

[67] Of course, once we find this something else we will have to ask in relation to it why PNC does not exclude its possibility as it seems to do in relation to the contrary desires.

Reason, Socrates tells us, "has forethought on behalf of the whole soul." (441e5) Again, reason, "deliberates about the whole soul and body" (442b4-6) and about "each part and the whole." (442c5-8)

Thus reason is able to oppose thirst in just the way needed. Significantly, it is able to oppose *any* desire belonging to the soul in the same way it opposes thirst. Again, this is a sign that it is not merely different from all these desires but also intrinsically connected to all of them in a way that they are not connected to one another. (It is perhaps as closely connected to each desire as that desire is to its own contrary.) It is also appropriate to attribute this ability to "reason." This is primarily because, again, of what is presupposed by the very idea of a right amount. The right amount is the amount that is appropriate to the ordered functioning of the whole.[68] The amounts of the objects of each desire can be ordered by being put in context of its role in the whole soul, or whole person, in a way that is analogous to the ordering of the parts of a pruning knife. In other words, when the soul asks itself whether or not to drink, the answer should depend upon whether or not drinking will be good for the soul as a whole and not simply whether or not the soul is thirsty.[69]

V. Reason

However, here we run back into a familiar question. To know whether or not anything is good for a thing as a whole we need to understand that whole. Yet, to understand the whole we need to know the function of the thing; we need to know the end or work. For reason to know

[68] We should keep in mind that, in ascribing this power to reason we are in the process of coming to determine what reason is. Plato has no predetermined set of characteristics that he is carrying into the account like baggage here. If anything, the only baggage is the analogy to the city. Thus, all we need to be able to say off hand about this "part" called "reason" is that it is analogous to the class which should rule in the just city, which it is.

[69] Of course, preferably these questions should not be opposed and the healthy soul is thirsty just when drinking will be good for the whole. How to harmonize them is a major issue. The concerns here largely underpin Plato's strategy for harmonizing.

how to order the whole soul it must know the end that the soul as a whole is to serve. We still don't know what this end is. Thus, we have run back into the question asked already in relation to justice (and to pruning knives). Justice, the ordered functioning of all the parts, is the good of the whole. But when we ask about how this works we run into problems. To order the whole we have to have some end that the whole itself serves. This is true for the objects of the desires as well. The right amount of drink is the right amount in relation to the good of the whole. Each desire's actions are ordered by placing that desire and its object in relation to the whole of the person that the desire is a part of. This whole, in turn, is understood in relation to the end. What is this end? What does reason know? The tempting answer to give here is just what has been given already. We could say that reason knows the whole soul or, what is the same thing, that reason knows justice. This answer, again, is correct as far as it goes. It is, however, incomplete and in just the way already noticed. To order the parts of the soul properly we need to do so in terms of the proper functioning of the whole. When the whole is functioning properly it is just, but what is it that the just soul is doing? What is the soul's end?

It is clear desire cannot rule in the just soul. Desire takes no account of the whole. It is also in the very nature of desire to take an external end. In fact, each desire seems to be defined in conjunction with the end that it takes. Thus, if the soul follows desire, or is organized around desire's end, it will, as a whole, take an external end. This would make justice, the order of the soul, instrumentally good, which is not what Socrates is supposed to be arguing.[70] If, on the other hand, the soul is organized around the activity of the reasoning part, this activity turns the focus of the soul back on itself. Reason, as we have just seen, is set over the soul as a whole.

[70] There are other more significant reasons why the soul as a whole cannot take an external end. In fact, the taking of an external end and the not looking after the whole are even more closely connected than the account here has made clear. It will turn out, as I will argue in chapter four, that for the soul to be a whole unto itself it must take an internal end.

Thus we have at least one way in which to order the soul for its self. If we order the soul around the activity of the rational part, a part which does not take an external end, we have the possibility of a soul that is acting for itself. We have, in fact, a sort of circle. The end that the desires are ordered around is the activity of the rational part and the end of the activity of the rational part is the ordering, structuring and, in a word, ruling, of the desires. This circularity is what the account of justice requires. The just and ordered soul is the one that is ruled by reason and reason rules the soul in such a way that it, reason, can rule. This gets Plato out of the vicious circle. Reason is not merely a means of making the soul just and organizing the desires, it is also, necessarily, the end around which they are ordered. Overcoming the disorder caused by desire's irrationality is necessary for knowledge and the proper functioning of reason in the soul. Thus, the following is said explicitly about the activity of reasoning in book VII:

"…education is not the sort of thing certain people who claim to be professors of it claim that it is. Surely they claim they put knowledge into a soul it wasn't present in, as though they were putting sight into blind eyes…. But the current situation indicates that this power (*dunamis*) is present in the soul of each person, and the instrument by which each one learns, as if it were an eye that's not able to turn away from darkness and toward the light in any other way than along with the whole body, needs to be turned around with the *whole soul,* away from what's fleeting, until it becomes able to gaze at what *is* and at the brightest of what is, and this, we're claiming, is the good." (518c-d, first italics added)

The language of this passage echoes that of the passage in book IV in which the question of the soul's division was raised. There Socrates asked whether we act by means of a single part or with the whole when we act in the ways taken to belong to each part. Here, using similar language to refer to the rational part of the soul (calling it "the instrument by which one learns"),

he asserts that the action of this part requires the cooperation of the whole. The soul as a whole, and even including the body, has to function properly for knowledge to be actualized. This makes the action of the rational part the end of the soul as a whole. Reasoning is the work around which the soul as a whole is ordered. Again, this gives the rational part a privileged connection to the whole; it incorporates the whole in its activity. Indeed, it requires the order to function. All the parts functioning properly can be reduced to the proper functioning of a single part: reason. Socrates claims, in language echoing that of the passage in which he raised the question of the soul's partition, that the part with which we learn acts with the soul as a whole and not with itself as an isolated part. That reason is set over the soul as a whole shows, again, the way in which it is opposed to each and every desire. While desires look outside the soul for the good, reason turns the soul always back towards itself. Reason opposes desire just in so far as desire takes an external end.

This is the highest point that the *dianoetic* aspect of the account can attain to. Yet, as *dianoetic*, it is still incomplete. Reason is supposed to rule in the soul. To do so it has to know the work of the whole. This is what allows it to order the whole. However, for it to know the work of the whole, for reason to function, we need the soul as a whole to be ordered. Thus, we have a sort of chicken and egg scenario. The soul must first know so that it can be ordered and must first be ordered so that it can know; the soul must have knowledge of the good of the whole before it can have knowledge of the good of the whole. The good must already be present in the soul in some way before the soul is able to embody this good. Thus we get the description in the passage above of knowledge as present in the soul as a *dunamis*.

Dunamis is a word used repeatedly in the *Republic* to describe knowledge.[71] Seeing the knowledge implicit in the soul as a potency underpins the real argument for why having desire

[71] See especially 477d8

stands in the way of knowledge. That the knowledge is there implicitly (as it must be if it is responsible for the unity and being of the soul) but is not actualized unless the whole soul joins in the activity of reasoning, tells us that desire stands in the way of knowledge. Until the desires are "turned around" the soul is unable to actively know. Far from an overturning or replacement of the account in book IV, this account stands as its completion. For the soul to know, desire must be turned inward. Plato is affirming here the strong unity of the soul. The so called parts, rarely so called by Plato himself, are actually the activities of the same one thing. When this activity is pointed outward towards the particular ends, or goods, of the desires, it cannot be properly turned inward. This is the reason why the soul that is persuaded by desire cannot reason properly. Although it has reason--otherwise it couldn't even desire--this reason cannot be properly actualized or expressed while the soul is pursuing an external end. The turning around is a turn inward. It is the *Republic*'s version of the recollection doctrine of the *Phaedo* and the *Meno*. There is, within the soul as it exists even in its embodied state, an internal principle of unity.

Here as well is the point at which to mention, albeit briefly, the spirited part of the soul. This part, like reason, seems to be able, for Socrates, to conflict with any and all the desires just as well as the rational part. If we restrict ourselves to a straightforward reading of the argument we would have no way to conclude that the "part" of the soul that is opposing the desire of thirst is reason and not spirit. It seems, indeed, that spirit could very well oppose thirst. I suggest that the need for the rational part is actually a need for an internal end. Spirit alone cannot determine the right amount. The primary concern here is actually the unity of the soul. Spirit, like reason, is in some sense set over the soul as a whole. Thus, it too opposes any desires. Its distinction from reason is that spirit, unlike reason, is always pointed outward and cannot take an internal

end. In fact spirit cannot even set an end but requires rather that this end be set for it either externally, in seeking honor or victory, or by the soul itself. The only part of the soul itself that could set an end on behalf of the whole is reason. Thus spirit, Socrates tells us, always allies itself with reason in its conflict with desire. (440b2)

VI. Unity

Although its formulation has changed and the groundwork for dealing with it has been laid, the very first issue, that of the unity of the soul, still persists. Is it not the case that the rational part continues to function even in the soul whose desires are out of control? The existence of a conflict assures us that it does. It seems that reason both does and does not function in the soul that is moved by desires. We can rephrase the issue in terms of what has been noticed in relation to the examples of contrary desires, like those for hot and for cold. PNC, if it does anything, would seem to exclude the co-existence of opposites in a thing which remains the same as itself. The desire for heat and that for cold were excluded from co-presence on this very ground. This exclusion is actually necessary for the argument as it allows us to exclude the only possible desire that could be set over the same object as, and thereby fundamentally and directly opposed to, any given desire. Why, if this is the case, do we not also exclude the possibility of reason, the desire for the amount of drink that is best for the soul as a whole, which is also an opposite of thirst, from being present at the same time as the desire? If this opposition is strong enough for the argument, it must exclude the possibility of the co-presence of reason and desire in the same thing at the same time just as it does with contrary desires. Even if we differentiate reason and desire only on the grounds that the former is directed inward while the latter is directed outward, as I believe we should, it is still a contradiction for the same one thing to be directed in and

directed out at the same time and in the same way. Yet, the example of the thirsty person not drinking begs for an explanation of just this phenomenon, whichever formulation of it we prefer. This is the problem of understanding a contradiction in the soul. It remains the overarching problem.

It seems to me that the possibility of an actual conflict in one thing of reason and desire is actually excluded by PNC. In fact, its exclusion is itself the reason why the soul cannot reason properly when under the sway of disorderly desires. To reason while desiring is for the same one thing to embody a contradiction. This is the case even for the natural desires like hunger and thirst, all the more so for those that are out of control.[72] Yet, if this is not possible in some way, this leaves the example of the thirsty person not drinking unintelligible. Again, even the weighing of the opposing options demands that they both be present to some one part that is to weigh them. The unintelligibility of the conflict, I suggest, is an unintelligibility that is built into the account of the division of the soul. Ironically, in Plato's hands this unintelligibility is actually a positive feature of the account and one that allows us to move beyond the *dianoetic* account as well as strengthening the claim of reason to be, in every way, the principle of unity of the soul.

The problem of understanding the contradiction in the soul of the person whose desires oppose his reason does not go away. It remains problematic and even contradictory. We can, however, distinguish two types of problems or contradictions in this sort of account. The usual contradictions in a philosophical account indicate that the account is incorrect or flawed in some way. This is the more familiar type of contradiction. As a result of this type of contradiction, many, if not most, professional philosophers are trained to react to *any* contradiction in any

[72] Socrates does not distinguish between necessary and unnecessary desires (what I am here calling natural and unnatural desires) until book VIII. (558d7-559c8)

account by abandoning the account-- or at least reworking it so as to avoid the contradiction. Plato, I contend, has another kind of contradiction built as a positive feature into his dialectical account. It is one which we must find another way to react to. If we react to it in the way in which we react to the first type of contradiction we stand to undermine exactly what is most significant in the account. This latter sort of contradiction is one that allows us to see the limitations in the *dianoetic* account and, in this case at least, in the thing being accounted for.

What makes the present case so interesting is that the thing doing the accounting and the thing being accounted for are one and the same.[73] In thinking about the soul we have a situation in which the knower and known are identical. Coming to know is as much a case of coming to embody form as it is a case of coming to apprehend it. In fact, the two are the same. So long as a soul has separate desires for physical things there will persist a sort of contradiction in the soul. All the more so if these desires are not being controlled by reason. The more controlled the desires are and the more unified the soul is in its activity, the more reasonable and *intelligible* it is. Thus, as the soul comes to embody the state that reason prescribes as the very state which allows for the activity of reasoning, it also comes to be intelligible as an object of reasoning, and to the same degree. As it more fully embodies its own principle of unity, the soul comes to be both fully rational and actually reasoning, both intelligent and intelligible, in just the same way, to the same degree and by virtue of the same principle. It does so by becoming rational as a whole. The fact that the soul in which desires and reason are opposed is simultaneously unable to know and unknowable, as unknowable as the conjunction in one thing of hotness and coldness, supports the connection between knowing and being as well as the connection of both to the principle of unity of the thing. When the contradiction in the soul goes away, which

[73] I actually think this is always the case for Plato. Thus, for example, the claim that sensible things are unknowable is also a claim that they do not possess knowledge.

entails the disappearance of the (outwardly directed) desire, the soul become one soul and also, because it is not contradictory, becomes *knowable* in a way that it was not before. The soul *as a whole* becomes rational. This has an interesting dual meaning. The soul becomes rational both as an *object* of reason, by no longer being contradictory, and by joining, as a whole, in the *activity* of reasoning.

For the soul to be completely one, for it to be free of contradiction, the soul *as a whole* must embody reason. In fact, I think that Plato has no choice but to conclude that, properly speaking, reason is the whole soul, the man within the man. (588d3) This use of contradiction is closely connected to the issue of the motion of the text upward towards first principles and towards being. The account moves upward largely by noticing contradictions in the account and finding the underlying unity that both makes the contradiction possible and stands outside or beyond it. This is exactly what I believe Plato intends for us to be doing in looking for the unity of the soul.

VII. Desire

Plato's account leaves us with a puzzle with respect to the desires. If the soul, properly speaking, just is its rational part, what are the desires? Are the desires a part of the soul?[74] It seems that the soul, so long as it has desires, even natural desires, is less than completely one, real or knowable as well as incapable of true knowing.[75] A full treatment of desire, even limited to the natural desires of book IV of the *Republic*, is not possible here. I will give an outline of what I take the account to suggest about desires. It is connected in manifold ways to the account as a whole, both that of the soul and that of sensible things.

[74] Socrates has turned the original account on its head. We began by assuming the existence of desires and attempting to prove the existence of reason. Now it seems that reason is the more clearly real and the existence of desire is in question. This is the way in which the motion towards principles is supposed to work.
[75] The claim that the body and its pleasures stand in the way of true knowledge is, of course, more famously associated with the *Phaedo.* See, for example, *Phaedo* 65a1-b5.

Desires, at least natural desires, are both rational and irrational, or both true and false, at the same time. Thirst, for example, is true because its presence is a sign that the soul does in fact need drink. When thirst is present in the healthy soul it is a sign that the body is lacking fluids and needs to be replenished in order for it and the soul to function properly. Thirst is false however, because, in so far as it is thirst, it takes drink to be *the* good itself, with no regard to right amounts or even to the soul. Desire, that is, takes a particular object, what is properly an instance or imitation of the good, to be the thing itself that it is an instance of. Yet, taking an instance for the thing itself is a characteristic of opinion. This is in fact the way in which opinion is distinguished from reason in book V.[76] Opinion is *like* knowledge in that it takes a likeness for the thing itself that it is like while true knowledge looks after the truth. Desire, it seems to me, is an opinion on the part of the soul about the good. Like any opinion, it is true and false or rational and irrational at the same time.

In the book V passage, the beginning of the so called "argument from opposites," Socrates goes on to connect the natures and strengths of the *dunameis* with the reality of their respective objects. Opinion stands in the same relationship to reason as the objects of opinion, sensible things, stand to the objects of knowledge, the forms of the good, just and beautiful. This relationship is one of imitation to thing imitated. Thus the account suggests that the lesser powers in the soul are *imitations* of the greater powers. Now an imitation, as chapter three will argue, is a contradictory instance of that of which it is an imitation. Thus, desire, which like opinion is set over particular sensible things, is a contradictory instance of reason. Desire is both rational and irrational. This harmonizes with the account of the present chapter. The

[76] The passage in question is the so-called "Argument from opposites." (476e *ff*) I will consider it in some detail in chapter three.

contradiction in the soul, that which makes the soul both unknowing and unknowable, comes along with the presence of the desire. Indeed, the desire *is* the contradiction.

All this suggests, puzzlingly, that the desires be both included and excluded in the rational part itself. They are *included* because, in so far as they *are*, desires are fundamentally rational. Socrates' description of desire, as we have seen, is infused with remarks which indicate that desires have some share in reason. His claim that they ask themselves questions is one example, as is the use of an analogy to knowing in his explanation of the relationship between desires and their objects. Even the ability of the desire to stand in opposition to reason is a sign that it has a qualified rationality.[77] So too, and along the same lines, our ability to distinguish a desire for heat from simply being cold, or that for drink from simply being dry, is based on some sort of self-awareness on the part of the desire. That is, a desire is not simply a lack of something, but the consciousness (or semi-consciousness) of that lack. This latter point suggests a degree of reflexivity or self-awareness in the desire resembling that of reason. The desire is able, in some limited way, to take account of itself. In other words, a degree of reason is implicit in the very nature of the desire that opposes reason and, in fact, seems to be what enables the opposition. Lastly, desire, as we have seen, depends upon the motivation for the right amount which is a rational motivation. Thus, the desire is, in one way, fundamentally rational. However, the other side of this same issue is that, as a desire, the desire does not comprehend even its own motivation. Desires are *excluded* from reason because, in so far as they are *desires*, they take an external end, an instance, as the good. It is this aspect of desire that is excluded: the taking of the external, particular end that makes the desire the external, particular desire that it is.

[77] Again, *Nic. Eth.* 1102b15*ff.*

Thus, to mention in passing an issue, or non-issue, that has become important in the literature, we do not need to attribute its own peculiar desire to reason if reason is to independently motivate actions on the part of the soul. Indeed, the need for making reason "desire like" is a mute point. There is nothing about desire of any significance, nothing with any "power," that does not already belong to reason in virtue of its being rational.

At any rate, the puzzle is how to distinguish desire and reason while still having them belong to the same one thing. The way Plato does so is actually quite ingenious. A desire is a contradictory or, what is the same thing, incomplete imitation of reason. This will mirror exactly the distinction between sensible things and forms, the objects of desire and reason, which will be the focus of the next two chapters. Obviously, there is much more to be said here. The nature of desire is not a small issue for Plato and, although there is no shortage of passages in the dialogues affirming the contradictory nature of desires, this interpretation is somewhat heterodox. Yet, what is essential for the argument of this chapter is just that the very having of the desire itself is the contradiction. If this is the case, then the doing away with the desire is the overcoming of the contradiction and, therefore, the overcoming of the unintelligibility in the account of the soul.

VIII. An Internal End

Socrates claims repeatedly in the middle books, the long passage on education quoted above is one example, that knowing, the action of the rational part, is set over the good. Indeed, this is in some sense the crux of the middle section of the *Republic*. Reason, as we have now seen,[78] is set over the good itself by itself. This is puzzling. We were told in book IV that the part with which we learn is set over the soul as a whole. In book VII, apparently, this part is being given a

[78] See especially section V of this chapter.

different and *external* object. Yet, if reason is to order the soul around some principle, that principle should be internal to the soul itself. The internality of its end is central to the claim of reason to rule in the soul in a way that is necessary for answering the central question of the text: that of justice's intrinsic goodness. This puzzle, far from undermining my reading of the text, actually supports it. Much has yet to be done to clarify the nature of the good in book IV. The claim that the good is the fundamental principle of *being* is as central to the middle books as the claim that it is fundamental to knowing. The next two chapters will focus on this very portion of the *Republic*. What will be established in those chapters will be of relevance to this issue. We can, though, see the solution in outline already. It relates to the question of the unity of the soul. In fact, it is the very account already given that overcomes, or uses, the impasse. The object of knowledge is something that is already within the soul, potentially. It must be if the soul is able to *be* at all. It only remains for us to turn towards it. We have already seen what this turning towards it entails. The soul, in becoming an actual unity, comes to embody the character that the object of knowledge has. The knowledge that the rational part seeks is one that the soul, in following reason, can come to embody. Just as the unity of the soul is necessarily present in some way even in the soul that is contradictory, form is already within the soul. Yet, in the contradictory soul, the soul with desires, this unity is obstructed. It is there in some way, as it must be for there to even be a conflict, but it cannot be fully realized as long as the desires are pointing the soul towards external things. Thus, the turning of the soul inward to itself *is* the soul coming to know the good, not by seeking the good externally, but rather by coming to embody the good within itself. This overcomes the apparent contradiction between Socrates' two statements of the object of reasoning: the soul as a whole and the good. The soul, in controlling

the desires and becoming just, comes to *be* the good just as it comes to know the good. Thus, as the contradiction in the soul is overcome, so too is that between the two ends of reasoning.

Such is the ideal at least. Although it is not clear that this state, the full embodiment of the good, can be achieved by the soul so long as it is attached to the body—or even after for that matter—even identifying it as the goal gives the soul the requisite internal end. This issue will be revisited in chapter four of this dissertation. For now it is enough to see it in outline. We can also see it implicitly in the very claim that motivates the long metaphysical digression that is the middle books of the *Republic*:

"'Unless philosophers rule as kings in their cities,' I said, 'or those now called kings and supreme rulers genuinely and adequately engage in philosophy, and this combination of political power and philosophy *joins together in the same position*, while the many natures that are now carried away to one of the two in isolation are forcibly blocked off from that, there is no rest from evils in the cities, dear Glaucon, or, I think, for the human race, and this polity we've now gone over in speech will never before that sprout as far as it can and see the light of the sun.'" (473d1-e2, italics added)

The very coming to be of the just state requires the rule of the part within it that is analogous to reason in the soul, the part that contemplates the good itself. That is, philosophy in the state and reason in the soul must be set over *both* the state or soul *and* the good itself. Again, this apparent contradiction is overcome just in so far as or to the same degree that the state or soul is entirely good and just. The overcoming of this contradiction, it seems to me, is the internal end of the just soul.

CHAPTER THREE

"Then claim as well that the things which are known not only get their being-known furnished by the good, but they're also endowed by that very source with their very being (*to einai*) and their being what they are (*ten ousian hup ekeinou autois proeinai*), even though the good is not being (*ousias*), but something over and above being, beyond it in seniority and surpassing it in power." (*Republic* 509b5-10)

"I should say rather that the image, if expressing in every point the entire reality, would no longer be an image." (*Cratylus*, 432b3)

I. Overview

Although he never argues for the claim, Socrates makes and uses the claim that sensible things (appearances) are contradictory (embody opposites) twice in the middle books of the *Republic*.[79] In both instances the claim is used to distinguish being (or form, or reality), which is not contradictory, from becoming (or sensible things, or appearances). In fact, that sensible things are contradictory is *the* way in which they are distinguished from forms in the text. This distinction, whatever it amounts to, is one that is central to Platonic philosophy. Yet, the claim that sensible things are contradictory, the claim on which the distinction is grounded, is not one that has been well understood or even particularly well regarded. Perhaps Plato is at least partially to blame for this. It is unclear from the text what exactly the contradiction in the sensible thing is supposed to be. Socrates identifies the contradictory nature, and thus the lesser

[79] "Argument from opposites" 476 *ff*, see especially 478e10-479d4; "Summoners" 523a1-525a9, see especially 524a1-3. On the other hand, Socrates uses two examples of sensible things to illustrate PNC in book IV. (436c6-e8) The main example, that of a spinning top, will be discussed briefly in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

reality, of sensible things with their being instances of what appear to be opposite predicates at the same time. Thus all things that appear to be beautiful, will also appear to be ugly (479a7) and an object, like a finger for example, that appears to be long will often appear to the same sense to be short. (523e1-5) Yet, these apparent contradictions have seemed to many scholars to be easily avoided by noticing that the things in question appear beautiful in one way and ugly in another, for instance, or, as the text itself says, that the finger is long relative to one finger and short relative to another. Thus, they do not seem to be real contradictions. Certainly the claim which is based on the sensible thing's appearing both beautiful and ugly, that sensibles are less than completely real, that they are "rolling around between what *is not* and what *is* purely and simply," (479d2-3) seems a bit, well, overblown to say the least.[80] Nor is it clear why a finger's appearing long relative to one finger and short relative to another should be, "suited in every way to draw someone towards being." (523a2) In fact, the appearance of the finger as both long and short does not, by Socrates' own admission, cause *hoi polloi* to doubt the reality of the finger itself. (523d4) Has it caused Plato to do so? And, if it has, has it done so for legitimate reasons?

[80] The ways in which scholars understand these passages has been categorized according to what the "is" in this passage means. Gail Fine identifies three possibilities and three corresponding readings of the text. The standard interpretations are generally referred to as the veridical reading, the predicative reading and the existential reading. The veridical reading reads "that which is" to mean, "that which is true" and "that which both is and is not" to mean, "that which is both true and false." Thus, the veridical reading takes "is" to mean "is true" in the passages in question. The predicative reading reads "that which is" as, "that which is an instance of (the predicate) F" and "that which is and is not" as, "that which is an instance of (the predicate) F and also an instance of (the predicate) ~F." Thus, the predicative reading takes the "is" to be an elliptical way of saying, "is some predicate F." The existential reading is the most straightforward reading of the Greek. It reads "that which is" simply as that which exists. It is the "that which is and is not" that is puzzling on this reading as it seems to entail that we countenance the assertion that there *are* things (whatever "are" means here) that both exist and do not exist at the same time. See: Fine, "Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V." Fine herself advocates a version of the veridical reading. For an influential version of the predicative account see: Vlastos, "Degrees of Reality." For a version of the existential: Cross, *Plato's Republic*, ch.8. Although the scholarly debate is interesting in many ways, it can tend to obscure the main issue. It is clear from the text as a whole that form is more true *and* more real *and* more properly an instance of whatever characteristic it is a form of than is the sensible instance. However, it is not clear how Plato gets from the claim that the sensible is both beautiful and ugly, for example, to its being and not being at the same time in a way that would justify the strong distinction between being and becoming clearly advocated by the text.

In this chapter and the next I will argue for answering both these questions in the affirmative. Doing so will entail understanding, as much as this is possible, the claim that sensible things are contradictory. The claim is not actually argued for in any detail in the text. Therefore, although I will discuss briefly the two passages in which the claim is made explicitly, the argument for the claim will require us to step outside of the Republic, outside of Plato all together in fact, and look at some of the fragments of Heraclitus. I will then try to show how the concerns that stem from Heraclitus' account motivate Plato's understanding of sensible things as *imitations* of form. That is, just as the passages suggest, the contradictory nature of appearances motivates their separation from the forms which are responsible both for their being and their being what they are.

The linchpin observation motivating this account, and the one that will be *the focus of this chapter*, is that Plato has no use for, nor does he ever make, the distinction between substantial and predicative forms attributed to him almost unanimously by the literature. This is a distinction that we have imposed upon the text. It obscures and distorts Plato's own central distinction between forms and sensible things; namely, that forms are the same as themselves and *substantial* while sensible things are not. Ironically, it is the insubstantiality of the sensible things, of the imitations, that has led many scholars to conclude that the forms most central to the Republic, those of the good the just and the beautiful, are predicates.

It might seem to some that the claim that there "are" things which are contradictory is an unpardonable absurdity and one that it would be best to avoid, at all costs, attributing to Plato. However, if we look at the Plato's claim more carefully we can see that he is not guilty of the absurdity in question. In fact, he seems to be opposed to exactly this scenario. That appearances are contradictory means, for Plato, that they *do not* exist or do not exist fully. This is in fact the

reason why their contradictory nature is so significant: though they must "be" in some way even for us to argue about them, appearances do not have being properly speaking. Rather, they "are" becoming. Thus, the claim that appearances are contradictory is not absurd-- at least, not in this way.

This chapter does not stand alone. It is the beginning of an argument that will not be complete until after chapter four. The argument as a whole will justify the claim that the being and the particular determination of all things are results of their being imitations of or partaking in the form of the good. In fact, that being and determination (being and being something) are distinct is itself the primary contradiction in sensible things. Although this will not be clear until the next chapter, seeing how this contradiction is overcome will return us to the issue of the unity of the soul. This chapter will focus on the ontological side of the contradiction, that is, the contradiction primarily as it manifests on the side of the being, although some attention will be paid to the epistemic side, that is, the contradictory nature of the determinations that make those beings what they are.[81] Both sides of the contradiction, I will argue, are manifest in the fragments of Heraclitus, with which this chapter will begin. I will then argue that Plato picks up on both in the account of the *Republic*. Although, again, I will focus on the one side here, it will be necessary to talk about both to some degree in order to highlight the fact that the good (or the good, just and beautiful) are responsible for both and not, for example, separate forms of particular substances.

[81] The ontological/epistemic distinction, though appropriate to some extent, does not capture Plato's distinction perfectly. The side being referred to as ontological here is that of the sensible thing in so far as it is partaking of the form, while the epistemic side is that of the *dianoetic* "form" in so far as it is a thing being partaken of. It will take some work to see what these entities amount to, work that will not be completed until the second half of chapter four.

II. Heraclitus

The *Republic* never actually gives us an argument for why we should accept the assertion that sensible things, appearances, are intrinsically contradictory. In the "argument from opposites" and "summoners" passages the claim is used but not justified. Rather, the dialogue's chief interlocutors seem to simply assent to the claim. Thus, for a justification of the claim that sensible things embody opposites or are contradictory, we need to look outside of the text; indeed, we need to look outside of Plato. The place to look is in the fragments of Heraclitus.

In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle (twice) makes the claim that Plato was persuaded by his exposure to the teachings of Heraclitus and Cratylus that sensible things are always in flux and not knowable.[82] The second time Aristotle makes this point he connects it to Plato's distinguishing of the forms as separate and enduring natures. Separating the forms, the objects of knowledge, from sensibles is exactly the purpose of Socrates' assertion that sensible things are contradictory in *Republic* V and the Aristotle passage is instructive. It is clear that Aristotle took Heraclitus to be a denier of PNC. In attributing to Plato a Heracleitean understanding of sensible things, he would seem to be claiming that Plato too denies the application of PNC in the case of sensible things, a claim for which there is no shortage of evidence in the dialogues.[83] At the same time, Aristotle is connecting Plato's separation of the forms to his Heracleitean understanding of sensibles. Aristotle's report fits with the way in which forms and sensibles are distinguished in the *Republic*. Socrates, as we have seen, distinguishes sensibles from forms by noticing that sensibles are contradictory, they are one way and the opposite at the same time,

[82] *Metaphysics* 987a32-b1, 1078a13-16.
[83] 475a-480a; 523a-525a. Other instances: *Phaedo* 74b; *Parmenides* 129a-d, 135e; *Hippias Major* 288a*ff*; *Cratylus* 439d*ff*; et al. See also: *Timaeus* 27d9-28a4 in conjunction with 29b1-c6.

while forms are not. Heraclitus thus affords us another way into the very issue in question: that of the apparently contradictory nature of sensible things and the separation of forms.[84]

So, what does it mean to claim that sensible things are contradictory? In his discussion of PNC in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle makes the assertion that those who deny the principle "do away with substance (*ousia*)."[85] His primary target here seems to be Heraclitus. Indeed, both the denial of PNC and the doing away with substance are manifest in Heraclitus' river fragment.[86] The general gist of the fragment in all its manifestations is the famous claim that one cannot step into the *same* river twice. Various formulations of the claim passed down emphasize the flowing of the waters or the lack of reality of the one stepping. All use the word *autos* (same); it is sameness, it seems, that the river is missing from one stepping to the next. Thus, as in Plato, the concept of sameness appears in the discussion. Why? Sameness, as Timaeus tells us, is not properly a relation between things. According to Timaeus, we should not think of the sameness of a thing as its being "the same as something else." (*Timaeus* 44a1-4) Rather sameness, it seems, is a relation a thing has, or in the case of the river doesn't have, to itself. It is *itself* that the river is not the same as from one moment to the next. On this reading of Heraclitus, and of Plato, the lack of sameness to itself is the central contradiction of the sensible thing. I suggest that this concept, that of sameness with self, allows us to see that what is really at issue, as Aristotle suggests, is the actual substantial being of things and not merely the predicates said things may or may not have. This is what the claim that sensible things are

[84] There is some literature on this issue in Heraclitus and much on it in Plato. I will not be discussing it in any detail. In essence, the literature does the same thing in relation to Heraclitus that it does in relation to Plato: assume the existence of some subject to which to apply allegedly contradictory predicates and, thereby, miss the nature of the actual contradiction. For an influential example on Heraclitus see: Irwin, "Plato's Heracliteanism."
[85] *Metaphysics* 1007a20
[86] DK 12,49a, 91

contradictory amounts to. The first step is to show that a careful reading of the fragments motivates such a claim.

What is so striking about Heraclitus' fragments in general and the river fragment specifically is that they are simultaneously arguments and riddles. There is an argument that the river fragment suggests to the careful reader. The argument, in turn, suggests a riddle. One cannot step into the same river twice, it seems, because the river does not continue to be the same river. The obvious, and superficial, reason why it is not the same river is because, as one version of the fragment explains, newer and newer waters continue to flow.[87] That is, each time I step into the river the water has changed and the river is no longer the same river it was the last time I stepped into it. The self-sameness of the river is in some way connected to the water that is in it; change the water and the river ceases to be the same river that it was even a moment before. If the river is the water, and the water is constantly changing, then the river is never the same river from one moment to the next. Thus, when one returns to step into it a second time, the river is no longer the same river it was before. This is as far as the superficial reading of the fragment cares to go. There is some river, between two banks, with a river bed of pebbles, flowing through the mountains and, because its liquid content is ever changing, it is never the same river from one moment to the next. One might wonder what it is that is so interesting philosophically about this observation. Or, rather, if this is all there is to the argument, why not simply say that it *is* the same river, just with different water in it?

The fragment becomes more interesting when we notice that it is not just the water in the river that continually flows but rather "*everything* flows."[88] That is, the banks of the river, as well as

[87] DK 12

[88] There is some uncertainty about whether to actually attribute this claim to Heraclitus. My purpose is not to provide an historical reason for doing so. However, I do believe, and hope to show here, that the claim that *panta rhei* fits with the rest of the fragments in an interesting and significant way. At any rate, there can be little doubt that

the riverbed and the mountains themselves are constantly in a state of transition and flux. This too, at least on the surface, is not particularly controversial. As the water of the river flows continually downstream it constantly eats away at bits of the bank and the riverbed. Sometimes trees fall into the river and get washed downstream diverting the course of the water. What was bank becomes bed and vice versa. Even the mountainside the river flows through is in a constant state of flux. Some changes are faster than others and some are so slow as to be practically imperceptible, but they are all occurring *all the time* none the less. The very things we take to be "things" are no more stable than the appearance of the ripples in the water or, to use a favorite image of Heraclitus', the ever-changing shape of a flame.

Yet, the shape that the flame, or water, or anything else, appears to us to take at a given moment does not actually explain how we are able to identify the thing as a single thing; at least, not in any straightforward way. There are at least two related reasons for this. **The first reason** is that the thing ceases to be the thing we are claiming it to be, ceases to have the shape we perceive it to have, before we can even identify it.[89] This is obviously the case for shapes in fire and water. It is equally necessary, by a simple extension of the same reasoning, in the case of materials that change more slowly but are still, nevertheless, in constant flux. In fact, since all material things are in a constant state of flux, the reasoning applies to all material things. Yet, if all the shapes and transitory forms that we identify as things are constantly changing, what is the "thing" taking on these shapes? This is the unanswerable question that Heraclitus' account has led us to; I believe that this is intentional on his part. The "river" is supposed to be the

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Plato understood Heraclitus to be claiming that everything flows. In fact Plato is the source of our knowledge of the fragment. The claim is attributed to Heraclitus and his ilk in the *Theatetus* (*Theat.* 152e, 156a; see also 179e-183a) and the *Cratylus.* (*Crat.* 440a) Thus, it is at least significant for understanding Plato's reading of Heraclitus.

[89] So Socrates in the *Cratylus*: "And can we rightly speak of beauty which is always passing away, and is first this and then that? Must not the same thing be born and retire and vanish while the word is still in our mouths?" (*Crat.* 439e)

underlying thing that underlies the changes in water and whatever else is changing. Yet it too is in flux. What is underlying it? If there is something, it too would be in flux. (Even the elements themselves out of which these things are composed are flowing into and out of one another. For most of the Greeks these elements were earth, air, fire and water but the account is the same no matter what the particular elements are. For Heraclitus, "All things are an exchange for fire and fire for all things."[90] If we ask what "it" is that goes from being fire to being something else it should be clear that we can give no answer.) This shows us the real force of Heraclitus' observation in the river fragment. There is no static, underlying thing that we can refer to as the river; there is nothing that is what it is and remains the same through the flux.[91] When we look for some one, stable and independent *thing* that remains itself, that remains the same as itself, it is nowhere to be found. The flux is all we are left with. Heraclitus, as Aristotle suggests, is making a claim about substance, or rather, the lack thereof. On this account there is no "thing" into which we can or cannot step. This is why Cratylus can extend Heraclitus' argument to apply to stepping into the same river even once.[92] The river that we step into has no sameness. It is not the same as itself. There is no "it" to step into at all. Even our identification of a river that is not the same as itself is not actually the identification of any*thing* at all.

The observation concerns the lack of sameness or unity, thinghood or substance of particular things. There is no *thing* that is in flux. The identification of something that persists has shown itself to be contradictory and, therefore, illusory. We are left with only the flux itself. Yet a flux without anything that is doing the fluxing, or a change without something changing is absurd. There must be something there for there even to be a flux. Or, to put the problem another way,

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[90] DK 90

[91] Socrates again: "Then how can that be a real thing which is never in the same state (*hosautos*)? For obviously things which are the same cannot change while they remain the same, and if they are always the same and in the same state, and never depart from their original form, they can never change or be moved." (*Crat.* 439e)

[92] At *Metaphysics* 1010a15 Aristotle too seems to suggest that Cratylus' claim is the same as that of Heraclitus.

even if I am misidentifying the river as one thing there must be something there for me to misidentify. Heraclitus seems to me to be aware of this problem. It turns the fragment into something like a riddle. The statement being made about the river is claiming that the river the statement itself is referring to is not there to be referred to. It is a statement with no subject; a statement about nothing. However, at the same time, the statement has to assume that there is a river being spoken about even to deny the river's existence. The statement undermines its own intelligibility as soon as it is understood.[93] It both assumes and denies the existence of some *thing* that is the river. This is what makes it riddle like. It is self-consciously contradictory; it both assumes and denies the existence of a thing we can refer to as the river.[94]

Significantly, the contradiction Heraclitus is pointing us to is in the substance of the thing and not in a contrary set of predicates that the thing has. We do not have an *S* that is both *P* and *not P* at the same time. We have and do not have an *S*. Or rather, *S* both is and is not. The underlying thing itself is intrinsically contradictory, both is and is not. It is peculiar how hard it is even to express this contradiction. It is peculiarly difficult to say anything about the subject itself that does not merely involve giving it predicates.

If the first reason we cannot identify a single thing is the flux of the would-be thing itself which causes it to slip out from under our notice before we even identify it, **the second** (related) **reason** that we cannot really identify particular things as things without arriving at a contradiction is that all things are flowing *into and out of* each other. Though I seem to identify particular shapes of individual things, these, one and all, are part of the same overarching flux.

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[93] Socrates to Cratylus once more: "Nor yet can they be known by anyone, for at the moment the observer approaches, then they become other and of another nature, so that you cannot get any further in knowing their nature or state, for you cannot know that which has no state." (*Crat.* 440a)

[94] The most peculiar version of the river fragment handed down to us extends the assertion to the person stepping into the river as well. DK 49a. The last line of this version of the fragment, "we are and we are not," shows us that Heraclitus takes this lack of substantiality to apply to persons as well as rivers. This last point is one that separates his account from that of Plato. Plato identifies the sameness of persons as soul.

Their distinction, or our identification of their distinction, is momentary and contingent. Why, for instance, delimit *this* ripple in the river as one thing as opposed to a part of the ripple as the one thing? Why not the river itself, or the whole ecosystem? Each is a shape that, like the water in the river, is contingent and impermanent. Once we notice that the limits differentiating things are arbitrary and changing, the differentiation itself becomes just as arbitrary. Heraclitus takes this line of reasoning to its conclusion. Everything moves into and out of everything else or, as listening to the *logos* tells us, "it is wise to agree that *all* is one."[95]

Once we lose the underlying unity that makes the thing independent, the "thing" becomes arbitrary. The river is not something. All we are identifying in identifying it is some shape, or form, that part of the overall flux *appears* to have at a given moment. Yet, even if we choose to separate this part off from the rest, it never actually embodies the shape. At any rate, where we make the separation is entirely arbitrary. There is nothing about the "thing" that dictates making the boundary here rather than there. All we have is a flux moving into and out of itself without any real definition. It is mysterious that we could delimit or make boundaries at all.

Before we turn to Plato, it is worth noticing that Heraclitus hasn't only turned his fragment into a riddle, he has also explained why the fragment *should* be a riddle. The account is an account of things (or non-things) that are themselves in continuous flux. Thus, if our thought about them is to be accurate, it too needs to capture this fluidity in some way. The connection between the nature of the account and the nature of the thing accounted for is common among ancient philosophers, Plato in particular. In Plato the connection is manifest in the strong relationship between powers and their objects.[96] Knowledge, in so far as it has an external

[95] DK 50. Plato expresses the same idea by making the whole cosmos one single living animal in the *Timaeus* and in the *Republic*, I will argue, by making specific substantial forms that allow us to identify things as things merely hypothetical.

[96] This claim is central to the distinguishing of the powers in the "argument from opposites." (see: 477c1-478d2)

object, must correspond to that object. If the object is indeterminate in some way, the knowledge itself, to be the accounting for of that of which it is knowledge, should itself be indeterminate as well. Thus, if the object being thought is not what it is, our thought about the object should likewise not be what it is; it should, somehow, be contradictory and undermine itself; it should be in flux. Heraclitus' account does this by leading us into a contradiction in which our thought cannot rest. That is, the argument undermines itself. It might seem that we can conclude that the river is unknowable or that it is contradictory, yet these claims are themselves riddle-like and are ever more worthwhile when we see the contradiction inherent in them: that they undermine themselves by revealing themselves to be claims that are not claims about anything. This contradiction is analogous to that of claiming that PNC does not apply to sensible things, which is itself an application of PNC to sensible things; or that of claiming that sensibles are unknowable, which is itself a knowledge claim about sensibles. Even in saying that we cannot say anything, we are saying something.

Thus, for Heraclitus, there is actually nothing at all that we can say about sensible things. Or, rather, what can be said undermines itself even as one is saying it. Whenever we attempt to say something, or identify a particular thing as one thing, we end up with a contradiction. Ironically, this is the strength of Heraclitus' *logos*. It says nothing static and definitive. Even the claim that all is one in context doesn't say anything that can be held onto. The whole of the fragment reads: "Listening not to me but to the *logos*, it is wise to agree that all is one." We have all the aspects just mentioned expressed succinctly. The fragment is contradictory. If we listen to the *logos* we are listening to Heraclitus, and if we listen to Heraclitus we are listening to the *logos*. If all is one, it should make no difference if we listen to either one- they are the same. What could possibly be the difference between listening to Heraclitus and the logos? All distinctions are

illusory. This is the ironic statement of the *logos*- that the *logos* doesn't actually make any statement. It is nothing that can be said by you or me or by Heraclitus. It erases rather than makes distinctions. It is the distinctions applied to a world of flux that lead to the contradictions. Any specific statement that we could listen to, including Heraclitus' own command not to listen, is as illusory as the famed river. Instead, by not listening to any specific statement, by being riddled out of any definite thought, we hear the *logos* itself, insisting, as we noticed a moment ago, on the futility of identifying *one* ripple or *one* river.

If Aristotle is correct, Heraclitus' influence led Plato to separate the forms. Plato was not content to notice the illusory nature of sensible things, he sought to explain the illusion, or, at least, explain its inexplicability. There are two related issues in Heraclitus. Plato picks up on both of them. First is the issue of what the *thing* is that is in flux and moves from order to order. This is the central problem or contradiction of sensible objects that imitation is uniquely suited to address. Second is the related problem of finding these delineations between things (ripple, river, ecosystem or any ordered whole) in the world of flux in which they are never actually to be found in any real way but in which, rather, all is one. This is the problem of identifying a *particular* thing or a something.

This second problem can be detected in the *Republic* as an assertion that PNC, and indeed that specific forms in the world, are hypothetical. The contradiction in Heraclitus' account comes from claiming that the river is *one thing*. Even in claiming that it is not one thing, in referring to it we assume that it is some one thing that we can refer to. We assume some "it." Thus, we can't actually claim that the river is not one. Rather, we are *forced* to concede, at least hypothetically, that there is some one thing that is always becoming. Thus Socrates tells us that the soul, when dealing with certain sorts of entities, is forced to use hypotheses. (511a4) What

the soul hypothesizes allows it to delineate the thing before it as a single independent thing. It is hypothetical because the thing does not ever embody any particular order for long enough even for the soul to identify it. This remains to be seen.

Again, Aristotle suggests that the contradictory nature of sensible things, conceived in the manner in which Heraclitus conceived of the contradiction, led Plato to separate forms. I will argue that Aristotle is correct. The first part of the argument, which will occupy the rest of this chapter, will involve seeing that Plato's account of sensible things as *imitations* of a separate form or forms deals with both of the problems that Heraclitus is raising concerning these entities and does so quite elegantly. Heraclitean flux, as we have seen, leaves us with two problems. The first is that of the "thing" that is in flux. That is, we are left in a quandary as to what the self-same thing is that is passing from being *this* river to being a different river. At the same time, we have the problem of the identity, or illusory identity, that the river *seems* to have at any given moment. This is the problem of what to make of each shape or appearance that the river seems to take. How, that is, do we identify a "something" at all if it is not actually there but rather all is one and flowing into and out of all? These might seem to be separate and even opposite problems. The first is that of the underlying thing taking on or receiving whatever form or structure or definition the river seems to have at any given moment, the second is that of the form or definition itself.[97] However, as we have already seen to some degree in the discussion of the fragments, the structure or definition is exactly what makes the underlying thing the thing that it is. The river that we identify just is its form or structure. Thus, the separation of the thing and what it is, a separation, I suggest, that they have as a result of *both* being imitations, is the

[97] The first seems to be the problem of the matter; the second seems to be the problem of the specific forms of things. It is interesting then, when we look at the text, that no mention is made anywhere in the *Republic* of such a thing as matter. Nor is there any mention of what should be the two most important specific forms- those of the human being and the state. I will suggest that both of these, the "matter" and the "form" of individual things, are imitations.

primary problem. The problem results in further problems for each of the separated sides. These are the two problems that we get from the fragments: because what it is, is a form or definition that it is not, the "underlying thing" is not the same as itself and because it is not a definition of any*thing*, the definition of the sensible, the something that it is, can never be separate and "itself by itself" but is rather intrinsically relational and dependent on things outside of itself.

These two problems of sensible things, that of their insubstantiality and of the intrinsic arbitrariness of the determinations that make each one the particular thing that it is, both of which are present in the fragments, are the two central problems of a thing that is an imitation. Both of these aspects of imitation are manifest in the common metaphor or image of imitation, that of the mirror reflection. The first is the problem of the existence of the mirror itself. To make sense of imitation we need to assume the existence of a *thing* that is doing the imitating; to have a reflection we need a mirror. Yet, at the same time, the existence of the mirror is excluded by a central premise of imitation which takes form to be responsible for the *being* of that which participates in or imitates it. The second problem is that a specific imitation, just like a reflection in a mirror, imitates only one aspect of, or perspective on, the thing being imitated. That is, what each reflection is is an incomplete or partial representation of that which it is reflecting. This leaves the reflection or imitation as intrinsically partial by nature. It is what it is only by being a part of something else. This makes our distinguishing it as a particular thing arbitrary in just the way that our distinguishing of the river as a particular whole, as opposed to say the ripple, shows itself to be arbitrary on a careful reading of Heraclitus. In the next chapter I will argue that these particular "forms," these determinate wholes, are *dianoetic* and hypothetical. They are the orders which make the things the things that they are, yet they are orders that are not orders *of* anything, they do not ever get embodied by any material, and must therefore be understood as orders that

are *for* something- they are relational and partial. We saw this in the fragments as the apparent contingency of where we draw the boundaries between entities. Thus the sensible thing both does and does not embody the *dianoetic* order that makes it what it is. It is the underlying thing itself that is and is not the form as order of the thing. This is the impossibility of connecting form as order, as being some particular thing, and form just as being. This is not to say that the order identified is not anything; that it is not a real order. Although the form is hypothetical, as the second claim of the incompatible claims from the divided line passage (the claim that sensibles imitate or approximate *dianoetic* objects) implies, for the sensible thing to be at all it must embody some order. This is one of the central puzzles of these hypothetical forms that the next chapter will focus on. These entities, the wholes that we identify, are intrinsically partial; so much so that it is mysterious how we ever identify any whole of which to even see them as parts.

The two problems, again, are related. If the thing reflects only a perspective on, or aspect of, its form, it can never reflect the actual being of the form which includes, indeed gives rise to, all the perspectives. Thus, it seems that imitation is especially suited to make sense of Heraclitus' central problem of sensible things. The problem is that the *being* of the sensible thing, whatever it is that is passing from shape to shape, can never match up with the shape, the something, that is what the thing is. The thing, we might say, is not what it is. There really is no more elegant way to state this contradiction than to say that the sensible thing is not the *same* as itself.

That this account of imitation deals with the very problems noticed in Heraclitus' fragments is itself a sort of argument for the position, as well as for attributing it or something like it to Plato. This chapter will try to state the position, somewhat dogmatically, emphasizing the contradictions. The goal in doing so is to give it in outline. The next chapter will give more details. One important point that we can notice by looking at the whole in outline is the way in

which this account fits with a mathematical peculiarity in the image of the divided line. If one follows Socrates' relatively sparse directions, the two middle sections of the line always end up as equal in length.[98] No matter how we choose to fill in the details,[99] if we cut a line into two unequal segments and then cut each of those segments in the same ratio as the whole of the line, (509d6-10) then the larger length cut from the smaller segment and the smaller length cut from the larger segment necessarily come out to be equal. Since the relative lengths of the segments correspond to the relative degrees of truth and clarity of the beings and apprehending corresponding to those segments, this suggests that the beings and apprehendings corresponding to the two middle sections of the line are equally true and clear. Because the ratios are so carefully chosen, this must be more than a mere quirk. It is precisely the relative lengths of the line segments that Socrates is referring to when he concludes that the four experiences (*pathemata*) of the soul have a share in clarity, and the things being experienced have a share in truth, in the same ratio to one another as the segments of the line. (511e3) Yet, the segment generally taken to be the higher of the two, that is, the lower portion of the intelligible segment, is just that— intelligible; while the lower of the two is the higher portion of the visible segment and, although it is more real or true than its own reflection, it is merely an appearance.

In addition, the ratio of the two segments resulting from any one division, as evidenced by the relationship between the two lowest segments, is representative of the relationship between a thing and its imitation, shadow or reflection. (510a-b) Thus, from the triple division itself we have what appears to be three but actually turns out to be four, or five, such relationships of a thing and its imitation. The more obvious three are (1) that between the intelligibles taken together and the sensibles taken together as resulting from the first division, (2) that between the

[98] For two proofs that this is the case see: Klein, *Commentary on Plato's Meno*, 119; and Adams, *Republic of Plato*, 64.
[99] Whether, for example, we choose to make the intelligible or visible portion of the line larger.

noetic and the *dianoetic* resulting from the additional division of the intelligible portion and (3) that between sensibles things and their reflections resulting from the additional division of the sensible portion. The fourth and fifth parallel relationships, resulting from the equality of the two middle sections of the line are, interestingly enough, that between the *noetic* and sensible things and that between the *dianoetic* and sensible reflections.[100]

It seems counter to everything we take to be true about Platonic philosophy to claim that there are sensible things that are as clear or true or real as intelligibles, even lesser intelligibles; or that *doxa*, the experience of the soul corresponding to these sensibles, is as clear as *dianoia*. In fact, although the mathematical image itself suggests that they are, the divided line passage itself is one of the key passages that seems to forbid the conclusion that lesser intelligibles and sensible things are equally real. In this very passage Socrates refers to *dianoetic* reasoning as using the objects of *doxa*, the actual shapes that geometers draw, as mere images which stand in the same relation to the actual geometric shapes as their shadows stand to them. (510b2; 510d6-511a2) Of course, he says that geometers *use* these drawing as images, not that they are in fact images. Yet certainly there is some truth to the view that the sensible thing imitates or approximates mathematical entities, which would entail that the ratio of the two middle sections be anything but equal! In fact, the ratio of the lengths of these two segments should be identical to the other ratios which symbolize this relationship. There is, it seems, something more complicated going on in the passage than any simple statement of Plato's doctrine or theory of imitation could do justice.

At any rate, what is clear is that Plato takes both the *dianoetic* entities and those which *doxa* opines to be *imitations*. There can be little question that the *dianoetic* entities stand in the

[100] The fourth and fifth relationships are given explicitly by Socrates at 534a4. If nothing else, this shows that Socrates is aware of the equality of the middle sections. If A= noetic, B= dianoetic, C= sensibles and D= sensible reflections, we have (A+B)/(C+D) = A/B = C/D = A/C = B/D.

relation of imitation with the *noetic*. The opinables, or sensible things, are also imitations though it is unclear of what. The size of the segment of the line representing them would seem to suggest that they are as true as the *dianoetic* entities and are also imitations of the *noetic*. Even if we are also told that they are imitations of the *dianoetic* we are still dealing with imitations. Thus, we need to ask, first of all, what sort of a thing we are dealing with when we are dealing with an imitation. The answer should be relevant to both these entities. In so far as the two can be dealt with independently, this chapter will focus primarily on sensibles while the next will focus on the intelligibles that are known through *dianoia*. However, in the case of sensibles especially, this independence of treatment is not possible to any real degree. Thus the present chapter will deal largely with the nature of imitation broadly construed. I will argue that it is in the nature of an imitation to be contradictory and, therefore, less than completely real. Thus, Plato uses imitation to explain the contradictions noticed by Heraclitus. As Socrates' formulation of PNC signals, the contradiction inherent in being an imitation is that of not being the *same* as oneself. An imitation, simply put, is the thing that it is imitating. Yet, at the same time, it is also not that thing. This is the central contradiction in sensible things and, perhaps, even in *dianoetic* objects. In fact I hope to show that, in so far as the two are imitations of the *same* thing, that which *nous* contemplates, their very separation from one another is already a sign of their lack of self-sameness. Or, perhaps we should say that each one imitates a different aspect of the form that *nous* contemplates as if they were two images of the *noetic*, each reflecting its image from different perspectives.[101]

The problem being illustrated by the equality of the middle segments is the same as that noticed in Heraclitus. We can see it in outline here although filling in the details will require the rest of this and the following chapter. In both cases, the line and the fragments, we are

[101] For the latter sense of an imitation (as intrinsically partial) see, eg, 598a5-c4

confronted with the separation between *being* and *something*. This separation is a contradiction. The objects of *doxa* are what they are, are at all, by having a structure that is already unchanging and an object of *dianoia*. Yet, the two never quite match up. These sensible entities never embody their forms, while the *dianoetic* forms are never actually embodied by the sensible things. Thus, we have, on the one hand, a thing that isn't anything and, on the other, a something that isn't. This can be explained, in so far as a contradiction can be explained, by noticing that both are imitations of the *noetic* entities and, as such, are themselves partial and incomplete while it is only the *noetic* forms that truly are.

The rest of this chapter is focused primarily on the first of the two problems- that of the simultaneous impossibility and necessity of the existence of the thing doing the imitating. However, although it will not be properly argued for until the next chapter, I will also give an outline of the solution to the second problem, that of the particular determinations of things. The reason for doing so is because doing both together, even incompletely, will allow me to argue here that it is primarily the form of the good that makes entities be as well as be what they are.[102] Thus, being good and bad at the same time entails both being and not being, as Socrates claims in book V.

[102] The account is actually considerably more complicated than will at first be apparent. It is the case that being what it is is what makes a thing be at all. However, it is also the case that both being and being something are both equally results of the form of the good. We might also wonder whether it is the form of the good or those of the good, just and beautiful that is or are responsible for the being of things? The text is unclear. The reason for the lack of clarity, I suggest, is that we are speaking at this point about these forms as *noetic* entities. As such, we cannot distinguish between them easily as they are beyond our fundamental principle of division: the PNC. At any rate, what will be important for the account is that all three manifest in their imitations as order or structure. Again, this will make more sense after the next chapter. There, both the good and the just will be discussed. The text has very little on the beautiful outside of the book V passage.

III. Imitation, the Good and Substance

The fact that sensible things are not the same as themselves, the very contradiction noticed by Heraclitus, follows as a consequence of and is explained by, the fact that they are *imitations*.[103] Imitations are contradictory because what an imitation is is something other than itself; the imitation is not itself but rather what it is imitating. As such it is not what it is. If we take seriously Socrates' constant insistence that form is responsible for the *being* of that which imitates it, we cannot avoid this conclusion about the imitation. Plato holds that things, imitations, *are* the forms that they are imitating. Yet, at the same time, these things are also not their forms; if they were they would not be imitations.[104] In other words, an imitation both is and is not its form; and it is both of these just exactly in so far as it *is* an imitation. In both being and not being its form an imitation is not the *same* as itself. A thing that imitates form is not what it is. This is the fundamentally contradictory nature of sensible things- they both are and are not their forms.

That not being the same as oneself is what it means to be anything other than form is not natural or obvious to us. Yet if we take seriously the central tenant of the metaphysics of imitation, that the thing drives its being from the form, it is not possible to say what the "it" that participates in the form is. When we look for it we get a contradiction. There must be

[103] What is prior here? Does the contradictory nature of sensibles lead us to the forms or do the forms lead us to conclude that sensibles are contradictory? Plato uses the contradictory nature of sensibles as a premise in the argument to restrict knowledge to forms in the *Rep.* V. The recollection argument in the *Phaedo* (72e-76a) is another important example. In both these cases however, we are, to use Aristotle's phrase, moving *toward* principles. (*Nic. Eth.* 1095a32) That is, we are led to the forms as a way of explaining the fact that we seem to encounter contradictions in experience. The *Phaedo* argument is the more obvious: we see the two not-quite-equal, or equal and unequal, sticks and we remember the equal itself. In a way it is the experience of the sticks that leads us to the equal itself, but this is a motion towards the principle. We are lead to the form of the equal as to something that had to be there already to make the experience possible in the first place. We could only recall the equal itself from the sticks (in which the equal is no more present than a person is in their photograph) if we had *prior* knowledge of the equal. It must be there already as something that makes the experience possible. Recollection represents this quite well; this being the motion to the principle. Once we have the principle we are in a position to explain the experience. (See also chapter 2, section II above.)

[104] Thus the quote from Plato's *Cratylus* which heads this chapter: "I should say rather that the image, if expressing in every point the entire reality, would no longer be an image." (*Cratylus*, 432b3)

something there that is not form and yet, if there is something there, that something is already partaking of form. That a metaphysics of imitation leads to a contradiction in the nature and existence of the thing doing the imitating might leave us wondering why Plato did not, at this point, abandon a metaphysics that countenances, let alone centralizes, imitation. We should not forget however that as problematic as it is this account is also a solution of sorts, or the beginnings of one. It is a solution to the problem of Heraclitean flux. In fact the self-contradictory nature of sensible things is exactly what the theory of imitation is uniquely suited to explain. This contradiction, like that in the case of Heraclitus' river, is much more fundamental than that of a thing taking on, or appearing to take on, contradictory predicates at the same time. The contradiction is, explicitly, that of the simultaneous being and not-being of the thing which is to take on any possible predicates. The contradiction is in the very being of the sensible imitation in virtue of the fact that it is an imitation.

If, on the other hand, we are to object to Plato's (and Heraclitus') account because it is asserting the existence of things that embody contradictions and that nothing that exists can embody a contradiction, his reply is that it is the very being of these things that is in question. That is, we would have actually provided an argument *for* his position that sensibles do not properly exist. Contradiction is precisely the suitable vehicle for understanding the degree of reality, of *being*, intrinsic to an entity. If it is the case that sensible things cannot help but embody contradictions, their very existence is suspect. That is, the objection is one that Plato's account absorbs quite easily. Indeed, contradictions cannot "be." That is exactly what makes the principle so indispensible a tool. If the "thing" in question turns out to be contradictory, we can no longer grant it *being* in the proper sense. Yet, at the same time, we need to explain the presence of the apparent contradiction itself. The fact that we are confronted with contradictions

at all is a sign that there is *something* before us giving rise to these contradictions. Such a something cannot *be* in the sense that Plato speaks of the forms as being but it must be in some way so as, at least, to account for the contradiction. Thus, these things, Socrates tells us, neither are nor are not but are rather, "rolling around as intermediates between what is not and what purely is." (479c5-9) Which is to say, they are *becoming*. Socrates is not claiming that contradictions can exist. That is precisely the reason why any intrinsic contradiction in sensible things is so significant. If these entities are contradictory their existence is suspect. Nor can we solve the problem by claiming that these entities *appear* to be contradictory but, upon inspection, turn out to be consistent. This is because the entities are themselves the *appearances*; they are things that are *sensible*.

Discussion of the problem of the participant in (or thing doing the imitating of) form is largely absent from the literature on Plato. This seems to me to be a sign that we have gotten too comfortable in an interpretation of the dialogues that simply overlooks the problem. An interpretation that is both untenable and unjustified by the texts. This interpretation, it seems to me, rests largely on the supposed distinction between substantial and predicative forms,[105] a distinction which appears, at first, to avoid the problem. As this sort of interpretation would have it, when we ask about what it is that imitates or partakes of the form of the good or the just we are asking about some independent thing which exists apart from these predicates. The positing of a separate substance would seem to arise here from the need to explain what it is, after all, that receives the alleged predicates such as tallness or goodness. Yet, Plato's theory of imitation ultimately undermines the need for, as well as the possibility of,[106] forms of substances

[105] This distinction is assumed as much by the "veridical" reading of *Republic* V as by the "predicative" reading. See footnote 113 below.

[106] The argument for the impossibility of transcendent substantial forms of artifacts is actually relatively simple. Forms are themselves by themselves and not in relation. Artifacts are intrinsically relational. Thus, they are not

like beds or tables and even fingers or people. For an account of reality that explains *that* as well as *what* things are by their imitating transcendent forms, substantial form does nothing to solve the problem of the participant. The problem immediately resurfaces with respect to the substantial forms in a way that is, if anything, more severe- or more obviously so. The positing of substantial forms gives rise immediately to the same question with respect to the imitations of these forms: what is the *thing* that participates in *these* forms? It is the need for a separate participant that would seem to lead us to the assumption of substantial forms in the first place. Yet the positing of such forms does nothing to solve the problem. It merely moves it over.

What we find when we look for an underlying subject is another instance of a form; at least, if we find anything at all. When we predicate browness of a table, for example, or longness of a finger for that matter, it is not clear that there is a single thing, a table or a finger, that is underlying these would-be predicates. What is the table, for Plato? If it is something that we can speak about or make reference to, it is not a particular at all; it is itself a form.[107] What is the thing that participates in the form of table? As an instance and not the "table itself," whatever such a thing may be, it is also *not* a table. When we look at the issue in terms of forms that we think of as making up the very being of a thing, like the alleged substantial forms, it is, if anything, easier to see why the existence of such forms would necessitate that the thing be intrinsically contradictory. The thing both is and is not the thing that it is. The thing is and is not the table. It is a table because that is the form that it participates in that makes it what it is. It is not a table because it is not the form itself. If there is a form of table, the sensible table is both a

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forms. We just ask ourselves what the perfect pruning knife does. The answer is that it prunes the perfect vineyard. This is absurd. The perfect vineyard, by definition, needs no pruning. (Natural forms are never mentioned in the *Republic*, though a similar argument can be made with respect to them.) Yet, these "forms" of artifacts are still important. They will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

[107] The forms of artifacts, which are explicitly *posited* in *Republic* X, will be discussed in the next chapter. That discussion will argue that these alleged substantial forms are themselves imitations of the forms of the good, just and beautiful. This chapter, among other things, is providing the context for that argument.

table and not a table in the same way it is both just and unjust or brown and not brown. It is a table because that is the form that it participates in that makes it what it is. It is not a table because it is not the form itself.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter what we identify these forms as. So long as we accept that, on Plato's account at least, form is what makes the thing what it is, we will arrive at the same problem. This is because what makes a thing be and what makes a thing be some particular thing are the same—a thing can't be and yet be nothing. However, as considering the constant flux or becoming of sensible things forces us to notice, *what* a thing is is constantly changing. The river continues with an ever new form or shape. Thus, the thing and its definition can never be properly put together even long enough to step into or consider it once, let alone twice.

Thus Socrates claims, explicitly, in book V that his account, the account which takes imitations to both be and not be their forms, applies to "all" the forms:

"And the same story with the just and the unjust, and good and bad, and with *all* the forms: each of them itself [*auto*] is one, but since they make their appearance everywhere in common with actions and bodies and one another, each appears to be many." (476a4-7)

Although Socrates makes no mention of forms of things like tables in the passages in question, if there are forms of substances like human beings or states or fingers, or even tables and pruning knives, these would seem to be included in the account as well.[108] The fact that these forms, forms of substances, are not mentioned at all may tell us all we need to know about their philosophical significance, or lack thereof. Ironically, the alleged distinction between

[108] Given how substantial forms are supposed to change the account on the predicative reading, they should certainly have been mentioned separately for such a reading to make sense. This seems to me to be a serious textual problem for the predicative reading. So too for any reading that suggests a significant distinction between these types of forms. This coupled with the fact that these forms only compound the problem that they are to solve, that of the existence of the thing taking on the form, seems to me to be a decisive argument both against making the distinction and against attributing it to Plato.

forms of subjects and those of predicates is motivated by the exact right problem; the problem of making sense of what it is that is participating in these forms. Yet, while Plato is struggling with this problem, as well as attempting to provoke his reader into struggling with it, the predicative reading would avoid the problem by positing a subject. Yet, this subject itself turns out to be an imitation of form and we face the same problem all over again. Perhaps Plato's intention is not to solve the problem but to provoke the readers into engaging it. Again, he is aware that *the many* will not be provoked. (523d4) This is not a sign that we should not be. The opposite is far more likely. It is, as this passage itself attests, the noticing of the contradiction in appearances that motivates the one noticing to turn towards being. If we look past the contradiction we miss the opportunity to make the turn.

In addition, not only are no substantial forms mentioned in the book V passage, there is no mention anywhere in the *Republic* of a form of human being or of the *polis*. Why, one can't help but wonder, if there are such forms, are they never mentioned in a text that purports to examine and compare their natures? How could I know whether justice is good or bad for a human being if I don't even know what a human being is? This is the very sort of question that we would expect Socrates to raise.[109] We are never told that what makes a city be a city or what makes a human being be a human being are the forms of city and human being respectively. The very absence of their appearance in the text is strong evidence against Plato's belief in the existence of such forms. In fact if it was the case that each had its own substantial form and justice was merely an attribute of these things the very analogy Plato is making between the justices of the two would be suspect; for attributes or predicates are what they are in relation to that of which they are attributes or predicates and not in themselves.

[109] See, for example, *Meno* 71a9-b8. Socrates asks Meno how we can know if virtue is teachable before we know what virtue is. In the *Meno*, *virtue* is apparently assumed to be a thing that does or does not display the predicate of teachability.

Nor does the text contain any mention anywhere of *matter*, which is probably the assumed answer to the question of what it is that participates in the forms. It is perhaps striking that absolutely no mention is made of matter in the *Republic*[110] but there is good reason for it. Plato cannot consistently affirm the existence of a something that *is* in its own right and participates in the forms; to do so would undermine his own central claim that form is responsible for the very being of all that is. To claim the existence of some "thing" that exists before and can take on the form as a predicate makes no sense on such a view. When we look for what it *is* that participates in form we get a contradiction.[111] We can't understand participation without a separate participant and yet, we can't understand participation with a separate participant as the existence of a separate participant undermines the central tenant of participation: that things get their *being* from form. In other words, we can't understand participation. Or, to locate the unintelligibility where Socrates does, we can't understand the thing that participates.

What the text *does* claim, as perhaps its central metaphysical point in fact, is that at least one of the forms usually taken to be predicates, that of the good, is responsible for the being as well as the being something of the things that are:

"Then claim as well that the things which are known not only get their being-known furnished by the good, but they're also endowed by that very source with their very being (*to einai*) and their being what they are (*ten ousian hup ekeinou autois proeinai*), even though the good is not

[110]For rare examples of Plato's use of *hule* see *Timaeus* 69a and *Philebus* 54c.

[111] The being of that which takes on the form is actually a major concern for Aristotle as well. It is one that has led to a contradiction, or at least a tension, between his physics and metaphysics. Aristotle arrives at matter in the physics by necessity. Matter is necessary as a substrate underlying substantial *change*. (For a concise explanation of the problem in Aristotle see: Owens, "Matter and Predication.") Plato never unequivocally makes such a move. Timaeus does something similar (*Tim.* 49b-50a) but only after confessing that he can't even convince himself that what he is saying is in fact the case. (*Tim*. 48c-d) In addition, Timaeus uses the assertion to *deny* that things usually taken to be substances, like fire and water, are things. (*Tim.* 49e) Maybe the closest analog we get is in the *Phaedo*. Implicit in the first argument for the immortality of the soul is the assumption that *soul*, not body or matter, is the substrate that underlies the "substantial" change from life to death. (*Phaedo* 70d-72e) This is perhaps a sign that soul is substantial, or substance like, for Plato. Here what is important is that "matter," even if we give it a label, is not something we can unequivocally affirm the *existence* of. It *is* without being anything.

being (*ousias*), but something over and above being, beyond it in seniority and surpassing it in power." (509b5-10) [112]

This passage is central to my interpretation. If the good is responsible for being then certainly to be good and not good (or good and bad) at the same time would indeed mean being and not being at the same time, which is exactly what the book V passage suggests. (479c6-9) This existential significance is also evident in relation to justice- at least in so far as the soul is concerned. We have already seen this to be the case, to some degree, in the last chapter. It will be seen again in the next chapter when we turn to the argument for the immortality of the soul. The significance of justice for the being of the soul follows entirely, I suggest, from the fact that justice is the *good* of the soul.

That substantial forms do nothing to solve the very problem for which they might be taken to be valuable should be enough to at least motivate looking at the possibility of the good as substantial or, at least, as accounting for substance. That doing so jives far better with the text is a strong motivation for attributing something like this account to Plato. Most significant, however, is the way in which understanding the form of the good in this way opens up Plato's account philosophically. Plato, it seems, is trying to get at the thing to which attributes are being predicated. It is difficult to even formulate the question in any sort of normal way. This thing, in so far as it *is*, is itself an imitation of the forms. As such it is not what it is. The sensible pruning knife that takes on the predicates of length and sharpness is itself only a pruning knife because of its partaking in, or imitating, the form of the knife (or whatever we take the form it is imitating to be). Outside of this imitation it is not at all. Our language, our very thought, forces us into

[112] This is the claim made in the famous sun image. I will argue in the next chapter that there are good philosophical and textual reasons for thinking that the form of the just fills a similar role with respect to the soul. The form of the beautiful is not actually considered much in the Republic outside of the book V passage. I would suggest that it, like those of the good and the just, manifests in the proper ordering of the thing and is thus more than a mere predicate. Again, this will make more sense after the next chapter.

predication. When we try to think about the subject we end up simply giving it more predicates. This is at once a problem with our ability to think and speak about these things, which are explicitly unknowable, and it is also a problem with the existence of the things themselves. Things derive their being from the forms which they imitate, but as imitations they are not those things. If their very being comes from their formal "predicates," they do not exist outside of those predicates. To say that a sensible imitation is not what it is is to say that it violates even what we might call the principle of identity. It is not the "same" as itself. This is the very language Socrates uses in his formulation of PNC. The tendency in the literature is to see Plato as holding that some sensible S is both P and not P. The problem is actually more fundamental. The sensible is both S and not S.[113]

Socrates has no shortage of images to illustrate this central tenet of his account (that this aspect of imitations cannot be made fully intelligible). Sensible things are to forms like shadows (515c2), reflections (596e1), paintings (597c1) and images in dreams (476c4-6) are to them. Of course this relationship, between a thing and its reflection, is an *image* of the relationship between forms and sensibles. As such it falls short. The place at which it falls short is the necessary existence of the mirror for us to make sense of the reflection. Try and imagine a shadow cast on nothing, a reflection that is not in any mirror or a painting without a canvas and you've got the idea. Of course, Plato's point is that we can't really imagine or *know* a reflection with no mirror because it is contradictory.[114]

[113] The so-called "veridical" reading of Republic V actually makes this same "predicative" slip. Fine, "Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V," 134-135, argues that the claim "S is both P and not P" is a perfectly intelligible claim about sensible things. We can see this, she argues, by simply renaming "both P and not P" as, say, A. We now simply have the claim that S is A, which is an example of an intelligible claim about sensible things. Yet, her observation looks past the problem. It is the S itself that is unintelligible even before any predicates are predicated of it.

[114] In fact, even this picture of unintelligibility is too clear. We cannot say that there is a mirror yet, at the same time, we cannot say that there is no mirror either because we need to make sense of the illusion itself. We have to explain the fact that we have arrived at a contradiction.

One quick aside: If the good, and perhaps also the just and the beautiful, are responsible for the being of things which are, what do we make of the *being* of their negative counterparts? Do the forms of the bad, the unjust and the ugly, forms also mentioned in the book V passage, actually exist?

The predicative reading rests on the existence of forms of things like injustice and ugliness. However, it is unclear what status such forms have for Plato. Although we have a reference in this very section of the text to these forms, nowhere in Plato, as far as I know, is there ever any reference to a form of the bad, of the ugly or of the unjust as *auto kath auto*. They are only mentioned in conjunction with their opposites. That is, they are only discussed in relation to other forms. Yet, as the very passage in question warns, viewing a form in conjunction with another form distorts that form. In fact, no distinction is made between this way of distorting a form and the way it is distorted by its connection to actions and bodies.[115] By never mentioning them alone Plato is warning us against taking these negative forms too seriously.

We should acknowledge, as Gregory Vlastos does,[116] how problematic the existence of such forms would in fact be. As we have seen, the goodness is used unequivocally in the *Republic* to account for the existence and the knowability of anything that is and is knowable. We are told in book I that injustice depends on justice for any strength or power that it has. (351c5-352a8) Thus, if the forms of badness and injustice *are* for Plato, they would have to *be* good and just. In other words, they would be as contradictory as the sensibles are. Yet, not being contradictory in the way that the sensibles are is what makes a form a form in the first place.

Although he notices this problem, Vlastos' account does not avoid it. Plato's apparent willingness to countenance forms of injustice and badness motivates Vlastos to deny any higher

[115] See: 476a4-7. Appearances seem to just be forms in relation to one another.
[116] Vlastos, "Degrees of Reality," 7-8.

"evaluative" reality for the forms but to maintain their higher "cognitive" reality instead. However, Plato could not accept Vlastos' amendment of his position. Since the good is responsible for the being known of a thing as well as for its being, the same problem resurfaces with respect to the cognitive reality of these negative forms. Forms like injustice and badness could not be more knowable than sensibles either. To be known they would have to have some degree of goodness and justice. Again, this would make them contradictory and, therefore, unintelligible. Vlastos attempts to separate cognitive and evaluative reality. Yet cognitive reality, for Plato, is also explicitly dependent upon the good. We might add that the central claim of the argument, valid or invalid, is that cognitive reality (or knowability) and metaphysical reality (or being) line up with one another. It is no surprise that Vlastos feels the need to suggest some amendments to the account. On his own terms though, he should have gone much further.

The problem of the existence of the bad, I suggest, is exactly analogous to the problem of the existence of the "mirror" in which forms are reflected. To say that a thing is bad is actually to say that it is good and bad at the same time, or say that it is good and not good, or that it is and is not. This is why there is no bad itself by itself. The bad is intrinsically contradictory, which is to say it cannot *be*. We can't say that the bad does not exist- just as we can't say that the mirror does not exist. Thus, the conclusion in this section of text that the sensible thing, the appearance that will always appear to be both good and bad, is in between being and not being. In addition, if there is such a thing as "matter" in Plato, it would have to be something like this contradictory thing that is and is not form. Perhaps the best description we can give of matter, keeping in mind that any description is inadequate, is that matter is a shorthand means of referring to the separation from form itself. Matter is non-sameness. If it has a "form" its form is that of the bad.

Lastly, recalling an issue from chapter two, we should ask now what sort of opposites (*enantiai*) the good and bad actually are? In fact, their opposition seems to be of just the sort we noticed between reason and desire in the last chapter. There, desires were contradictory instances of reason and opposed reason just in virtue of this contradiction. Here too, the bad, it seems, is a contradictory instance of the good. Thus, this account harmonizes with that one. The bad, as contradictory instance of the good, is just like a desire in opposition to reason.

IV. Imitation, The Good and Particularity

The second aspect of imitations, also illustrated especially well by the mirror metaphor, is that, like a mirror reflection, an imitation can only imitate one part of, or one perspective on, the thing it is imitating. When one looks in a mirror he sees his face as it appears from only one angle. He can change that angle but the reflection reflects only one angle back at him at any one time. The thing reflected can be reflected just as accurately, or accurately and inaccurately, from any number of different and even opposed perspectives. This is because the reflection, in addition to being insubstantial relative to the thing being reflected, is also only *partial* and reflects the appearance of only one part or perspective on the thing. As such, the reflection actually has few if any of the essential attributes of the thing it is reflecting. It shows only how the thing *appears*, and only from one perspective at that. The reflection of a couch, for example, has none of the solidity or structure that makes the couch what it is nor can it do the thing or things that a couch does. It merely shows us one way the couch may appear; it gives us a likeness.

Again, the part or aspect imitated or reflected in this way can never be the being or substance of the thing which is itself never a part. The being of the thing, what makes the thing be one

thing, cannot be captured by a reflection that is limited to a single perspective of the thing to the exclusion of all other perspectives. It can never be the underlying nature but only the appearance. Thus Socrates' description of the craftsman as imitator:

"Well if he doesn't make the one that *is* a couch, he wouldn't be making something that *is*, would he, but something that's like a thing that *is* without being that? And if anyone were to claim that the work produced by the couch-workman or by any other artisan is something that *is* in the full sense, he's liable to be saying something that's not true." (597a3-8)

Any particular reflection, which is one of many possible reflections of the thing reflected, is one of many because the thing, while it has only one being, is potentially unlimited in appearances. Indeed, this "one over many" aspect of imitation is emphasized in book X in the same section as that from which the quote above is taken. (597c1-8)[117] The imitations are many and yet different from each other precisely because none of them embody or reflect the actual being of the one thing but only its appearance. The puzzle here is to carry this analogy over and use it to understand the relationship it is supposed to explain: that of the form and the thing. How, to use the same example, do we understand the form that the couch is imitating if we take as our starting point the claim that the couch is a partial, perspectival and insubstantial reflection of this form? Not only does the sensible couch, as a mere reflection of form, not have the same substantiality or structure as the form, it doesn't even have the whole of the appearance. Perhaps most significantly, it also cannot do whatever it is that the form does. That is, neither the structure nor work that make the couch we experience a couch are the same as those of the form of the couch. In fact, it seems that they are not even similar. Rather, just as the structure and work of the reflection is completely different from that of the couch, the structure and work of

[117] The "one over many" aspect of imitation is also important in the book V passage (476a4-7) and in the claim in book V that the philosopher, who loves knowledge of the forms, loves *all* of knowledge. (475b6)

the couch is completely different from that of the form. Relative to its form, the couch is a partial and insubstantial appearance. From the other side we can see that, if there is a form of a couch at all, it is nothing like the physical instance with respect to anything but the most superficial qualities. It is unclear what this form would be like. It must have these qualities, a structure and a work, in a way that is more real or true or what have you than the way in which the sensible couch has them.[118]

Although the problem raised is itself merely the result of an image, it should be enough to motivate at least considering another way of thinking about the form that the couch is imitating. It is clear that it does not need to, that it should not in fact, resemble a couch in any straightforward way. This should be enough to motivate at least considering that the form in question is that of the good.[119] We have already noted several philosophical and textual reasons for taking the good to be responsible for the *being* of the sensible thing. Now we are seeing the beginnings of an account of why we should take the good to be responsible for the being *something* of the sensible as well. This too is explicit in the passage already quoted above. Again, most of this account will be given in the next chapter. Giving it in outline here will allow us to see more clearly that the separation between being and being something, that a thing is and what it is, is the primary contradiction in the sensible thing.

Of the sorts of forms generally taken to be substantial, the only ones considered in the *Republic* are those of *artifacts*. However, these cannot be forms in the proper sense of the word. The artifact's "form" is something akin to the order or structure of the artifact. This order or

[118] The proponents of a "type" distinction between forms and sensibles are a philosophically diverse lot. See for example: Allen, "Participation and Predication"; Nehamas, "Self-Predication"; and Patterson, *Image and Reality*. For some, like Nehamas, the central problem motivating the distinction in type is that of the self predication of the forms. Is the just beautiful and pious? Is it one? The distinction in type that I am advocating is actually suggested by this concern as well: the forms as they are in themselves, unlike their instances, are not predicates. Rather, they are *things*.

[119] We could also get to the good as the form of forms by following out the "one over many" method Socrates uses to get to forms of artifacts in the first place. (596a5*ff*)

structure is what it is, in turn, by allowing the artifact to accomplish some end, the end for which the artifact is designed and which makes it what it is. Yet, because it is defined in terms of something outside of itself, this order or structure cannot be a true form which is always "itself by itself." Nor, we might add, is there any way to think of this order alone as being *more* substantial than the artifact that embodies it, or embodies it and does not embody it. Rather, as Plato perhaps signals by having Socrates refer to these forms as being merely *posited* (596a5)—and as their being orders or structures (which are a kind of mathematical entity) strongly suggests—these entities are *dianoetic* in nature and are also, like the things which embody them, imitations of *noetic* entities. The "forms" of artifacts, and indeed of all particular sensible things, are themselves imitations of forms.

If we follow this out, this second aspect of imitation also, upon investigation, leads us to the good as that which things are imitating. The posited forms of artifacts are the "something" that the sensible things (in this case things needed for the functioning of the state) are. Yet these things are not forms. They are actually limited and partial imitations of the form of the good. Put simply, each artifact is a partial, limited good; it is good for a specific purpose. Artifacts, like pruning knives, are good for doing some things and bad for doing others. Or, to use the vocabulary of book V, the artifact is both good and bad at the same time. The pruning knife, as good *for something*, is a particular manifestation of goodness. That is, while the good has its goodness "itself by itself" and is always good, the particular reflections of the good that are sensible things are good for particular external ends. While the good is good in relation to itself, and is always good, the artifact is a particular good that is good for a particular end. The order that the thing has, an order that makes it what it is, also connects it to things outside of itself and gives it the character of being a part. This externality of the artifact's end also entails that the

artifact is also not good, or bad, for other ends. The pruning knife is bad, for example, as a children's toy. Thus, it is a particular, partial and limited good. When we see in the next chapter that this same aspect of the chair's nature- the externality of its end- is also closely linked to the chair's insubstantiality, the argument will be quite decisive.

All this is quite reminiscent as well of the second problem Heraclitus led us to. When we look at an order that is what it is by relating to some external end, in essence we are ordering that thing in relation to something else. The radiator of a car or the kidneys of an animal are separate independent things only hypothetically. When we try to understand them they are intelligible only in relation to that end for which they function. This is the focus of their ordering. If the same is true of the car or the animal as a whole, we will have to say the same thing about it. The thing with an external end is a whole by being a part. Thus, as we noticed in relation to Heraclitus' river, where we actually draw the lines between such things, which things we refer to as wholes, is arbitrary. Neither the ripple, nor the river, nor the forrest is actually one and independent. In themselves the "things'" in so far as each is something, are intrinsically connected to the larger whole. They are what they are in relation to each other. No particular thing is independent but, rather, all is one.

Thus, whether we call it flux or becoming, the fact that "things" cannot hold on to the determinations that make them what they are leads to problems for both the things and the determinations. The problem for the thing, again, is that what it is is the determination. Thus, without the determination we cannot properly affirm its existence; it exists without being anything. This is Heraclitus' first problem. The problem for the determination is that, because it is not a determination of anything, it does not seem to have existence; it is a something that isn't. This is Heraclitus' second problem. For Heraclitus, this is a sign that all particular

determinations are illusory, that there are no particular things at all but that, rather, all is one. Yet, for Plato this is only the beginning. These illusions, even if they are illusions, are still something, even if it is a contradictory something. In addition the determinations make the "things" possible in the first place. Thus, Plato needs some way to make sense of these determinations and to account for their passing into and out of one another. The way he does so is quite sophisticated. As we will see in detail in the first half of the next chapter, he makes the determinations be what they are in relation to one another. That is, the determination that each thing has, though unintelligible as a determination *of* something, is intelligible in a limited way as a determination *for* something. In this way the very determination itself passes over into another determination not unlike one ripple passing into another in a river. In fact, these determinations are so interdependent that their separation, each into the particular determination that it is, is merely *hypothetical*. Just as Heraclitus asserts, in truth the whole is all one thing. Thus, although these determinations are forms in some sense, as they must be to account for the being of things, they are not true forms. Thus, they are *dianoetic* and hypothetical.

Again, the hypothetical nature of these determinations will be taken up in the next chapter. What is significant to notice with respect to the main argument of this chapter is that, as the equality of the middle segments of the line indicates, the thing (being) and the determination (being something) are both imitations of the good. The good is responsible both for what makes all things be, and is the same in all things, as well as responsible for the determination that makes all things be the one thing that each one is. Things are what they are by being particular instances of the good. Yet the good has these characteristics in a way that is so far from the way they appear in sensibles that it seems to be a mistake to speak of the good as having them at all. Or, rather, particular things, in never being able to unite their being with what they are, don't

have either one of these in a consistent way. The good, on the other hand, has its being and its being what it is in a completely unified way. Thus, while the two essential aspects of imitation can never be united within the imitation itself, they are united in the good in such a way that the good has a completely distinct *type* of being from sensible things. It stands to them as they stand to reflection or imitations of themselves. Goodness "itself by itself" is metaphysically distinct from good things in just the way required by the analogy to a thing and its imitation.

V. Conclusion

Socrates distinguishes forms and sensible things by noticing that the latter are contradictory, while the former are not. The contradiction is spoken of in terms that make it difficult to see that there is actually a contradiction; at least, it is hard to see how there is one of the sort that would motivate the sort of radical distinction Plato seems to be making. While the form of the beautiful, for example, will never appear to be ugly, any particular instance of beauty will also be an instance of ugliness; the beautiful thing will also be ugly. So too, Socrates claims, with the forms of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad and, indeed, *all* the forms. That these instances embody opposites motivates the claim that these sensible things cannot be said to either be or not be or to be both or neither. (479c5) This is puzzling. The puzzle comes largely from the fact that all Socrates' examples in the passage in question seem to be instances of predicates. Thus, it is unclear, if there are forms of substances, why the account would apply to them as well, as the inclusion of all forms would indicate. In addition, and along the same lines, why conclude here that the sensible things cannot be said to either be or not? Why not simply say, as most of us would, that the thing is, for example, good in relation to some things and not in

relation to others. Initially, it is unclear why Plato's statement is metaphysically significant or whether it can be maintained.

To appreciate Plato's account we have to see that the contradiction is not that of an independently existing thing taking on apparently contradictory predicates. Rather, the contradiction is that of the non-being, or being and non-being, of the thing of which the would-be predicates are being predicated; the contradiction is, as Socrates claims, in the very being of the sensible thing. The contradiction is that there is no thing, no self-same substance, there to take on any predicates or anything else. The thing taking on the predicates is itself already an instance of form- of the forms of the good the just and the beautiful in fact, the very forms in question. But, taking on or imitating the forms, it cannot itself be these forms. To be one of these forms and not be one of these forms at the same time is thus a contradiction intrinsic to the very being of the thing.

Indeed, even forms like longness (and shortness), the forms that give rise to the contradiction in the fingers passage, are a presence and an absence that reflect the same account: specifically, the use of length in the fingers passage highlights well the second problem of imitations. This form, length itself, is different in type from the length of the finger. In the finger, length just is relational. To have some length is to have it in relation to something else. Yet, since the finger is its form, the finger's being is wrapped up in this relation. Thus, the contradiction in the relation, being long relative to one thing and short relative to another, is a contradiction intrinsic to what the finger is.

CHAPTER FOUR

"And isn't it the case that the excellence, beauty, and rightness of each implement, animal, and action is related to no other thing than the use for which each has either been made or else been naturally adapted?" (*Republic* X, 601d3-6)

I. Overview

This chapter combines and completes the work of the previous two chapters. Specifically, this chapter connects what has been argued in chapter two concerning the soul and its internal principle of unity with what has been seen in chapter three to be a lack of such unity, or self-sameness, in sensible things. Soul, specifically the rational soul, makes possible the singling out of distinct unities in the world of flux or becoming. It is the soul's possession of its own internal principle of unity, or internal form, that allows it to pick out unities in the world. It is the action of the soul which determines specific limits to particular things. These limits are, as the discussion of Heraclitus in the previous chapter showed, never more than arbitrary or hypothetical. The picking out of unities in the world is the soul's application of PNC, in many senses its own principle, to the world outside itself. This the soul does so as to preserve its own, separate, non-hypothetical unity.

When we ask what it is that gives things their determinate character, the short answer generally given on Plato's behalf is form. Form, in addition to being responsible for the existence of things, is responsible for the determinations that make them the specific things that they are. This answer is fine as far as it goes; indeed when Socrates speaks of the forms of

artifacts in *Republic* X[120] he would seem to be advocating something like this picture. However, the determinations being given, the "forms" of artifacts, are not actually forms in the proper sense. Although ultimately there are perhaps forms (or even a single form—that of the good) responsible for the being and unity of all things, the relation is not as direct as the short answer might suggest. The problem with calling *these* entities, the only forms of particular things mentioned in the text, forms is that any "form" the artifact has is a result of, and is connected to, the end or work that the artifact is designed, or formed, to serve or do. This relationship to an end, and an external one at that, is something that no true form existing "itself by itself" could possibly have. The argument for this is through example and is relatively simple. One of Plato's examples of an artifact in the text is that of a pruning knife. If there were a true form of a pruning knife, it would be ideal and exist, as the short answer would have it, in the realm of the forms. Its end, if it is to be an ideal version of the pruning knife which imitates it, would be the pruning of the ideal vineyard.[121] Yet, the ideal vineyard, in so far as it is ideal, would not require any pruning. Pruning is something that belongs to the non-ideal vineyard as a result of its very non-ideality. If, as the quote which heads this chapter suggests, and as this chapter will argue, the "forms" of artifacts are intrinsically connected to some use, work or end, there can be no true forms of these entities. Rather, the "form" of the pruning knife is what it is as a result of the necessity for pruning in the non-ideal world. This account will apply to anything with an end that is outside of itself to which its determination is so intrinsically connected. Thus, in arguing that the artifact's external end is essential to its being, and to its being the very thing that it is, this chapter will argue against understanding the artifact to be an imitation of its own form;

[120] These alleged forms are "posited" by Socrates and Glaucon (596a4-6) as part of a discussion of imitation and poetry.
[121] That forms, if they are like the sensible things which imitate them, are what they are only in relation to other forms is an essential part of the separation argument of the *Parmenides.* (133a5-135b2)

certainly if its form is to be taken in the straightforward sense of there being a real pruning knife, itself by itself, that the sensible pruning knife is imitating.[122]

One might claim in defense of the forms of artifacts that the form imitated by the artifact exists, as a form, in a way that is entirely different from the way in which the same form exists within the particular sensible thing. That is, we might distinguish the very *type* of thing that a form is from the type of thing that a sensible thing is. In fact I am largely in agreement with this claim. There is, however, the not insignificant matter of determining what the distinction in type amounts to. Once we see how central the end is to the form of the artifact, it is hard to imagine what it would look like, as an artifact, if this end were taken away. What would it mean to have a form of an artifact that was not good *for* anything? Or, to note another connected problem with taking these entities as forms, what would an artifact with no parts look like? What we get following such a line of inquiry to the end, I suggest, is exactly what we will get in this chapter. The forms that make these artifacts what they are are ultimately those of the good, the just and the beautiful. The distinction in type between the true forms and the "forms" of artifacts is not unlike that between two objects Socrates commonly uses to illustrate this very distinction: a thing and its reflection. The "form" of the artifact is a particular instantiation of goodness that, like any reflection, imitation or instantiation, reflects only one particular aspect or perspective on the thing reflected. (598a5-8) Thus, while the form of the good itself is always good, the form of the artifact is good *for* some particular end (and not for others). The distinction, in this case, is connected to the distinction between a thing with an external end and that with an end in itself as well as that between a simple unity and the unity of a thing like an artifact which has parts. In other words, the form of the good exists in itself and is good for itself while the "form" of the artifact is merely a reflection of the good. It is significant as well that this being for some

[122] Why Socrates even refers to forms of artifacts is a question that will be discussed in this chapter.

external and particular end makes the "form" of the artifact a mere imitation of form at just the point at which its plurality, self-externality and lack of independence become manifest, as we will see.

The good itself, though in some sense responsible for the artifact's "form," cannot determine the form of the artifact by being its end in any straightforward sense. We have already seen why. The good is ideal. It has no need of anything an artifact could provide. If, as this chapter will argue, the form of the artifact is what it is in relation to the artifact's use or end, the relationship between the artifact and the form or forms that make it what it is is not simple or direct. The account requires some sort of intermediate to make sense of the way in which things imitate or participate in form. What is required is something incomplete enough to require the artifact but complete enough to serve as an end. What this something is, I will argue, is the soul. The artifact is what it is *for* the soul. The soul on the other hand, at least the rational soul, is for itself. This character of being for itself means that the soul has an internal principle of unity and goodness. This internal principle, the internal good of the soul, is reason. It is reason that allows for the application of PNC both *to* and *by* the soul. We have already seen, in chapter two, that reason is in some sense the *whole* soul. That reason is also the *end* of the soul makes the soul an end in itself.

II. Posited Forms: Order

The only forms mentioned anywhere in the *Republic* that fit the mold of what we would generally think of as being "substantial," if we take substantial forms as being those which make a thing one and independent, are the forms of artifacts mentioned by Socrates in book X. Yet,

the existence of such forms is never unequivocally affirmed in any of the dialogues.[123] When these forms are mentioned in the *Republic* Socrates makes something of a show of the fact that their existence is not argued for. He mentions these forms with the disclaimer that they are "posited." He and Glaucon, "following [their] usual approach," will, "take [*tithesthai*; literally: "thesize" or, hereafter, "posit"] some one particular form for each group of many things to which we apply the same name...." (596a3-7) This claim includes far more than just the forms of artifacts. In fact, it would seem to make "artifact" itself a form, which is peculiar. For now though, I want to focus on the disclaimer. It is both familiar and interesting. It comes at the moment Socrates and Glaucon recognize a thing as a particular thing that can be classified, a thing with a common name. That Socrates uses *tithemi*, the root of the word hypothesis, and that he refers to a "usual approach," seems to suggests exactly what this chapter will argue: that these "forms" are not true forms. They are not forms in the same way that the forms of the good, the just and the beautiful are forms. The latter, the true forms, exist themselves by themselves and are the objects of *noetic* thinking. The former, as their being posited suggests, are objects of *dianoia*. That these entities are *dianoetic* entails that they are themselves imitations of some sort and do not exist independently but are connected, at least, to a something that is positing them and to some end for which they are being posited.

To see how this plays out we can look again at the pruning knife. The pruning knife is used as an example in an argument proving, or attempting to prove, that justice is more profitable than injustice. The argument, from book I, (353e1-354a9) is as follows: A thing has a work if, like a pruning knife, there is something it alone accomplishes or something it accomplishes most

[123] Forms of artifacts are never even mentioned in the *Phaedo*, *Symposium* or *Phaedrus*. Socrates expresses serious doubt about the existence of natural substantial forms such as "human being" and "fire" in the *Parmenides* (*Parm.* 130c1-3) and doesn't even consider the possibility of the forms of artifacts. I suggest that in the *Timaeus*, where natural substantial forms are mythologized, a similar thing happens to them as will be seen to happen to those of artifacts in the *Republic*: their apparent independence is shown to be largely illusory and they reduce to soul.

beautifully. For each thing which has a work there is a virtue (and opposite vice) for that thing. The virtue of the thing is that which allows it to a do its work well or beautifully while the opposed vice makes this impossible. The soul has a work: living. The virtue of the soul is justice and its vice is injustice. Therefore, the soul which is just is able to live well or beautifully while the soul which is unjust is not. Someone who lives well or beautifully is happy. Therefore, the person with the just soul is happy while the one with the unjust soul is not. It is more profitable to be happy than not so. Thus, justice is more profitable than injustice.

It might seem strange to have it be suggested, as Socrates does by way of example in the above argument, that a pruning knife has a virtue.[124] Perhaps "excellence" is a better translation for *arête* here. At any rate, the claim is quite natural when we understand what Socrates means by virtue. As the argument assumes, the virtue of a thing is simply that which allows for the best and most beautiful functioning of that thing. Thus, for anything which has a function there is a virtue that best facilitates that function. This is all the content Plato needs; we will see that it is quite rich. It is significant as well that the virtue of the human soul is identified as justice. This connects the discussion of artifacts to the central issue of the text- if we can understand the virtue of artifacts better we might also have a clue for understanding the virtue of the soul. Justice, I suggest, is not merely a predicate of the soul. Rather, it is responsible for the very unity and existence of the soul. I will return to this point later in the chapter. It is central to my account. If it is the case that justice, the virtue of the soul, accounts for the soul's very existence we might favor an account that explains the virtue of the pruning knife in the same way and, from the other

[124] Other examples in the passage of things with virtues and works: horses, eyes and ears. (352e1-7)

side, if the virtue of the artifact turns out to be what makes it exist we might favor an interpretation of the virtue of the soul that does the same.[125]

Indeed Socrates' description suggests that the ability to do the work that it does, to prune vines, is not only what makes a pruning knife virtuous but also what makes it a pruning knife in the first place. That is, we can see a connection to being already in the idea of virtue as that which allows for the functioning of the thing: Both the virtue of the knife and its posited form are what allow the knife to do what it does well or beautifully. The pruning knife prunes well, Socrates claims, if it is worked up (*ergasthenti*) in a way that best allows for the accomplishment of that end or functioning. (353a3) This working up, the making of the knife, is what makes the knife virtuous. Yet, that which the craftsman imparts to the material, or whatever it is that he is "working up," is the knife's posited form; or at least an imitation of this form. Thus, the end, in dictating this form, dictates the very making of the pruning knife. When one makes a pruning knife, or any other artifact, one does so with an eye towards the end that the artifact is to serve. The well made artifact, the virtuous artifact, is the one which is put together, "worked up," in such a way as to best allow for the serving of that end. Thus, in examining this "form," the form that makes the artifact an independent thing, we will actually be examining the virtue of the artifact.

I suggest that this virtue of the artifact, its posited form, is simply the order or structure of its parts. The artifact is virtuous if it is *ordered* so as to allow for the action of pruning grape vines, or to do whatever it is that a pruning knife does. In the case of the pruning knife this seems to entail that, over and above the ordering that any knife has, the pruning knife has a curved or hooked blade that is specially suited to pruning vines. This knife, the one that is well ordered so

[125] That a thing can be more or less virtuous, though it might seem to undermine this account, actually supports it. The things in question, things with parts, are *becoming*. Thus, they both are and are not the things that they are. In becoming more virtuous, the thing is coming to be itself more completely.

as to fill its function well, is the good or virtuous pruning knife. The knife that lacks that order due to a dull blade, loose handle, inappropriate shape or what have you, so that it no longer works well, is a bad or vicious pruning knife. Thus, the virtue that a thing has is the order or structure that allows the thing to do what it does. The better the knife embodies this order the better it is able to do its work and the more virtuous a pruning knife it is. On the other hand, the less ordered it is, the less able to prune, the less of a pruning knife it is. If it were to become so disordered that it could not prune at all, it would cease to *be* a pruning knife. That is, what makes the knife a pruning knife is its ability to prune vines. If it were to lose the virtue that enabled this functioning, if it could not prune vines at all, it would cease to *exist* as a pruning knife. The "form" that makes the pruning knife a pruning knife would no longer be present.

Thus, it seems that on Plato's account what makes the pruning knife a pruning knife or, generally, what makes the artifact *be* what it is, is indeed the thing's virtue. For artifacts this seems to be the order of the artifact. This order, or whatever we take the hypothetical "form" of the artifact to be, is the particular virtue or excellence of the artifact. On this account, to have virtue, or excellence, is to be what you are to a high degree. And the same thing that makes something be what it is makes it be what it is well. In all these cases forms of artifacts are organized wholes composed of parts. As such, their unity is the unity of a thing that is put together in such a way that the thing's parts form one thing. This forming of a oneness out of a plurality is the ordering of the thing that accounts for both the being and the virtue of the thing.

The obvious objection to this account, even if we do concede that it is Plato's account, is that although the pruning knife may no longer be a pruning knife when it is so powerless that it cannot prune, it does not disappear into non-existence; it does not cease to exist completely. That is, although it is no longer a pruning knife it is still something. Even if it is nothing more

than a heap of metal and leather or wood, it is still a thing that exists. Yet, not only can the account handle this objection, it is clarified through it. The objector in this case is actually agreeing that thing that was the pruning knife has ceased to exist. What remains is not a pruning knife but a plurality of things in one place, in a heap or clump; a plurality that is no longer the *one* thing which was a pruning knife. Each of these things, in turn, exists as the *one* thing that it is because of the order or structure that it has. The leather exists as leather because of its embodying the order that makes a thing be leather; so too the metal and whatever other parts of the pruning knife there were which once existed as parts of the order that was the knife. If we were to continue to break up these unities into their parts the same account would hold again. Though the leather would cease to be one thing, would cease to *be* leather, the continued existence of the parts that made it up, whatever these are, is possible only as a consequence of the order that each one has.[126] Thus the objection leads us to the heart of the picture of things as orders. No matter what the thing is that we identify, that thing's very existence as well as our ability to identify it is dependent upon the parts of the thing embodying the order or structure which makes the thing what it is. As calling these entities "forms" suggests, these orders or structures are responsible for the very being of the things that imitate or participate in them. The order or form of the sensible thing is what that thing is. Not only is it the case that this order is what we identify when we identify the thing as a distinct thing, the sensible thing *is* only in so far as it possesses some order. Thus order is not simply an attribute or predicate of the thing. On the contrary, it is that through which all the predicates are understood to belong to a single thing.

[126] This is the case even if the end is undefined. The leather is what it is because of its order or structure. This order or structure, though it is not always for the same end, is still what it is based on how it relates to things outside itself. The leather has thermal and water resistant qualities, for example, that identify it as leather. Its being leather is its being able to do the things that leather is able to do. That is, the order of the thing is the thing's potency or power--the *dunamis* of the thing—that allows it to do whatever it is that the thing does. That the thing has many, different potencies is itself an indication of how tenuous and *hypothetical* our identification of the thing as a singular particular thing actually is. A worthwhile discussion of *dunamis* in the *Republic* is far too large to undertake here.

The order, or virtue, or "form" of the thing is what accounts for the very thing that would or would not take on the predicate. These "forms" are responsible for the being of the thing as well as our ability to identify it as a single thing.

Yet, we need only notice that the orders in question are unchanging while the thing is changing and unknowable to see that the two cannot be the same. This is, once again, the central contradiction of sensible things. Although what the thing is is the order that it possesses at the moment, the thing never fully possesses or embodies the order that makes it what it is. The thing *is* its order or structure; it is the hypothetical form that it has at any given moment. To be simply is to have some order. Yet, at the same time, the thing can never properly embody its own order, the order that makes it the thing that it is. That is, even though it is perhaps impossible for a thing to embody any specific order completely or constantly the thing can't but have some order; although the order embodied by the sensible thing is never completely embodied, the sensible thing only is in so far as it is embodying some order. So, for example, the square that the geometer draws in the sand as an illustration will never be a perfect instance of squareness. (510d5-511a3) Rather, the shape he draws will necessarily fall short of perfect squareness; it will fall short of being a perfect instantiation of any identifiable shape for that matter. Yet, at the same time, what is drawn in the sand must necessarily be some shape. That is, although it is not a perfect square or circle or a full instantiation of any particular shape we can identify, it must necessarily be a shape of some sort if it is drawn at all. Thus, the drawing, in so far as it is, is just some shape; while, at the same time, the fact that the drawing can never fully embody any particular shape entails that there is something about it that resists and is not order or shape. In addition, this shape in the sand is, like everything else in the sensible world, in flux or becoming. The shape of all sensible things, like that of the river, is constantly being lost and replaced by a

new shape. The fact that the *thing* is in flux or becoming, that it is constantly and unceasingly changing from one order or shape to another, entails that the *thing* and the order that it takes on are never actually one and the same. If the *thing* is always in flux or becoming, is always losing one order and taking on another, then the *thing* cannot be any of the orders that "it" is gaining and losing. It is not the order that is passing from order to order but something else, something that we cannot consistently claim to "be" although we also cannot deny its existence. Rather, though it cannot exist without being some order, the sensible thing never actually is the order that it is- "it" is a becoming moving from form to form or from order to order and never managing to be what it is.

Thus, we can actually see the central contradiction in sensible things that the last chapter has argued for again in the example of the pruning knife. When the knife loses its structure what is left is no longer the single thing that was the pruning knife. Rather, what is left is a plurality of things which once were the knife's parts. These parts, in turn, are only things in so far as they embody some order, so too the parts of these parts, and so on all the way down. Rather, we can continue going down indefinitely and never get all the way. To get all the way down would be to get to something that *is* outside of its being an embodiment of some order. Thus, ultimately, there is nothing taking on the order or being ordered. We never get to the bottom and to some actual *thing* that is being ordered. The thing being ordered would be something that exists independently of order. This is a point that cannot be argued for directly. It is explicitly unintelligible. It is the same contradiction we have seen already; that there is no *thing*, no "it," there to take on the form. Turning this around we could say that there is something essential about the sensible thing that is external to or different from the order that makes the thing what it is, though what this is can neither exist nor be intelligible; it is a contradiction. That positing the

"form" in question as the order of the thing leads to the same contradiction in sensible things as was noticed in the last chapter, and even allows for a deeper understanding of this contradiction, is a significant argument for understanding the "form" in this way. It is also the beginning of Plato's attempt to deal with these entities, albeit hypothetically, in a way that does not overlook the problem of their inherent unknowability.

III. Posited Forms: End

As the dialogues repeatedly affirm, there is something about physical nature, about the world of flux or becoming, which is both unreal (or less than fully real) and unintelligible (or less than fully intelligible). This aspect of his account is one that does not come naturally to us. We tend to think of precisely the underlying stuff that Plato is skeptical of the existence of, the "I-know-not-what" which takes on forms or shapes or properties, as being real and existent and the source of the being of that which is shaped out of it. Plato does not. On the contrary, it is form that gives being to stuff. In positing the "forms" of artifacts, Plato implicitly claims exactly this about these forms, and this is, perhaps, the reason for calling these entities forms in the first place. The orders or structures of artifacts are forms precisely because they account for the being and intelligibility of the things that embody them, or strive to embody them. Yet Socrates refers to these forms as being posited. Referring to these entities as posited would seem to suggest that, though intelligible and even unchanging, they are not forms in the truest or highest sense. Rather, they are *dianoetic* entities; entities which are themselves imitations of form, which is *noetic*. We can now appreciate more fully the argument for why this is the case. It has already been given. It rests on noticing that these entities, unlike true forms, cannot exist independently, themselves by themselves. Rather, they require embodiment. They require the addition of an

external "stuff" or what is generally referred to as "matter." This need, which is nothing more than the necessity that these entities be self external in some way, follows from an even more fundamental lack of independence: these "forms" are *for the sake of* something else.

We have already seen that the order or virtue of the artifact is what it is for the sake of the work that the artifact is to do. More precisely, the artifact's virtue or order is determined by and depends upon the work for which it is designed. This much would seem to be the case for all things with a work. In all such cases the virtue of the thing is that which allows for this work to be done in the best possible way. Again, this virtue or order is essential to, if not synonymous with, the being of the thing. For artifacts there is the added factor that this work is invariably for the sake of something *external* to the artifact. Artifacts, like pruning knives, have a work that is done in relation to the bringing about of an end or a good that is distinct from the artifact itself. Yet, the order of the artifact is what makes the artifact what it is. If this order is determined by an end that is outside of the artifact, what the artifact is is for the sake of and in relation to something outside itself. What this means is that the principle around which the artifact is ordered or structured, the principle of unity of the artifact, is external to the artifact. Ordered wholes like artifacts, which do not have internal ends, do not have an internal principle of unity. The unity of the artifact is contingent upon something else; the "form" is and is known through something outside of itself. The difference between a pruning knife and an un-unified heap of metal and leather is contingent upon the hypothesizing of a particular form that *is* because it is needed to fill a particular function. In fact, because it is the end that gives the artifact its order, the end, even more than the order, would seem to be the principle of unity, being and intelligibility of the artifact.

We have also already seen, in the previous section, how the separation between the thing and the order or form that makes it what it is manifests as a contradiction within the thing being ordered. In fact, since the thing being ordered just *is* the order it is receiving, the separation itself is the contradiction. At the same time, the separation is problematic for the intelligible order or structure itself. The problem for the order is that, in so far as it is separate from the thing being ordered, it is an order or form that is an order or form *of nothing*. This is the other side of the same separation. We have an ordering without anything that is being ordered. The pruning knife, to continue with the same example, is what it is because of the order of its parts. It is an organization of metal, leather and whatever else is part of what makes the pruning knife a thing that is suited to pruning grape vines. These parts, in so far as they are, are what they are because of the organization of their parts. The leather is an ordered mix of whatever it is an ordered mix of. If we take the parts of the leather apart, the same thing will occur with them and with their parts. Again, we can continue in this way indefinitely. The parts of the parts are what they are by having the order that they have, same goes for their parts, and so on. As long as we continue in this way we never get to some *thing* that is being ordered. Again, we have already seen that this is a contradiction-- the contradiction of the thing, or lack of a thing, imitating the "form." This thing, it turns out, is nothing more than some sort of self-externality or lack of self-sameness. It is also, as I now want to emphasize, a contradiction for the "form" in question. The posited form is not an independent thing that can account for its own being and unity. It is merely posited. This lack of independence actually connects the "form" in question to the underlying "stuff" that it is the order of-- to the inherently material element of the artifact. The order of the artifact alone, without some "stuff" or "material" that is taking on that order, cannot do what it is that the artifact is designed or ordered to do. We can see this problem manifest

itself in the example of the pruning knife. The "form" of the pruning knife, the order or structure that makes it what it is, is what allows the pruning knife to do the work of cutting vines. Yet, the order itself, taken as an unchanging order outside of the "stuff" that strives to embody the order, cannot accomplish the cutting of vines on its own any more than the un-ordered "stuff" can. The "stuff" is incomplete without the order, but the order too is incomplete without the "stuff." The externality of the end necessitates the embodiment or materiality of the order. Yet, this materiality, this "stuffness," is external to the order. That the order cannot be understood without the stuff, in exactly so far as it has an external end, is a lack of independence on the part of the order. That these orders are not independent is a clear sign that they are not forms because forms do not have any lack and are independent.

In fact, it seems that the order is not the same as itself. By including a materiality that is external to it, it is contradictory. It is implicit in the nature of an ordering that it is an ordering *of* something. That is, the "forms" in question all depend upon encompassing a plurality in some significant way. These orders are unities composed of parts. Yet, the ordering of external parts is also something that a true form, which is simple and without externality, cannot have. The fact that the ordering of parts of the artifact is intrinsically connected to the externality of the end of the work of the artifact, also something that we have seen that the true form cannot have, would seem to provide a motivation for understanding the hypothetical forms in this way. These "forms," though unchanging and not becoming, cannot be forms in the highest sense. They are wholes composed of parts. They require their own metaphysical status separate from forms and sensible things- as they have on Plato's account. They are not the same as sensible things nor are they true forms. They are posited forms- one of the objects of *dianoetic* reasoning.

There is another way to express this contradiction in the nature of the artifact. It is that the two principles of unity and being that we have identified for the artifact must remain distinct. These are the order of the artifact and its end or work. They are, in Aristotle's terminology, the formal and final causes of the artifact. For Aristotle, for a thing to be an independent thing, an *ousia*, these two causes must be the same.[127] That they are not for the artifact is a sign that it is not an independent thing but rather an imitation. That this aspect of the thing comes out as it is separated from its end, its good, is significant. I will return to this separation between these two types of causes in a moment. It is well illustrated by another of Socrates' arguments from book I.

That these entities, the "forms" of artifacts, are *dianoetic* and, therefore, imitations of the *noetic*, entails that they too be contradictory in some way. We can see this contradiction manifest itself in two ways for the "forms" of artifacts. The first is that as an imitation or reflection, these entities imitate or reflect only a particular aspect or part of that which they are imitating or reflecting; just as, for example, a mirror image or painting of an object captures only one side or perspective of that object and misses the others.[128] Ultimately, the posited form, the order of the artifact, is itself an imitation of the form of the good. We can actually appreciate this, to some extent, from the issue we are dealing with right now. As an imitation we should expect that the artifact imitates one particular aspect of the good while lacking others. This is indeed the case. The good itself is good regardless of instances or circumstances. On the other

[127] We cannot reconcile the contradiction in the account by simply noting that one argument is concerned with formal and the other with final causes. For Aristotle as well it is essential for the unity (and non-contradictoriness) of *ousiai*, at least natural *ousiai*, that the two causes are one and the same. (*Physics*, 198a 22-26) *Ousiai*, for Aristotle, are the entities to which PNC primarily applies. Thus, we see a sort of independent confirmation of what is in this sense the same position- the externality of the end to the thing results in a sort of contradiction within that thing.

[128] Particulars offer differing perspectives on a thing that, in reality, is in no way "different (*diapherein*) from itself." (598a5-8) They do so because they *imitate* the appearance and never the being. (598b4-6)

hand, the artifact, in so far as it has some order, is good for some *particular* end or purpose. The good of the artifact, that which makes the artifact what it is, is a particular limited instantiation of goodness. As such it is good in one way and not in others. In mundane terms, the pruning knife is good for cutting vines and not so good, for example, as a children's toy. This particularity is connected to the externality of the good. The good itself, in having its goodness intrinsically, is good unconditionally. Even more than being good in all circumstances, its goodness is of an entirely different *type*; it is good outside of any circumstances. The good of the particular thing, on the other hand, in having its good, here taken as virtue, in relation to something external, is conditionally good- or good sometimes and bad other times. This is exactly like the contradiction we saw in relation to the length of the finger in chapter 3. The finger only has length, or determination, in relation to something else. This was the cause of its determination being inconsistent or contradictory. Yet, because its very existence is tied up with these external relations, like that of the pruning knife, the contradiction is one that is intrinsic to it.

Aristotle has a criticism of Plato in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that both supports this interpretation and illustrates this last point nicely. He is criticizing the general claim that knowledge of the good is necessary for understanding and achieving the human good and, therefore, that knowledge of the good is necessary for ethics. This is, of course, a claim that Socrates makes explicitly in the *Republic*.[129] The criticism rests on an analogy to crafts. He criticizes Plato for giving an account on which a carpenter would have to know the good in order to build a set of bookshelves:

[129] "… you've often heard that the greatest learnable thing is the look of the good, which just things and everything else need in addition in order to become useful and beneficial. So now you know that I'm going to say that, and in addition that we don't know it well enough. But if we don't know it, and we know everything else as much as possible without it, you can be sure that nothing is of benefit to us, just as there would be none if we possessed something without the good." (505a2-b1)

"But perhaps it might seem to someone that it would be better to be acquainted with [the good itself] with a view to those good things that can be possessed or done; for having this as a sort of pattern, we would also know the things that are good for us better, and if we know them, we will hit upon them. Now while the argument has a certain plausibility, it seems to be discordant with the kinds of knowledge we have, for all of them leave aside an acquaintance with the good itself in order to aim at some particular good and hunt for what they lack. And surely it is not reasonable that those skilled in the arts should be ignorant and not even look for something of such great assistance. And it is impossible to say in what respect a weaver or carpenter will be benefited in relation to his art by knowing the good itself, or how one who has beheld the form will be a better doctor or general." (Nic. Eth. 1097a1-10)

Aristotle is noticing the same thing about Plato's position- that all artifacts are ultimately imitations of the good. He also sees clearly how central the problem is. On Plato's account *all* craftspeople and not only the ruler of the state should have to have some knowledge of the good itself. Each of the crafts is what it is by its relation to the good. To make a bookshelf you have to imitate the form that is the bookshelf. Yet ultimately this is the form of the good. This does not seem to reflect the way crafts actually work. We don't train carpenters in metaphysics. It wouldn't help. The opposite is more likely.

Ironically, Plato embraces both aspects of Aristotle's observation. It is the case that the carpenter would have to know the good to build a set of bookshelves and yet how this knowledge is beneficial is impossible to say. The carpenter has to know the good because this is what it means to know an order**.** The order is what it is by being an imitation of the good. And yet, each specific order is also not the good. That is what makes it the particular order that it is and not the

good itself. Both aspects are intrinsic to the thing and both aspects, its goodness and its separation from the good, are essential. How this could be the case is in some sense, as Aristotle points out, impossible to say. Where the goodness of a thing ends, there too ends its intelligibility. The carpenter, then, has a partial, warped knowledge of the good that coordinates with the bookshelves partial, warped reflection of the good. The knowledge of bookshelf making is a knowledge of the good, it just isn't very complete. So too, a bookshelf is the good, only equally incompletely. The carpenter's power, the strength of his knowledge, coordinates exactly with the degree of reality of his object. Just as his object is an incomplete likeness of the good, so too his knowledge is a partial likeness of true knowledge and, as the passage from book V and the intimate connection between a thing and its power (if the two can be separated at all) both suggest, the carpenter is a likeness of the philosopher.[130] In other words, the bookshelf cannot be known because it is a sensible thing. If the carpenter fully knew the good, he would no longer be a carpenter, he would be a philosopher.

This, I suggest, is what the "type" distinction between forms and sensibles really amounts to. Form is a thing in itself, or itself by itself, and possesses an independent reality because it is what it is in relation to itself. The strange truth about sensible things, the "embodiment" of form, is that, in being embodied, these sensible things are actually *less* substantial. Sensible things are like reflections.

How this all works, as Aristotle complains, is impossible to say. We cannot fully understand how carpentry works because its object, a bookshelf, is not fully intelligible. If it were it would be the good. The impossibility is exactly where Plato has led us to expect it to be: in the

[130] In fact, that the craftsperson, who Socrates lumps together with the lovers of sights and sounds (476a9-b1), is "like" the philosopher is explicit in the text. (475e2) This likeness of the craftsperson, and the corresponding trueness of the philosopher, leads to the distinction between their objects: sensibles likenesses and true forms.

separation of the thing from what it is, from the good. The carpenter's knowledge as well is actually an imitation of the philosopher's knowledge in just the same way that his object is an imitation of that of the philosopher.[131] His work is unintelligible in just the same way as his object is. This is why Aristotle can claim that Plato thinks that the carpenter would have to know the good to build a set of bookshelves. In a certain sense that is exactly what the carpenter knows, only incompletely.

Interestingly, the principle of unity of the artifact, the *end*, is the good of the artifact. The good of the pruning knife, to use the same example, is not in the knife but in the vineyard, or whatever order it is that the knife is designed to serve. This good is what makes the pruning knife be what it is as well as what makes it knowable, both of these for the same reason: the good, in accounting for its order, accounts for the unity of the thing which is both what makes the thing be and what makes it intelligible. Thus, we are told in the text that it is not the maker of the artifact so much as the *user* who has knowledge of the artifact.[132] The user, through his attachment to the use, has knowledge even of the order. The maker, on other hand, trusts the user and has trust concerning the order of the artifact. The user, the one who knows, has knowledge of the artifact not through its order but through its end. This is the higher, ruling knowledge. The knowledge of the order or virtue (or, here, beauty) is subordinate to the knowledge of the end or good because the order itself is subordinate to the end. When we look at this end, however, the same problem repeats itself. The end, if it is a thing that exists, is also some order. In fact, since the artifact is designed to serve it, the end must be some order that

[131] This is also analogous to the way that desires were seen to relate to reason, as it should be if the analogy between the state and the soul still holds. Thus the account of the unity of the soul offered in the previous chapter should further support this reading.

[132] "Therefore it is utterly necessary for the one who uses each thing to be the most experienced with it, and to report to the maker what good or bad features the thing he uses has in its use… Therefore, for the same implement, the one who makes it will have rightful trust about its beauty or worthlessness by being around someone who knows and being obliged to listen to the knower, while the one who uses it will have knowledge." (601d8-602a2)

requires work done to or for it. As such, it would seem to be the same sort of thing as the artifact and we need to ask again about its end. The pruning knife is what it is in relation to the vineyard. The vineyard too is what it is as a result of the order that it has; this order is what pruning is designed to preserve. Yet, the end of the vineyard will suffer from the same problem if it too is the same sort of thing. In other words, we seem to have a regress in the upward direction that matches the one in the downward direction toward the material. We have orders of orders that are ultimately orders of nothing and orders for nothing. Although the downward regress is, for Plato, insoluble, the upward regress is not. It can be solved by finding something, some order, with an internal end; we need something that is *good in itself*. We need something in which the order, or virtue, or beauty, is the same as the good. Is it possible to conceive of such a thing?

In fact, in solving the upward regress the downward one is solved as well. This aspect of the account is difficult to get a clear handle on and really requires the whole account for its justification but we can give two short arguments for it. First of all, the need for an external "stuff," for something that is *not* order, comes from the need to accomplish an external end- the pruning knife must be an ordered something if it is to prune. Thus, in getting rid of the external end, we get rid of the need for the external "stuff." Second, we can see already to some degree, that the "stuff" that is ordered stands in the same relation to the order as the order does to the work or function. The terms are relative. The pruning knife's leather handle gets the order it has from its work as part of the pruning knife, for example. Thus, in getting rid of the separation between the order and the work we are actually getting rid of both externalities and, therefore, both regresses. This suggests that the thing that is good in itself lacks the externality and materiality of the thing that is good for something else. It also lacks the particularity noted with

respect to instances of the good in chapter three. This entity, in lacking externality completely, is the same as itself and is, therefore, completely one. Thus, being without plurality it seems to be a simple unity and not an order at all.

At any rate, whatever we make of this entity, be it a simple unity or an inclusive whole for example, the need for something that has an internal end is pressing. To paraphrase Aristotle, the absence of something that is good for its own sake results in the futility of all the prior actions existing lower down in the hierarchy. These "lower" actions or crafts or artifacts cannot be good for their consequences unless there is, at some eventual point, an actual good consequence (which is to say- an intrinsic good). We can add to this the further implication that, for Plato, these consequences, the external ends, determine the very being of the thing. Thus, without the intrinsic good to serve as an end in itself, the things that serve as means to that end would not only be futile, they would not be at all! A pruning knife without an end that it serves is no more unified, no more existent, than a heap of metal and leather. The very *existence* of these determinate unites requires the existence of the end in itself.[133] The artifact is ordered around a principle, its principle of unity, which remains external to it. If what I have argued concerning the relationship between the internality of the principle of unity of a thing and the application of PNC to that thing in chapters one and two is correct, this observation is especially important. It implies that the artifact's consistency, its self-sameness, is dependent upon something outside of itself. When we ask what this thing is, the text has an answer waiting for us: the just soul. Justice, each part doing its part without interfering with the others, is the

[133] Even if we want to say that these unities don't actually "exist" but are merely hypothesized, the same question will follow from our ability to hypothesize them: What is the internal end in relation to which we are hypothesizing these unities? Because the position we are moving towards is one according to which the end and the thing doing the hypothesizing are the same- the soul- it will make no difference if we think of the problem in terms of our ability to hypothesize these things or in terms of their hypothetical nature in itself.

ordering principle of the soul. Arguing that this ordering principle has an internal end, that justice is good for its own sake, is the explicit motivation of the text from book II on. (see: 357a1-358d4)

There is an interesting confirmation of this problem with external ends back in book I. In the middle argument of the three arguments that end book I, arguments designed to disprove the assertion of Thrasymachus that it is better for an individual to be unjust than to be just, Socrates argues that justice is stronger and more powerful (*dunameteros*) than injustice.[134] The argument rests on the example of a band of thieves. The band of thieves, or any group with a presumably unjust goal, is only able to achieve that goal if they are unified and work together. This is familiar territory. The ability of a thing to accomplish some work rests on and dictates the order or organization of that thing. In the case of the band this unification or organization is identified by Socrates as the band's justice. Their being just to one another is what allows the band to function as a band and accomplish their unjust goal. Thus, while injustice among the members of the group causes dissention and strife and results in the disintegration of the group as a whole and renders it powerless to accomplish any joint goal, justice causes unity and assent between the members and allows for the whole to function as a unit and achieve whatever end, be it just or unjust, it sets for itself. The example is supposed to motivate the claim that injustice is powerless without justice. Since justice is that which gives power to injustice, it must be the case that justice itself has this power, the power it gives to injustice, to an even higher degree.

However, this is not the only type of causal argument that we could make here. We could just as easily argue that it is rather the unjust goal that the band has that causes the members of the

[134] This argument, which runs from 350d7 to 352d8, immediately precedes the happiness argument with which this chapter began. It itself is immediately preceded by an argument for why knowledge and justice are alike.

band to be just towards one another. The thieves, in so far as they are thieves, are not willing to be just to one another out of some inner need for justice or because they have been convinced by Socrates' arguments that it is better for an individual to be just than to be unjust. The members are only just to one another so that they can accomplish their unjust goal. They are working together out of a desire for the loot that they are trying to acquire unjustly. Working together, being "just" to one another, is necessary because it allows the band to accomplish its "unjust" end. The unjust end, we might argue, actually makes the unity possible, empowers the unity, by being the thing around which the band is unified. In fact, this is exactly what we have seen to be the case for artifacts. Although, in one sense, the order is necessary for the accomplishment of the end, in another it is the end that is necessary for the ordering. If we look at it this way it is the unjust end, the goal, that is making the justice, the unity, possible. The injustice may necessitate justice, but the causal relationship, in at least one important sense, is inverted and we are left in a quandary. Does the justice make the injustice possible or is it the other way around?[135]

I suggest that the problem in the argument actually strengthens the position in the text. The justice of the band of thieves should be contradictory. The band is a particular thing and not the form of justice. We should expect that the justice of such a thing would be contradictory; that it would be inseparable from its opposite. It is a consequence of the contradictory nature of earthly justice that it can only exist alongside injustice.[136] Or, to put this another way, the just thing, exactly in so far as it has a material component, cannot be perfectly just. If Socrates were to give

[135] Again, one way to see the difference is that one version of the argument identifies a formal and the other a final cause. Justice as the ordering of the parts of the band is the formal cause while, for a band of thieves, the unjust end is the final cause.

[136] If, as will turn out to be the case, the soul has a justice that is not contradictory, this will be a sign that the soul does not belong primarily to this world-- a world of "stuff" and self-externality.

us a straightforward argument here he would be cognizing a sensible thing and undermining the position he eventually advocates. But we cannot simply stop here having noticed that the argument contains a contradiction. We need to see how the contradiction adds to the overall account.

First of all, the band serves as a good example of how intrinsic to the being of a thing the justice, and therefore the contradiction, actually is: The worst thing that could happen to the band of thieves, *as a band*, is that it accomplish its end. This accomplishment would nullify the reason the parts of the band had for being united, for being just to one another, and thereby destroy the band. In other words, the moment the contradiction is reconciled and the band no longer has a common unjust purpose they are no longer a band at all. (We should notice the clear analogy to natural desires, like those of hunger and thirst. These also have an external end and also destroy themselves in achieving their end.) So central to its being is the contradiction that the existence of the band, of anything with an external end, is entirely wrapped up in it and the resolution of the contradiction through the achieving of the end destroys the band as a band. The contradiction in the argument actually lends support to the overall position.

Second, as a negative example the band teaches us what it would take for a group or an individual to be completely just, and, simultaneously, to overcome the contradiction in the argument. Socrates does not restrict the contradiction to the case of a band of thieves. His account includes any group, any plurality, "with a common unjust purpose." (351c) This, if we can speak this way, is the scope of the contradiction in question. To determine which sorts of things, which sorts of unities, are contradictory in the way in which the band of thieves has shown itself to be we need to determine which entities seek ends that are just and which seek ends that are unjust. Thus, we need some way to differentiate between the ends themselves; we

need a way to determine which ends are just and which are unjust. It is not immediately clear how to do so. In fact, given Socrates' account of justice, it seems to be impossible to do so. Justice is a relation of the *parts* of a thing in and among themselves and to the whole; it is each part doing its part and not interfering with the other parts. The relation of the whole, as a whole, to something outside itself cannot even be considered under such a definition of justice. Thus, an external end, in virtue of its externality, cannot be just and anything with an external end will, like a band of thieves, be intrinsically contradictory. The very purpose that unites it, the accomplishment of some external goal, stands to destroy its unity the moment it is achieved. Once the band has stolen the loot the very thing that united it now stands to break it apart. This contradiction comes from the end's externality. The band is contradictory in just so far as it is directed at an external end—in so far as it is not completely just. It is the very externality of the end that leads to its being unjust and, therefore, contradictory. But this gives us just the differentiation we need: the only possible just end is an end that is internal to the thing! We need, again, an internal end or good.

We can see this in another way. In the context of the *Republic* there are only two possible ways of determining whether the end pursued by a person or group is just. The first is to place the person or group within a larger context and determine the justice or injustice of the end in terms of that context. We take the band of thieves and place them in the state and then ask our question again. Is the band's end, the stealing of money from other citizens, just or unjust? If the stealing interferes with any of the parts of our state doing their part, as it most likely will, the end is unjust. Yet the justice we are now speaking about does not actually belong to the band as a separate thing any longer; this justice belongs to the state. It is the justice of the state, the parts of the state working together, that the band is subordinate to. The band loses its individual

justice and, because of the connection between justice and being, ceases to exist as a separate individual thing. It is no longer a whole unto itself, it is a part of something else. (Again, Plato has a close analogue in desire here.) This way of determining the justice of the end is fine as far as it goes but it is incomplete. It is incomplete as a refutation of Thracymachus and it is incomplete as an account of justice; both of these for the same reason. Thracymachus and certainly Socrates are concerned with a more fundamental question. The question is how we determine the justice of the largest, most inclusive group? What accounts for the justice of the whole? That there must be such a thing is presupposed by the very fact of the question. That there are lower, or dependent, justices is proof that there is a higher, or encompassing, justice in the same way as the existence of artifacts presupposes the existence of a thing that is an end in itself. The answer to the more fundamental question (that of how to determine the just end of the whole itself by itself) can only be to make the end internal to the group and bring it within the context of the justice of that group. Again, the contradiction we have identified applies to anything that has its power directed towards some *external* end. The end, in virtue of its very externality, cannot be just. It is outside of the context in which things are determined to be just or unjust. Yet, as that in relation to which the thing is unified, it is, in a way, a significant part of the justice of the thing. The externality of the end is connected to the need for external "stuff" within the thing that creates, or is, the problem; the external end and the need for externality are a contradiction in the thing.[137] If we can remove the externality we will have removed the problem

[137] We see one kind of externality in the case of the "stuff" taking on the form. This is the entity we cannot even talk about or apply PNC to in any way (though we also cannot consistently deny its application). Now, in the case of the order that makes the thing what it is, the externality is in the form of an incompleteness; although the thing is the good, it is only able to be so in part. Thus, it needs to go outside of itself, towards some other part of the good, to become good. These entities are not independent things.

along with it. How does one get rid of the externality? The solution is implicit in the problem: what is needed is an end that is internal to the thing.[138]

The things that are just, on the other hand, in having an internal good, are independent in a way that artifacts are not. We can now see why justice and goodness are to be understood as forms which most properly account for the "substance" and being of things. That the two account for the order of things that make these things be what they are, and do so in a more complete way than the simple "forms" of artifacts, is essential. The just soul is an end in itself. Here the order and the end, the two aspects of the thing that make it what it is, are one and the same. The "substance" (or order) of the thing and its end (or good) are the same. This strange turn is one that is not *dianoetic* in nature and is very difficult, for me at least, to state clearly. The central point is that justice, in being an ordering that is for itself, overcomes the problem of sensible forms—that, because they are insubstantial, require some mysterious "stuff" that takes on the form. This "stuff" though is just a stand in term for not being what one is or being contradictory; it is itself nothing more than an inability to embody order completely; it is not a substance for Plato so much as a lack thereof. We have seen that the artifact's need to pursue an external end and its need for a principle of externality in its very substance or order are essentially connected. The thing that embodies justice, on the other hand, in having an internal end, an end that is the same as its order or structure, has no need of the "stuff" that allows for the pursuit of an external end. As the principle of self-ordering, justice is what makes the *soul* a unity in a higher sense than sensible things. This internal end, as we have already seen to some degree in chapter two, belongs to the soul in so far as it is rational. Thus, the question the account has led us to is that of how the reason that rules in the soul takes an internal end. We

[138] Even in the book I argument discussed above the end of the soul's work, living well or happiness, was internal to the soul.

will see in the next section that this question is the same as: how is the good internal to the rational "part" of the soul?

IV. The Soul: Immortal and Mortal

There are two entities to which justice is consistently connected in the *Republic.* These are the soul and the state. Yet, the state gets its justice, gets all its virtues in fact, from the souls of its citizens. (435e2, 544d8-e2) Thus, we might take the soul to have these virtues in a more fundamental way than the state. Indeed, unlike the state, the soul is immortal. An immortal entity has a different type of being, and a different type of unity, from a mortal one. Thus, the soul has a different type of being and unity than the state and certainly a different type of being and unity than sensible things. Given the connection between justice and being, we might expect this to be significant for understanding the respective justices of the two entities. In fact, the internality of justice's end, its principle of unity, to the soul is essential to understanding the soul's immortality. In short, the soul is immortal because it has a unity that cannot be taken away or separated from it. The state, on the other hand, is mortal. This signals a difference in the way they embody justice. This is obviously a major issue. Distinguishing between the justice of the soul and that of the state undermines the central analogy of the text. I will say something about the justice of the state at the end of this chapter. It will be easier to talk about the differences after talking about the soul and the discussion of the state will also serve as a transition into the concluding chapter. As far as the analogy is concerned, it is enough, for now, to notice that the state is a much closer analogue of the *embodied* soul than it is of the soul in its true state. Even as an analogue of the embodied soul though, the state falls short.

A. Immortality

Socrates argues that the soul is immortal in book X. (608c8-611a2) The argument runs roughly as follows: Each thing that exists has its own natural "bad" that alone is capable of destroying it and nothing other than this peculiar bad could ever "dissolve and destroy" (*dielusein kai apolesen*)[139] that thing. The soul's bad is injustice. However, injustice does not "dissolve and destroy" the soul. Since the only thing that could possibly destroy the soul, its particular bad, injustice, does not destroy it, the soul must be indestructible. That which is indestructible is immortal. Thus, the soul is immortal.

There are two controversial premises in this argument.[140] The first is that the peculiar badness of a thing, and only that badness, can destroy the thing. This premise is indeed crucial to the argument. It is only if injustice alone could even *possibly* destroy the soul that proving that injustice does not do so guarantees the soul's indestructibility. Yet, this premise need not be so controversial, or even mysterious. We need only recognize that Plato's conception of a cause of destruction, perhaps of causality in general, is different from our own.[141] We identify any number of causes for the destruction of a thing. You can destroy a clay pot, for example, by throwing it at a wall, melting it, hitting it with a bat or loaning it to a clumsy friend. We identify these as distinct causes. It is clear from this passage that Plato does not. In all these cases, according to the text, the cause must be the same: the specific bad coming to be present for the pot. What this bad is, if the argument is to makes sense, must be something that explains the

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[139] "*Dielusein*" is used consistently through the argument. "Dissolve and destroy" is used most frequently: 609a7, 609b5, 609c2. See also: 609c6-d2.

[140] Julia Annas raises both of the problems that will be mentioned here. She does not think the problems are solvable and refers to this argument as, "…one of the few really embarrassingly bad arguments in Plato…." (Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 345.)

[141] *Aition*, the Greek word for cause, is not actually used in this argument. For us, when we impose the idea of a "cause" of destruction on the argument, our natural tendency is to think in terms of external, efficient causality. Yet, in so far as this argument is causal, the cause in question is clearly the formal cause. The dissolution just *is* the destruction of the thing. Plato, like Aristotle, has a more complex view of causality- one that identifies certain causes as internal to the thing. Indeed, Socrates seems to have this in mind when he distinguishes between innate evils and any number of extraneous evils which may or may not bring about this innate evil. (610a2, a8)

destruction of the thing in all the above cases and, indeed, in all possible cases. The interpretation I have been developing in this chapter, one which takes the being of the thing to be some sort of order, does so quite easily. The destruction of the thing, the thing's peculiar bad, is simply the undoing of its order or structure. The specific bad, as the very language of the argument suggests, is the disordering, *dissolving* or, in general, de-unifying of the thing. For Plato, the "cause" of the existence of a thing is the form of that thing coming to be in the material, which is the ordering of the material of the thing. The bad, on the other hand, is the removal or absence of this order. Just as we saw in the example of the pruning knife, when the order is no longer present, when the pruning knife is so disordered that it can no longer prune at all, the pruning knife ceases to be. There can be many ways that the disordering comes about, but in all cases it is the disordering itself that is the cause of the thing's destruction. Again, this should reinforce for us both that the good is connected to the being of the thing and that the good (the "virtue") of the thing is some sort of unity or order. This is the only thing that the pot is losing in all these cases. The cause of the pot's destruction is its being broken apart; its disintegration.

Turning to the soul, the badness in question, the cause of disintegration, or perhaps the disintegration itself, is injustice. This is the second controversial premise. However, this too follows quite naturally from the text as I am suggesting it be read. The argument with which this chapter began identified justice, the virtue of the soul, as doing for the soul what ordering does for artifacts—justice is the soul's order and unity. Thus, injustice, the opposite of justice, would be the dissolution of this unity. Injustice, the badness of the soul, destroys the soul, or would destroy the soul, by being the dissolving of its unity. Yet, we are told that injustice does not destroy the soul. Although injustice is the soul's own natural bad and does indeed make the soul

"defective," (609b5) it is not capable of destroying it. That injustice cannot destroy the soul is presented as something like an empirical claim in the passage. The reason for it, however, is more fundamental. Injustice in the soul in all cases involves the soul's taking of an external end. We have seen this recently in the band of thieves example and, even more significantly, in the discussion of desires in chapter two. The unjust soul, is the soul that is persuaded by desire and not ruled by reason. It is persuaded to seek the object of the desire, an object that is always external to the soul in some way. Yet, in any of these cases, the very *possibility* of taking the object as end requires that the soul also possess an internal justice. This is manifest in the band of thieves example as the claim, central to the passage, that injustice gets its power from justice. In relation to desires, again as chapter two argued, the very possibility of desiring, the very being of the desire in fact, rests on the presence of rationality, of some inwardness and self-awareness on the part of the desire. This inwardness is the desire's inherent rationality. Desires are contradictory instances of reason; this in just the same way as the band of thieves has a contradictory justice. Injustice is only possible as long as justice is present. Thus, the injustice cannot destroy the justice; quite simply, it will lose its power before it is able to do so. For injustice to destroy the soul is as absurd as suffocating oneself by holding one's breath- more so in fact. Justice, on the other hand, can exist in the soul without injustice. Actually, this is its ideal instantiation. It requires nothing more or less than the soul taking itself as its end- the soul following reason. That the taking of an internal end allows for the possibility of justice without injustice retroactively saves the band of thieves argument. Injustice does not make justice possible. On the contrary, justice, the proper functioning of the parts of that which is just, can exist in a better, stronger or more complete state if it takes itself as an end. The argument for the superiority of this latter justice is entirely self-reflexive. Justice is the order of the soul and

injustice its disorder. To be disordered is to have one's parts interfere with one another (i.e. to be contradictory). The justice that takes an external end is contradictory and cannot exist without its opposite. The justice that takes an internal end is not contradictory (at least not in this way). This makes it more consistent, more ordered and, thereby, more just.

All this would seem to suggest that the argument for the immortality of the soul contradicts sharply the account of the soul's division in book IV since Socrates now seems to be asserting that the soul has a unity that cannot be divided, even by injustice. However, this reading of the immortality argument actually confirms, or at least supports, the reading I have offered of the book IV argument for the soul's division in chapter two of this dissertation. There I argued that the division of the soul is itself hypothetical, as hypothetical as the principle (PNC) by which it is accomplished. Thus, it does not describe the soul in its true and non-hypothetical state. At the same time, it was argued that the very division effected by noticing a contradiction in the soul presupposed a unity that stands outside of that division and, thereby, outside of the principle in question. There is a fundamental unity to the soul that is a necessary prerequisite for the application of PNC in the text. Most significantly, the application, though through it Socrates concludes that the soul has parts, could not help but assume that the soul is also a unity- that the soul is *one* thing composed of parts. This was because it is conflict on which the soul's division is founded. The conflict, or contradiction, in the soul requires not only that desire and reason move in different directions but also that each one attempt to take the whole soul, or at least the other parts, along with them. That is, the conflict depends upon the soul being a unity- even in plurality. This unity then, the justice of the soul, is, in a fundamental way, beyond the conflict in the soul; it makes the conflict possible in the first place. This underlying unity is the soul as it is in its immortal state.

Thus, what appears as an assumption of unity in the immortality argument is actually *necessitated*, and not excluded, by the account of the soul's division in book IV. The unity in question is not an assumption and is not merely hypothetical. It is rather the plurality that is hypothetical, while even the ability to hypothesize this plurality necessitates the existence of an underlying unity, a unity in the soul that is non-hypothetical and beyond even the Principle of Non-contradiction. This is not to suggest that the unity that is the soul does not conform to PNC. In fact, whether or not the unity conforms to PNC is the wrong question. It seems rather that PNC conforms to, and requires, the unity. [142] That this unity cannot be undone and that it is "beyond," and underlies, PNC, the principle of the soul's division, are connected. The soul has a unity that cannot be undone by contradiction or injustice.

There are, it seems, two ways in which the soul can be a unity and both are referred to as justice in the text. The primary way that the soul is one is as the underlying, immortal and indestructible unity that the immortality argument refers to as the justice of the soul. Yet, this is not the only justice in the text. First of all, because this unity seems to be simple while the justice that is the harmonious functioning of the soul's parts, and with which most of the text is concerned, requires that the soul be compound. Again, the immortal unity is one that cannot be taken away, while the justice Socrates has in mind is one he seems to think he has to convince his interlocutors to care for. In addition, the one justice is beyond any opposition to injustice while the other is exactly its opposite. Lastly, the simple unity is one that cannot be divided by contradiction while the compound, though fundamentally connected to this simple unity, can be weakened by injustice.

[142] That the unity in question is one that is beyond any possibility of division suggests that it is a simple unity and not a wholeness. Socrates himself suggests that the immortality argument points to what Joe Sachs calls an "abiding simplicity at the core of the soul." (Sachs, 312) Socrates: "…and let's certainly not imagine that in its truest nature a soul is the sort of thing that's filled with lots of variety, non-uniformity and difference within itself." (611b1-3)

B. Reason

That the soul has an internal principle of unity gives it a different *type* of being from that of sensible things. Having identified this internal unity as the internal end or good, the very one sought in relation to justice, we might ask what else we can say about it. It is clear from the text in general that this unity is to be associated in some fundamental way with the rational part of the soul. Reason, as we saw in chapter two, is the "part" of the soul that is able to conflict directly with, and therefore is directly connected to, all the other parts. In addition, reason, unlike the desires, takes an internal end. This is now clearly relevant. In fact, we can put some of these strands together: The rule of reason is what makes justice possible (473d1-e2) and, as we saw in chapter two, reason's functioning is connected to the whole soul and includes the whole soul's proper functioning within itself. (518c5-d2) These claims connect as well to the claim that the *user*, the one who knows, rules the maker. (601d8-e3) Putting these strands together we see that reason rules in the soul by using the soul as a whole. For the soul to be a whole, the ruler, the one most connected to the end of the whole, must take an internal end; that is, as the end or user of the whole, reason must take an internal end. Thus it seems that reason's internal end is what makes justice possible-- is what makes it possible for the soul to exist as a whole unto itself. Reason is the end of the soul as a whole. What is reason's end? That it is internal would seem to suggest that reason is set over itself but it is not clear what this means. What is reason doing in its functioning? What is it set over?

There are two possible answers suggested by the text for what reason contemplates. The first, the good of the soul taken as a whole, would seem to be the answer we are looking for- it is

internal to the soul, though not its rational "part" to the exclusion of the other parts. The second, the good itself by itself, is more problematic. Yet, there is reason to think that the good itself is actually the truer answer. The reason for this is the dependence of the former on the latter, which I will try to demonstrate now. That is, both answers are correct, but one is prior. It is significant as well that the prior answer is the one that comes later in the text as this confirms the observation, made in chapter two of this dissertation, that the text, up until books VI and VII, is moving towards principles.

It would seem that the need for the end of the soul to be internal to the soul suggests that reason is set over the soul as a whole. Indeed, the picture of reason as set over the whole does give the soul a sort of internal end. Reason, in contemplating what is best for the soul, is taking the soul as its end. Yet, if it is ordering the parts of the soul it must order them with respect to some end. If reason knows that end it must itself be the *user* of the soul as a whole. The text, as we saw in section II above, suggests exactly this. This suggests that the soul as a whole functions for the sake of reason. That is, the end of the other parts is reason. At the same time, we also know that reason, as the ruling part, rules for the sake of the other parts. This is said explicitly to Thracymachus (347a1-3) and is also implicit in the claim that justice is good for everyone. (420e9) Looking at the soul in this way it seems that the end of reason, what reason contemplates, is the other parts and the whole. Thus, the soul as a whole is being ordered so that reason can be exercised and reason is being exercised so that the soul as a whole can be ordered. In this way, the soul as a whole is an end in itself.

Although this picture, or something like it, certainly seems to be operating in the text on some level, it is incomplete. The picture, which is itself one of an ordering of the relationship between reason and the rest of the soul, suffers from a sort of bootstrapping, or chicken and egg, problem.

If we need the soul to be ordered so that we can reason properly, it would seem that the soul would have to be ordered by something other than reason. Or, on the other hand, if we need to be able to reason properly to know how to order the soul, we would have to be able to reason properly even when the soul was in disorder. In other words, we need some way for the whole thing to get off the ground. Either reason or order is independent. Yet, if either is independent then the mutual dependence that makes the soul an end in itself is lost. We can put this problem in another way: If reason is to contemplate the soul as a whole by itself, the soul has to *be* a whole that exists independently without going outside of itself. If the soul is not a whole in this way, then either reason is contemplating something that is not, which is not possible for Plato (476e7-477a2), or reason is contemplating something other than the soul, which would not give us the necessary internality. That is, it is not until the soul becomes ordered (and just) that it is able to be the requisite *object* of knowledge for reason to contemplate. The embodied soul is constantly moved by desires, necessity and its attachment to the body in general, all of which cause it to turn outward. In doing so, the soul ceases to be intelligible through itself in just the way that anything that is externally directed (artifacts, bands of thieves, etc.) is not intelligible through itself. However, it is reason's proper functioning that leads to the ordering of the soul, the very ordering that makes it intelligible. For the soul to be self-knowing it has to be knowable in itself, but for the soul to be knowable in itself it has to be self-knowing. This is the underlying reason why the soul that is under the sway of desires is unable to know: the object of knowledge, form, is not fully present to the soul through itself but is only present in an incomplete and contradictory way. It is there, but it is not complete when the soul is turned outward because the reflexivity is itself part of its completeness. This reflexivity is neat and interesting and seems actually to be an essential part of the account, but the problem, at this level, is that there is still

no way for the whole thing to get off the ground. The soul needs to have reason to be ordered and needs to have order to be able to reason. What is needed, it seems, is a principle of unity and intelligibility that is there even before it is there. What is needed is an internal principle of unity *underlying* or *grounding* the wholeness of the soul. In other words, the soul must have access to the good, or whatever this internal unity is to be called, before it becomes the good as a whole. But this internal unity underlying the wholeness of the soul is exactly what the immortality argument and indeed the account as a whole has led us to affirm! The soul's unity is present already in the soul, it is just covered up.[143]

Thus, the next question we are led to is that of how the good, the soul's principle of unity, is internal to reason. Or, why, in striving after the good, is reason not taking an external end? It is significant as well that this question comes up in connection with the soul in so far as it is immortal. It is reminiscent of the recollection arguments of the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*. In fact, not only is the association of immortality with reason similar to these texts, the way we have just arrived at it is similar to the way that recollection comes up in the *Meno* especially. The necessity of the good, the object of knowledge, being there before it is there is really another way of stating the debater's paradox of the *Meno.* (*Meno* 80e1-10)

In addition, answering this question (that of the internality of the good) will also solve the central problem we have already noticed with respect to the "forms" of artifacts. What has shown itself to be necessary, as the end of the functioning of artifacts in general, is an entity that has an internal good but has it in a way that is incomplete. This entity, for Plato, is the soul in its embodied state. To say that the internal good is incomplete, though, is misleading. It is not the internal good that is incomplete. It is the soul that is striving to embody its own goodness that is

[143] The image of the statue of Glaucus strongly supports the claim that the soul, as it truly is, is a simple unity and that it is only its connection to desires and to the body that make it appear multiform. (611b8-d8)

never quite complete. I will return to this point below. It should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the dialogues that reason, and reason alone, is the immortal "part" of the soul. This is exactly what the account suggests. The unity of the soul as a whole unto itself depends upon the existence of a unity that is internal to the soul and is independent, the same as itself, whether it is embodied by the soul as a whole or not.

C. The Good

The internality of the good is the point that the account as a whole motivates and points to but which it can never quite capture.[144] We are now at the part of the account that is most explicitly beyond *dianoetic* reasoning. Although we cannot capture the internality of the good sufficiently (this is a point that is itself essential to the account), we can get an idea of what has to be the case. It is said explicitly in the text that the good is responsible for the being (*ousia*) of all things that are. (509b5-9) All things *are* by, in one way or another, being *imitations* of the good. In fact, in so far as things are, they are the good. It is only because things are also merely imitations and, therefore, in some sense are not the good, that things are not. In exactly so far as they are not, things are not the good. Plato accounts for the being of the thing in terms of its being the good and the non-being, or lack in the thing in terms of its externality from the good. In his terminology, things, in so far as they are, are the same as the good. Again, however, things are the particular and imperfect things that they are by *not* being the same as the good in some significant way.

The good is internal to all things, the same as all things, just in so far as they are and in so far as things are, they are the same as the good. Things have this sameness to the good by being the same as themselves. This is, in fact, what it means to be the same as oneself: to be that which

[144] Again, that justice is intrinsically good for the soul is the question that motivates the discussion from book II forward.

you are striving to be and which accounts for what you are. Thus, it is not the case that the good is external to anything that is, in so far as it is. Rather, things are external to the good in so far as they are not, or are not fully. There is, necessarily, something unintelligible about this last assertion. The very externality in question, an externality from the good, is as much a negation of intelligibility as it is of being. We cannot comprehend it directly but what we can do is locate it at the point at which things cease to be what they are.[145] In failing to embody its own goodness completely, the thing is failing to be what it is; the lack of virtue of the thing is a lack of being. Turning this back around, we see that things become the good by becoming what they are to the fullest possible extent. They become good, or as good as they can, by becoming the same as themselves.

We have just seen, in the argument for immortality, that the soul has the good within it in a way that cannot be taken away; that, unlike a sensible thing, the soul has an internal principle of unity. At the same time, the soul, in just so far as it can take an internal end, is not like a mere artifact which seeks its good in something else; that, unlike an artifact, the soul does not seek the good as it manifests in some other particular thing. We can put these two points together: the soul, in having the good within itself, does not have to seek the good in something else. The soul can take the good as its end by taking itself, in just so far as it is, as its end. To be what it is, to be the same as itself, the soul need only embody fully its own internal goodness. Thus, we can say that the reasoning soul, in taking the good as its end, is taking itself as its end in exactly so far as it is. But the soul, in so far as it is, is the soul that reasons. The soul that reasons is also the soul being reasoned about. Again, there is a self-reflexivity to the account: the soul, as it comes to take itself as its end, becomes the sort of thing that can be taken as an end in itself. This is to be expected; the good is the principle of both knowing and being. In coming to be the

[145] Thus Aristotle on the impossibility of explaining the carpenter

good the soul comes to be both knowing and, because knowing is set over being, knowable. Knowing, *noetic* knowing, is the unity and being of the soul, and the soul, properly speaking, *is* its rational part. In being set over itself reason is like the good and in being like the good reason is set over itself. This internal good is responsible for both the being and the knowing of the soul- indeed, in the highest sense the two are the same.

D. The Embodied (Mortal) Soul

The claim that having desires is an impediment, perhaps an intractable one, to having knowledge is not one that I would be the first to attribute to Plato. It is most obvious, perhaps, in the account of the *Phaedo*. Yet it manifests itself in the *Republic* as well. The most obvious manifestation of this lack of knowledge comes in the form of Socrates' explicit denial of any real knowledge of the good, either for himself or for others. (505a5) In fact, the connection between knowing and its object actually requires that we, as embodied souls, not be able to know the good fully. To do so we would have to be the good. Yet, at the same time, the very knowledge that allows us to see that we *don't* have this knowledge is itself a sign of some sort of awareness of what the knowledge is that we are lacking. This is the puzzle: we are the good, in some significant way, a way that separates the type of being we have from that of mere artifacts, and yet we are not the good. This seems to be a contradiction for us right at the point at which things should be the most consistent. I suggest that Plato is able to use this contradiction. The self-sameness, the inward turn, can never be completed by the embodied soul. Although the soul has within it all it needs to be complete, its attachment to the body and to desire makes a true inward turn impossible.

The crux of the argument of chapter two involved establishing that the just soul is the one in which the irrational, or rational and irrational, element of desire, the element which opposes

reason, is overcome to the extent that this is possible. As such desire comes to be a part of the activity of the rational part and in so doing, I argued, the soul overcame the contradiction inherent in the opposition of desire to reason, which is a contradiction inherent in the desire itself. This overcoming is a sort of ideal to be aimed at. It is a return to reason's natural state. Reason, as *nous*, is properly independent and immortal. Yet, in the embodied soul, somehow, in a way that is necessarily unintelligible, it is connected to desires. Being connected to desires, however, means being connected to the external world and, thus, being a part of something else and not a whole "itself by itself." Again, desires are really just reason pointed towards specific, external goods. Thirst takes drink as its end, for example. Thus, the soul that is thirsty, not unlike an artifact, has an external end. If this is all that desire is, we can see both why it stands in the way of reason and how to get it out of the way as much as possible. Reason needs to orient itself away from externality and particularity and towards goodness and being.[146] This reorientation is exactly what makes it reason and not desire; rather, we should say that the mis-orientation towards the external is what makes the desire the desire. If reason were not connected to desire and to the body, if it were not mis-oriented, it would not have the problem of how to reorient itself. In fact, desire just is the problem. Thus, if we could get rid of the desires reason would show itself to already be set over the good. The object of reason is already there. All we need is to remove the barrier, and we are contemplating it; we need to remove desire. Of course, this is not possible in any complete or lasting way. It is in the nature of desire to be opposed to reason and in the nature of the embodied soul, a thing among other things, to have

[146] The need to accomplish an external end is what led to the inclusion of "stuff" or material in the being of the artifact. Yet, this "stuff" is essentially self-external. What it means to include a material component in the very being of the order of the artifact is that we have some sort of disorder, self-externality or unintelligibility built in to the thing; the thing is contradictory. (Thus, eg, the justice of the band of thieves is contradictory.) The internality of the good to reason makes reason "body free" and eternal! To get to it, we need to separate reason from sensation and desire and to turn the soul away from becoming and towards being. This is exactly what the philosopher's education in mathematics is supposed to do. (521d3, see also: 508d3-9)

desires. What we are left with is a next best option. Although we cannot remove the desires, we can order them in such a way as to best allow for the functioning of the rational part; we can order the desires for the sake of philosophy and reason. The only thing to do, in the face of the connection of reason to the desires, is to order the desires in such a way that they are not opposed to reason any more than necessary.[147] Thus, the account of the unity of the soul, a unity that seems to be both intrinsic and transcendent, justifies the account of the soul's justice as wholeness; the object of *nous* grounds that of *dianoia*.

This account makes ruling and philosophy two sides of the same activity and reconciles the problem of reason's two ends- at least, the reconciliation is itself a goal to be aimed at, and an internal one at that. In ruling, in controlling the lower parts of the soul, the soul is turning itself around and reorienting itself towards the good, an object that is already there. The overcoming of desire, ruling, can only be done properly if it is for the sake of the contemplation of the good, philosophy. The doing of philosophy, or reasoning, is the internal end of the soul. In fact, the connection between the two is stronger than even this makes them seem. Ruling, the ordering of the soul, gives the soul as a whole the character of being the end. As the desires become more controlled they cease to be external to what they actually are—reason—and the soul comes to *be* its rational part. This is the soul coming to be the same as itself. Thus, the distinction between the two activities elide, ideally, in the completely rational soul. That is, in the completely rational soul order and end become actively one. Yet, because their doing so entails the

[147] Even the ordered desires, such as the natural and appropriate desires of the hungry and thirsty person for food and drink, are opposed to reason in some way- they are pointed towards the external while reason is always pointed inward. Yet, they are not as opposed as the out of control desires. The difference is that, in the case of the natural and healthy desires, their satisfaction can be done for the sake of the returning of the soul to itself. That is, we can eat and drink for the sake of thinking and doing philosophy. Natural desires are like craftspeople; unnatural desires are like bands of thieves.

disappearance of desires as separate from reason, this ordering is no longer an ordering at all. We are left with a simple unity. The soul, in becoming itself, has become *good*.

The soul that is completely one, both as an internal standard or model for becoming as one as possible inside the body and as the very foundation of this oneness, is the justification for justice as wholeness and the solution to the bootstrapping problem. Though this activity is never completed, the embodied soul never quite becomes the good so long as it is embodied and has desires, in striving for the completion of this activity the soul gives itself an internal end. The soul's own, internal state of unity, which, as we have now seen, is somehow both *internal* and *transcendent*, gives the soul an internal end to strive after. This second end is the life of striving after knowledge of the good; the end is the life of inquiry. Reason orders the desires around its own continued life of contemplation. Though not ideal as compared with the actual pure grasping of the good, this end solves perfectly the problem of the internal end: What the account demands, as we have seen, is an end that is internal, ideal and *in*complete. That is exactly what the philosophical life is. Although, for the embodied soul, the overcoming of each of these contradictions, or problems, is always a striving, this striving is exactly enough to establish and justify the structure of the state and the soul that Plato is advocating on this reading. It gives the state an internal end that is also one that it has to strive for.

Putting everything together in this way shows that the soul both comes to actively know, to do the activity of reasoning, and to be knowable in a way that it was not before when it embodied a sort of contradiction. In so far as the desires conform to reason, in just that far is the soul knowable and in just so far is it knowing. Thus, there is a parallel between knowing and being that is being carried through the account. The soul is immortal and is non-hypothetical in just the same way. It is also hypothetical in the same way as it is mortal, or embodied, or a whole

composed of parts. Yet, it is not simply that the natures of knowledge (or apprehension, to use a more general term) and of being run alongside one another, the connection and relation between the two is itself a part of the account. The two converge completely in the good, which is responsible for knowing and for being. They converge also, though in an incomplete way, in the non-hypothetical unity of the soul. This unity, as chapter two has already argued, belongs to the rational part of the soul. We have seen that the unity makes possible the application of PNC to the soul. We can now see that the possibility of this application is also the possibility of the soul being a unified and just whole.

In this way the account culminates with respect to the soul in itself. Yet, the unity of the soul also makes possible the application of PNC, or of the hypothetical method itself, *by* the soul to the world. We have already seen much of this account. It is the soul as an end in itself that "posits" the unity of artifacts by identifying what it *needs* to continue its own functioning. It does so by fabricating the unities that allow it to control its desires and to reason properly. The last step in the account is to notice that even the ability to *identify* a thing is to posit some unity in the world- to identify some order and make the claim that it exists as a whole unto itself. This too follows from the soul's own internal unity. Though it takes us outside, or at least to the limit, of the scope of the *Republic* we can see it in outline by beginning with a major difference between the state and the soul.

V. Conclusion: The State and the World

Although Socrates argues from the justice of the state to that of the soul, it is primarily the soul to which justice belongs in the *Republic*. Ultimately, the state is and is understood through the soul. In fact, because the justice of the state can't be understood without that of the soul it

will help us to complete the discussion of sensible things by giving us an instance of the soul applying its own principle of unity to something else. It is also a central topic in the text in its own right. The state, I suggest, though like the soul an end in itself, is only an end in itself hypothetically. Ultimately, like all hypothetical unities, the state gets its end from the soul. That the soul from which the state gets its unity belongs to its own citizens (in particular that of the ruler) makes the state its own kind of entity.

Again, it is explicit in the text (435e2) that the state gets its virtues from the souls which make it up. Thus, the state's order, which is its justice, is a result of the souls within the state. So too the state's end, the internal end that makes it the sort of unity that it is, is a result of the activity of souls within the state, specifically those of the rulers. If these rulers are philosophers, like the soul of the philosophers that rule it the state will have a properly internal end—the state will be unified around the activity of philosophizing done by its rulers. However, this internal end cannot encompass the state in the way in which it does the soul. For the state to be a unity like the soul would require that the state *as a whole* be included in the end. Yet this is not possible. Its end is rather one part of itself, namely the philosophical part, to the exclusion of the others.[148] While in the soul the desires, in coming to be for the sake of reasoning, actually lose their character of being desires and join with the whole soul in the activity of reasoning, in the state the craftsmen can only participate in the philosophizing of the ruler by treating her activity as the end. Desire, which is already a contradictory instance of reason, becomes reason by ceasing to be contradictory; by ceasing to point outward; at least, this is what the activity of ordering the soul is striving towards as its end. Yet, this strong unity, the coincidence of order and end, is not

[148] We should say *in some sense* to the exclusion of the others. In fact, each of the parts is an end in itself by having a role that exercises its own reason by doing its craft or job. This must be the case if justice is to be good for everyone in the state. Yet this exercising of reason is not the complete exercising of the philosopher. It cannot be because it takes an external end. It is only by belonging to the just state that the craftsman has virtue. In the context of the state, his external end becomes an internal end.

possible for the state. This difference changes the account considerably. Unlike the soul, the state as a whole is not included in the practice of philosophy. In fact, that the craftspeople *not* philosophize is essential. If they did, the state would not meet people's needs. Thus, unlike in the soul, there is no possibility in the state of the order and the end becoming one, or of politics erasing the distinction between itself and philosophy as it can do, in theory at least, in the soul. The inability to erase this distinction entails that the state can never be free of self-externality. This is evident in the mundane observation that a man needs to eat, or from the fundamental principle on which the state is founded: that people have needs. (369b7) That is, the state can never maintain itself in the world without going outside of itself in some way. The state's crops grow only at the mercy of the weather, to give one obvious example, even if we leave aside the more disturbing cases such as that of the stealing of land from neighbors. (373d8) Thus, the state is not entirely intelligible through itself and will not conform to the mathematical formulas which dictate the proper cycles of procreation. (546b4*ff*) That is, the state is external to its own structure in some way and this externality is connected to its being a part of a larger whole- the cosmos. From this follows the state's inevitable demise. (546a3) The justice of the state, unlike that of the soul, does not have an immortal component to it; the justice of the state is entirely hypothetical.

We can find an interesting confirmation of this reading in the *Timaeus*. The *Timaeus* begins with an unmistakable reference to the *Republic*; a reference containing two conspicuous omissions. Timaeus' long discourse that occupies most of the dialogue is preceded by a brief review, by Socrates, of Socrates' own discourse of the previous day. The discourse concerned, "the kind of political structure cities should have and the kind of men that should make it up so

as to be the best possible." (*Tim.* 17c)[149] The review, famously,[150] is filled with allusions or similarities to the *Republic*. In fact, everything mentioned in the brief outline is reminiscent of the *Republic* including the separation of the warrior class from the producers, (*Tim.*17c) abolition of private property for the guardians, (*Tim.*18b) women sharing the occupations of men, (*Tim.*18c) children in common (*Tim.*18c) and breeding (*Tim.*18e) to name a few. Conspicuously absent is *any* mention whatsoever of justice, the very focus of the discourse in the *Republic*, or of the rule of the philosopher. When he is finished with the review, Socrates expresses his desire to hear, as a payment for his discourse, a discourse from Timaeus and his friends depicting his city "in motion" (*Tim.*19b) and in its dealings with *other* cities. (*Tim.*19c) That discourse, it is suggested, needs to be preceded by a discourse beginning with the origin of the world and ending with human beings (*Tim.*27a), which is to say, it needs a cosmos in which to take place. The description of the cosmos, and the *soul* of the cosmos, is the discourse delivered by Timaeus that occupies the remainder of the text.

The absence of justice and philosophy, I suggest, is directly connected to the ability to put the state in a larger context and to see it in motion and in its dealings with other cities. This is because it is the justice of the state, a justice made possible by the rule of the philosopher, that makes the state a unity unto itself. The *Republic*, by giving the city a unity of its own, albeit a *hypothetical* one, makes the city out to be an independent thing that can and has to be discussed in isolation from any context. The republic is what it is, unchangingly, until it ceases to be. When the city's relation to other cities comes up at all in the *Republic*, it is always as a side note. There is never any question raised as to whether stealing land from neighbors is just or unjust or whether it is really acceptable to turn the rich and poor of another city against each other. In the

[149] All passages quoted are taken from Zeyl, *Plato's Timaeus*.
[150] The allusions are so clearly to the *Republic* that they have been used by some to establish the relative dates of the dialogues. See, Brandwood, "Stylometry and Chronology," 90.

context of the *Republic* there can be no such question. These things preserve the unity that is the state. Thus, they are just. It is always this unity, the state as a whole as a context unto itself, that is the focus. If the actions of the state support the activity of philosophizing on the part of its rulers (and in a secondary way the exercising of reason on the part of all its citizens) then those actions are just within the context of the state. In the *Timaeus*, on the other hand, in order to see how the city relates to other cities we need to give the city a larger context in which to perform. We need a cosmos. In such a context the city is not merely a whole, a unity unto itself, it is a part of a larger whole. We cannot give the city its own justice before we are provided with a context because its justice will be contextual. It will be a just or unjust city, if this terminology is even relevant, based on how it relates to other cities; based on whether or not it is a part of the *cosmos* that does its part and does not interfere with the other parts. This is the city in motion and in its relations with other cities.

Not only is this *Timaeus* passage interesting in relation to the hypothetical nature of the state's unity, it is also interesting in relation to Plato's understanding of sensible "forms." We can see how by returning to Heraclitus. Of the two connected problems brought out by Heraclitus, that of the insubstantiality of sensible things and that of their tendency to move into and out of one another, this is the latter problem. This aspect of the contradictory nature of sensible imitations is inevitable and, as the quote that heads this chapter seems to claim, includes all sensible things and not only artifacts- those with which the *Republic* is primarily concerned. Each individual thing stands in an external relation to every other individual thing. This relational aspect is intrinsic to the nature of the thing. In fact, it is ordered through it. Thus, if a thing is a thing among other things, and stands in many relations, this results in a necessary tension in the order of the thing's parts; that is, in the structure that makes the thing the thing. In the *Republic*, Plato

treats of the state as if it were a thing alone unto itself. This makes possible the limiting of the discourse. It may also be necessary as an act on the part of the philosopher-ruler in the actual running of the state. No matter who does it and no matter what the reason, it is merely hypothetical. As the cities inevitable demise demonstrates, the city is not a whole unto itself, but a part of the cosmos and subject to the mathematical cycles of the latter. To attribute justice to a thing is to treat it as a whole, yet any *particular* thing is a whole and also a part in a larger whole. By taking the context of the state in the world and among other states out of the picture Socrates is suppressing the contradiction. He is examining the state on the *hypothesis* that it is a thing that stands alone, itself by itself.

We are now at the limit of the discourse in the *Republic*. Absent from the discourse is any significant mention of the forms of *natural* entities, or so it seems. Yet, the discussion of these entities would not take us in a significantly different direction. Not unlike Heraclitus, Plato does not attribute separate unities to natural objects. Rather, as we learn in the *Timaeus*, the world as a whole is a single living being. (*Tim.* 30c2-31a2) This, again, gives the "natures" of the particular living things, plants and animals for example, the characteristic of being essentially *parts* of a larger whole. Each particular animal is more properly understood as an *organ* of a larger living being than as an entity unto itself. Thus, to understand it we have to look to its role in the overall purpose of the cosmos; to understand one single thing, we have to understand the whole. Yet, even as a part or an organ particular beings are something of a puzzle. There is not, for Plato, a clear way in which to delimit the nature of the organ. Rather, like Heraclitus' river, the limit that we impose is one that reflects our own needs or purposes as much as it possibly could the nature of the "thing." From the perspective of the thing, it is a part of the unified whole.

CONCLUSION

After this long discussion we are now perhaps in a position to say something about what Plato's attitude toward the possible justification or grounding of the PNC might be. It is now clear that the question is as much one of scope as of justification. The issue is not that of the intrinsic truth or falsehood of the principle so much as that of what the principle applies to and how is it possible that the principle *be* at all. That is, even if the principle is "false," we might still ask how it is that we came up with it. Given the necessity of this principle for determinate thought, this is a serious question. The answer to the question of the principle's existence is form. That is, the PNC depends for its very possibility on the simple unity of form, a form which, interestingly, stands outside of the scope of the principle. We have seen this in the division of the soul passage and attendant discussion in chapter two. There, the very possibility of division depended upon a unity that was, somehow, implicitly on both sides of the division without being separate from itself. Though this seems to be a contradiction, such a unity is necessitated by the very application of the principle in the text: To apply the principle at all, there must be some unity there that it is being applied to. Ironically, this unity is outside of the principle's scope. This unity, as chapter four attempted to make clear, is the simple, immortal, *noetic* unity of form upon which the unity of the whole depends. The unity that is inside the scope of the principle is that of the whole, or so it seems. Yet, this unity as well seems to be many just in so far as the principle is applicable to it. It seems obvious to us that a whole is a whole by encompassing its parts, but when we try to think about the unity of that whole it is less than obvious what it amounts to. It does not seem to include the parts at all, as doing so would make it a plurality and not a unity. Rather, we seem to be back again with the necessity of a

simple unity that stands *outside* and beyond the division. Thus, though no less problematic, it is perhaps not so surprising that Plato seems to associate both the simple unity of the soul and its wholeness with justice and with reason.

It seems that the PNC is a sort of attribute or byproduct of this simple unity as it preserves itself, as wholeness, even in plurality. Even in plurality, this unity maintains some semblance of itself. Not being contradictory, having parts that do not conflict, is the underside, so to speak, of simple unity. This is manifest even in the definition of justice offered in book IV, a definition that Socrates and his interlocutors find "rolling around" (432d8) at their feet, having been present all along.[151] The definition of justice, stated several times in different ways, is each part doing its part. (433a8; 433d2-4; 434a1-2; 434c6-9) In two of the statements of the definition we find Socrates stating the definition in a slightly expanded form (433d2-4; 434c6-9) which includes the claim that these parts should not meddle or interfere with one another. This expanded form, which is stated by Socrates as though it is the same definition, includes what is essentially the PNC-- the claim that the parts of the thing should not conflict. This is indeed a byproduct of the same definition. For each of the parts to do its part for the sake of the work of the whole, the parts can't be interfering with one another. As we have seen, it is this unified functioning for the sake of the whole that makes the thing a unity. Thus, the whole, to be a whole, includes the requirement of non-contradiction. In so far as the whole maintains itself as a whole, the parts must remain consistent. If it seems as though the parts can conflict, to some degree, it is only because the whole we are dealing with is not a pure or perfect whole and if the conflict or

[151] It is interesting, that the word used in this passage to describe what justice is doing, *kulindeisthai* ("rolling around"), a somewhat uncommon word in Plato, is also used in book V to describe *becoming.* (479d3) If this is significant, it could only mean that the definition of justice being offered does not describe the form but rather its manifestation in the world. The only other use of the term in the *Republic* is somewhat ironic. It is in one of the examples of passages from Homer that should not be allowed to be repeated in the just state. It is excised because it is an instance of a passage portraying a virtuous person, Priam, behaving unvirtuously. (388b8)

contradiction where to pass a certain point, the whole would cease to be one at all and we would not have a contradiction so much as not have a thing to which even to apply the principle.

The connecting of the PNC to some unity is not uncommon, certainly not among ancient philosophers. The connection itself is common even to philosophers who disagree about the truth of the principle. For example, both Heraclitus and Aristotle, two philosophers who are perhaps on opposite extremes with respect to the truth of the principle, seem to assert the same connection. Heraclitus denies the principle and, in doing so, denies the possibility of particular determinate beings, as we have seen. Aristotle actually connects the PNC to *ousia*, which is a type of determinate, unified being, and sees the connection quite clearly. He claims, explicitly, that those who deny the principle do away with *ousia*, probably with Heraclitus in mind. (*Meta.* 1007a20) Thus, for Aristotle, the PNC is as true, certain and universal as substance is, and he can claim that the principle, like substance, is *non*-hypothetical, which he does explicitly. (*Meta.* 1005b15)[152] Plato is in-between. For Plato, both the principle and particular, determinate unity are *hypothetical*. We have seen this several times and in some detail, especially in chapter four. Any determination that we give to particular things only holds in so far as we attribute some particular end to what we identify as a thing. Indeed, the identification of the thing and the attribution of the end seem to be identical. Yet, each thing can take any number of ends because the end is external and relational and the "thing" stands in any number of relations. Thus, the order we identify is, ultimately, one of many different and even inconsistent orders and the application of the principle to the thing is, in some sense, an external imposition.

[152] It is something of an injustice to deal with Aristotle's account of PNC in passing, as I am doing here. Obviously, there is considerably more to it. For a fuller account see, Halper, "Extension of Non-Contradiction." I have added Aristotle's explicit claim that the principle is non-hypothetical, which may very well be a shorthand way of distinguishing his view from Plato's.

Ironically, it is only in relation to the soul, the very entity for which and by which the principle is hypothesized, that the application of the principle seems to take on a more essential character. The reason for this can be understood in a number of ways, all of which come together. The soul has an internal principle of unity. This internal principle is the form of the good which is internal to the soul, in so far as it is rational, in a way that it is not internal to other things. Having an internal form makes the soul an independent thing in a way that sensible things are not. In addition, this internal good is also an internal end. This is significant. It makes the soul different from sensible things in exactly so far as sensible things are merely particular, limited reflections of goodness which are good only in relation to certain other things (and are, consequently, bad in relation to certain other things as well). The soul, in being good in relation to itself, avoids the contradiction of being both good and bad that we have seen to be inherent to sensibles. Lastly, the association of the soul's internal end with reason gives the principle a reflexivity with respect to the soul that it does not have with respect to other things. The soul is not just the thing being hypothesized about, it is also the very thing doing the hypothesizing. In fact, in speaking about hypotheses in the divided line passage, Socrates claims that the soul is *forced* to hypothesize when dealing with certain entities. (511a4) The soul, it seems, in seeking its own good, must make use of this fundamental hypothesis.

Does this make the PNC more than a mere hypothesis? Or, rather, does our inability to look past the PNC in our thinking provide us with a concise proof of the frailty and inadequacy of human knowledge? The answer seems to me to be, in a way, both of these and, in a way, neither. The PNC is more than a mere hypothesis because it is implicit in the hypothetical method itself. Yet, this would mean that our inability to look past it does indeed make all our knowledge merely hypothetical. However, at the same time, our ability to see the limits of such

thinking, which we can do through the principle itself, gives us an insight, slight as it is, into what is underlying the hypothesis itself. This, again, is the unity of our own souls as knowers. Thus, the principle itself allows us insight into what is beyond it and by which it is grounded.

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