

Metaphysics and Pronouns at *Phaedo* 74b7-9

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Much ink has been spilled over *Phaedo* 74b7-9. The context is Socrates' discussion of recollection. His example is "the equal." Ordinary, i.e., sensory experience discloses that one stick is equal to another stick (in, say, length), or one stone is equal to another stone (in, say, weight). In addition to sensible equals, however, there is also "the equal itself" (αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον 74a11-12).¹ Since sensible equals inevitably betray some measure of inequality, and since the equal itself never does, the two are distinct. The former can, however, remind the soul of the latter. Since being alive implies the presence of sensory experience, access to the nonsensible "equal itself" must have its source in some form of pre-natal existence. Therefore, the argument seems to go, the human soul is immortal.

The difficulties in this familiar rendition of the theory of recollection, as well as in Socrates' proof of immortality, are enormous. Indeed, even the short paragraph above immediately raises questions. A particularly thorny one is this: two sticks, for example, may be approximately equal in length. In saying "they are equal," the speaker invokes a standard, the equal itself, which is perfectly equal. Sensible, i.e., approximate equals, necessarily "fall short" (ἐνδεῖ 74d6)² of the perfectly intelligible "equal itself." In what exact sense, however, does the equality of two sticks "fall short," and in what contrasting sense does the equal itself not fall short? The language of "approximation" just used is most convenient, but as Nehamas and others have argued, may be quite misleading as a way of describing "the imperfection of the sensible world."³

Whether Nehamas is right or wrong, specifying the imperfection of sensible particulars is obviously crucial in the formulation of Platonic metaphysics, for it bears directly on the fundamental issue of the difference between, even the

separateness of, the sensible "world" of particulars and the intelligible "world" of forms.

This chapter begins by focusing only on one question: *How* are the deficiencies of sensible particulars expressed at 74b7-9? The answer, as Part I will show, is through an artful use of a variety of pronouns. Part II will offer a philosophical (and speculative) response to the question, *Why* did Plato express his views in this manner? Part III will discuss some corresponding passages from other dialogues in the hope of confirming the suggestion offered in Part II.

I

ἄρ' οὐ λίθοι μὲν ἴσοι καὶ ξύλα ἐνίοτε ταύτ' ὄντα τῶ μὲν ἴσα φαίνεται, τῶ δ' οὐ;

Is it not sometimes the case that even though they are the same, sticks and stones seem equal to someone, and not equal to someone else?

The principal difficulty of the target passage lies in the ambiguous gender, and hence the referent, of the pronouns, τῶ μὲν . . . τῶ δ'. I, with a number of translators,⁴ but here only for the purpose of convenience, begin by treating them as masculine. Obviously, however, they could also be neuter. A further complication of this passage is that there is some manuscript support for τὸτὲ μὲν . . . τὸτὲ ' οὐ. This possibility I reject, for (among other reasons) I agree with Archer-Hind who says, "τὸτὲ has inferior ms. support and is clumsy after ἐνίοτε."⁵ (Mills makes an even stronger point: τὸτὲ, he says, would render the ἐνίοτε "utterly superfluous.")⁶

There are, then, several ways of reading the pronouns of 74b7-9. Each, however, generates its own set of difficulties.

(1) *They are masculine.* The imperfection of sensible equals is disclosed through the fact that two items may seem equal to one person, and not to another. By contrast, the equal itself cannot seem equal to one person, and not to another.⁷

This reading, while offering a natural translation of the Greek, is conceptually problematic. Even if sensible equals sometimes seem unequal to one person, might not that person simply be wrong? If sticks #1 and #2 are both measured at 18.36 inches long, and you say, "they are unequal in length," then aren't you just wrong? In other words, the possibility of human error need not count against the true equality of the sensible items. Archer-Hind disagrees: "The existence of a conflict of opinion is sufficient to establish the difference between the particulars and the idea."⁸ I don't see why this is the case. Furthermore, might not some thoroughly deluded soul say of the equal itself, "no, it's not really equal?"⁹ Human error of all sorts is easy to imagine.

(2) *The pronouns are neuter.* This can result in "even though they are the same, sticks and stones seem equal to one thing, and not equal to something

else." Rowe favors this reading. "[A] stone or stick which is equal to another . . . is capable simultaneously of appearing as . . . equal to its pair . . . and as unequal to some further stone or stick; if so, it will evidently be both equal and unequal, while remaining the same."¹⁰ In a similar fashion, Bostock renders the passage, equal "to one stick, but not to another stick."¹¹ Rowe and Bostock, then, opt for *the neuter over the masculine because only the use of the neuter would result in the stick being both equal and unequal, and hence would express a sufficiently strong distinction between sensible equals and the equal itself.* Her 18.36-inch stick is equal to your 18.36-inch stick, but not to his 9.18-inch stick. Her stick is both equal and unequal, and so is definitively distinguished from the perfect singularity of the equal itself.¹²

The difficulty in (2) is that morphologically the pronoun might just as well be masculine so, as plausible as their argument may be, neither Rowe nor Bostock are on incontrovertible textual ground.

(3) *A third option is that the pronouns are neuter, but have adverbial force.* Haynes favors this view. He first considers the possibility that τῶ . . . τῶ are not indefinite pronouns at all. Perhaps they are the definite article, analogous to τῆ . . . τῆ, and so to be translated as "in one respect equal, in another respect not equal." Of course, the problem here is that there is no such listing for τῶ in LSJ. The problem can be solved, Haynes argues, by retaining the pronoun as an indefinite neuter, but nonetheless translating it as "in one respect . . . in another respect."

The virtue of this move lies precisely in its own indefiniteness. It allows that either of the two previous possibilities, (1) and (2) above, might capture the sense of the phrase. Two sticks are unequal, but may be so in various ways. Perhaps they are unequal as seen through the view of one person but not another, or they are equal to one thing but not to another, or they are equal in length but not in weight. In other words, the translation acknowledges that "the respects in which the sticks or stones may be equal or unequal are indefinite."¹³

Again, however, the expressiveness of Haynes' translation is purchased at the cost of stretching the possible meaning of the pronouns. As Bostock rightly says, if the translation were meant to be "in one respect . . . in another respect," "we would certainly expect τῆ μὲν . . . τῆ δὲ."¹⁴

(4) *Gallop acknowledges the possibility of both (1) and (2) by cleverly integrating the ambiguity of the pronouns' gender into his English: "equal to one, but not to another."*¹⁵ This is, I propose, far and away the best translation precisely because it preserves the sort of indefiniteness Haynes tries to achieve without distorting the Greek. The error of other translators (especially those who emend to τὸτὲ μὲν . . . τὸτὲ δ' οὐ),¹⁶ is that they impose a definitive sense on the pronouns. Unlike Gallop, they do not allow the ambiguity to stand as it is.

I take Gallop's move one step further. I propose that the ambiguity of the gender, and hence the referent, of the pronouns is entirely deliberate on Plato's part. The indefiniteness expressed by the morphological identity of the

masculine and neuter is meant to reflect the indefinite nature of the inequality suffered by sensible equals. In other words, the ambiguity or instability of the pronouns imitates, on a linguistic level, the ontological instability Socrates attributes to sensible particulars.

There are various ways in which sensible equals are also unequal. Her 18.36-inch stick is equal to his 18.36-inch stick, but unequal to your 9.18-inch stick; her stick looks equal to his, but only from her perspective; my stick is equal to yours in length, but not in weight; my stick is now equal to yours, but upon being cut in half will later be less; her stick is actually 18.3654-inches long, and so it's not quite equal to his, which actually measures 18.3655-inches. The several forms of sensible equality are unequal even with one another. Thus, both the language itself of 74b8-9 (specifically, the pronouns), and what the language is meant to communicate (the various forms of inequality suffered by sensible equals), are indefinite.

Even if correct, this argument hardly closes the book on *Phaedo* 74b7-9. An account of the contrasting nature of sensible equals and the equal itself is still wanting. I suggest, however, that before plunging into the metaphysical conundrum of what exactly distinguishes the forms from sensibles, it would be useful to reflect a bit further on the language, specifically the pronouns themselves, Plato uses to articulate this issue.

I next argue that just as Plato signals the indeterminacy of the sensible through a playful use of the indefinite pronoun, it is also with pronouns that he signals the definite nature of the intelligible. I refer to his frequent employment of the intensive pronoun to name the "forms." Plato himself, at least in the *Phaedo*, rarely uses the term εἶδος and first does so in a technical fashion only as late as 103e3. Far more common is the sort of phrase already cited above: "the equal itself" or the "just itself" (65d4-5.)

The intensive pronoun carries great weight in this dialogue. Indeed, its first word is Αὐτός. Echechrates asks Phaedo, "Were you yourself there with Socrates, Phaedo, on that day when he drank the poison in prison? Or did you hear about it from someone else?" (57a1-3).¹⁷

The use of the intensive pronoun here is both colloquial, as well as resonant with the language of the courtroom.¹⁸ More important, it foreshadows issues that are critical throughout the dialogue. Echechrates is asking this: Did Phaedo himself have clear, direct, and immediate access to the event, or is his understanding of the event dependent upon, and hence possibly obscured by, someone else? In short, is Phaedo's report of Socrates' death reliable and authoritative?¹⁹

The intensive pronoun at 57a1, repeated at 57a4, is contrasted with the indefinite at 57a2: ἄλλου του ἤκουσας. Did Phaedo hear about the death of Socrates from someone else? If not, he must have been there himself.

The two options implicit in Echechrates' question—"you yourself" and "from someone else"—foreshadow the philosophical contrast later to be

developed concerning sensible equals and the equal itself. The "itself" is the source of reliable knowledge. Accessible to the intellect, it can be known definitively. The equality of sticks and stones is available to human judgment only through the presence of the equal itself. Since any equal pair of sensible objects must also, in some indefinite sense, be unequal, when one judges that "these two sticks are equal," access to the stable standard of equality must (somehow) derive from a source other than sensible experience. In short, the condition of the possibility for a judgment about sensible equality is some sort of a priori knowledge of the equal itself.

Of course there are questions: what sort of a priori knowledge is this, and in what way does sensible equality derive from, or participate in, the equal itself? The problem, however, is that Plato's text is, from the vantage point of metaphysical theory, stunningly sparse. Just as there are several ways of explaining the imperfection of sensible equals, so too are there various angles to take on explaining the relationship between sensible equals and the equal itself. In the second part of this chapter I suggest a specific approach to the problem, one which can account for the sparseness of Plato's text, and one which will once again take its bearings from Plato's extraordinary ability to use ordinary language, in this case, his pronouns, to suggest the direction of his philosophical thinking.

II

The opening words of the *Phaedo*—"Were you yourself there with Socrates . . . Or did you hear about it from someone else?"—suggest something about the character or the psychology of philosophers. They are not satisfied with mediated and hence potentially unreliable reports. They intensely want to know, for themselves, the thing itself.²⁰ They thus turn away from the indefiniteness of hearsay. In a parallel fashion, they turn away from the "hearsay" of particulars. Their animating question is "what is it?" and particulars can provide no definite answer to that question. As a result, philosophers turn toward what scholars typically call the "forms," but which are, I propose, better named the "itselfs." (To reiterate, far more common than the technical term εἶδος is a phrase such as δίκαιον αὐτὸ at 65d4-5.)²¹ I propose that rather than taking it as a technical metaphysical term, we begin by considering the intensive pronoun as a device used by Plato to help articulate the nature of philosophical desire.

Let me explain by turning to Socrates' discussion of philosophy as "purification" (Κάθαρσις 67c5). He is explaining why he is not disturbed at the prospect of death. Those who engage in philosophy correctly, he says, "practice nothing other than death and dying" (64a). Simmias laughs. What could this bizarre formulation possibly mean? To answer, Socrates defines death. It is, he says, "the release (ἀπαλλαγῆ) of the soul from the body" (64c4-5).²² At first

blush, this definition is innocuous. Surely if there is a standard picture of death among the Greeks, it is of the breathing out of the ψυχή. Upon the last breath, the body is a lifeless and inert thing. Upon death, the body becomes separate from the soul; it becomes αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ (64c6), "itself by itself." Bereft of ψυχή, which better than "soul" is translated as "cause of life" (105c9), the body is by and only itself; it is dead.²³

The startling feature of Socrates' definition of death is not found in his characterization of the body after the departure of the soul as being "itself by itself." Instead, it is in his application of the same pronomial phrase to the soul: upon death, it too becomes separate from the body and is αὐτὴν καθ' αὐτὴν (64c7-8). The soul, somehow, becomes "itself by itself." Some scholars, notably Gallop, believe that with his initial definition of death, Socrates begs the question on what appears to be the major issue of the dialogue, namely the immortality of the soul.²⁴ If the soul can exist "itself by itself," then it is already assumed to be immortal, and no further argument is required.

I do not believe Gallop is right, for I, with Ahrens Dorf and others, do not believe that the real purpose of Socrates' arguments is to prove the literal immortality of the soul.²⁵ Instead, I would argue that the major achievement of the *Phaedo* is its explication and defense of the philosophical life itself, i.e., the life animated by thought.

Consider the following: The philosopher, during his lifetime, turns away from the body and its pleasures, and toward the soul (64e6). As much as anyone can, the philosopher loosens up the soul from its connection with the body (65a1-2). This language of turning best describes, I propose, the experience of thinking itself. In other words, when we think hard, when we concentrate, we turn toward ourselves. As such, we withdraw as far as possible from external or sensory input, from hearsay. In moments of intense concentration, for example, we often close our eyes to avoid the distraction of visual stimuli, or seek the shelter of a totally quiet room. It is in this sense that the body is an impediment (65a10). The soul reasons best when it is free from external excitement, for at that moment it "comes to be itself by itself" (αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν γίγνηται 65c7).

Here the intensive pronouns are applied to the soul and they are best understood as tokening a psychological phenomenon, rather than a metaphysical entity. Philosophical thinking, that which "has an urge for being" (65c9), i.e., the kind animated by a desire for what is universal and stable rather than particular, requires the soul to think hard and to turn away from the "hearsay" of sensible particulars. When Socrates says that the philosophical soul "seeks to become itself by itself" (65d1-2) he refers to this experience of thinking.

The philosophical soul seeks to think the "itselfs," i.e., the "just itself," the "beautiful itself" and the "good itself" (65d4-7). These are the ultimate objects of thought, for unlike sensible particulars, they are called upon to exhibit no indefiniteness and (somehow) make possible the various qualities exhibited by the particulars. To think the "itselfs" thus requires severe narrowing of focus,

severe concentration. For this reason, philosophers must be animated by an intense desire. They are not satisfied with the particulars of sensory experience; they recoil from the "hearsay," the indefinite flux, of ordinary life and seek instead to think "each thing itself" (αὐτὸ ἕκαστον 65e3).

The goal of philosophical purification may thus be expressed grammatically. It is to achieve, as I call it, "pronomial symmetry." Consider 66a1-3:

αὐτῇ καθ' αὐτὴν εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διανοίᾳ χρώμενος αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ εἰλικρινῆς ἕκαστον ἐπιχειροῖ θηρεύειν τῶν ὄντων.

[The philosopher] using pure thinking itself by itself attempts to hunt down each of the beings purely itself by itself.

The philosopher strives to replace the indefinite with the intensive pronoun, and to do so with respect to both the subjective and objective aspects of thought. On the subjective side, the goal is to concentrate hard by turning away from sensory stimuli. If successful, one "earns the right" to attach the pronomial phrase αὐτῇ καθ' αὐτὴν to one's own mind. On the objective side, the goal is to think about, not this or that or the other, but things themselves. If successful on this end as well, purification has been achieved, and "pronomial symmetry" won.

III

Gregory Vlastos once complained that what Socrates "mean[s] by the itself-by-itself existence of the entities he calls εἶδος, ἰδέα... has been curiously neglected in the vast literature on Plato's Theory of Forms."²⁶ My proposal is to approach this question by turning first to the subjective side of the story, i.e., the philosophers' desire. With the hope of clarification, I close by discussing two additional passages.

(1) *Republic* V.474c-480a is a favorite target for commentators, such as Gail Fine, who are hunting for material for or against Plato's "Two World Theory,"²⁷ i.e., for Platonic metaphysical theory. I would remind such commentators, however, that this passage is first and foremost an analysis of the soul of the philosopher. Recall that Socrates has just announced the "third wave," namely that philosophers must rule in a just city (473d). Upon hearing this, Glaucon was astonished and he warned Socrates (473e-474a) that a group of men would get so angry when they heard that philosophers had to be be kings, that they would strip naked and attack him. It was necessary, as a result, "to distinguish for them whom we mean when we dare to assert the philosophers must rule" (474b).²⁸

Socrates does this by distinguishing the lover of the sight of truth, the philosopher, from the lover of sights. Notice how he characterizes the latter:

The lovers of hearing and the lovers of sights, on the one hand, surely delight in fair sounds and colors and shapes and all that craft makes from such things, but their thought is unable to see and delight (ἰδεῖν τε καὶ ἀσπάσασθαι) in the nature of the fair itself (476b).

Lovers of sights are not simply cognitively deficient; they are psychologically deficient as well, for they cannot take delight in the itselfs. Indeed, they show a strange kind of resistance (480a) to them. By contrast, philosophers are “those who delight in each thing that is itself” (480a11). As he does in the purification passage of the *Phaedo*, Socrates here describes the philosopher as indifferent to the pleasures of the body, but alive to “the pleasure of the soul itself with respect to itself” (485d). As in the *Phaedo*, the intensive pronoun is working hard in the *Republic*. But it is not primarily performing a metaphysical task. Instead, it is telling us who the philosophers are, and what it is they love.

(2) *Theaetetus* 184b-186e. To paraphrase the argument of this passage: I see a red shirt and I hear a loud whistle. But in addition to my perceptions of objects of sound or color, I also think (διανοεῖ 185a4) that they both are or exist (ἔσθ' 185a9). This is true, and so presumably I know the red shirt is or exists. This bit of knowledge, however, cannot derive from perception, because perception is of special sensibles and particular objects, not common qualities or entities such as being or existence (185a). Since, however, being or existence, οὐσία (185c9), is an object of knowledge, but not of perception, knowledge cannot be identified with perception.²⁹

While driving Theaetetus to accept this conclusion, Socrates asks him, If it is not through perception, then “through what” do we think or apprehend οὐσία? (185b-c). Theaetetus answers, “it seems to me that the soul itself through itself (αὐτῆ δι' αὐτῆς ἢ ψυχῆ 185e1) views directly what all things have in common.”

By invoking the pronomial phrase, “itself through itself,” Theaetetus effectively declares his “flirtation” with Heraclitus to be over. Recall that the Heraclitean position was also stated via the pronomial formula, albeit in the negative: ἐν μὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ οὐδὲν ἔστιν (152d2-3). Socrates is jubilant when he hears the boy's reply. “You are beautiful, Theaetetus,” he says, “and not, as Theodorus said, ugly. For he who speaks beautifully is beautiful and good” (185e3-5).

But why exactly is Socrates so pleased? Theaetetus has just affirmed that there is a “soul itself” somehow capable of acting “through itself” and apprehending “concepts” such as οὐσία. This affirmation is a significant achievement and may represent, as Burnyeat puts it, “nothing less than the first unambiguous statement in the history of philosophy of the difficult but undoubtedly important idea of the unity of consciousness.”³⁰

It is important to note, however, how meager the theoretical results of this argument actually are. There are a number of ways, for example, of explaining the appearance of what Theaetetus names “the soul itself.” Rather than an enduringly substantial entity, perhaps the “soul itself” is only some sort of Humean ability to associate disparate impressions into a unity. The “soul itself” could be the Kantian transcendental ego. Even more distressing would be a Nietzschean (or Gorgian) interpretation: the soul-itself might only be an appearance or an illusion. The point is this: Socrates' argument tells us only that there is a psychological phenomenon—namely the awareness of common “qualities” which we then describe by using words such as οὐσία—that cannot be accounted for simply by perception and which thus requires the postulation of “the soul itself.” But the argument explains neither the true nature of that phenomenon, nor the soul itself that conceives it. Furthermore, the argument neither demonstrates that οὐσία exists as a genuinely independent, stable substance, nor, even if it does, that we can actually know anything about it.³¹ We may simply think or say οὐσία exists. We may simply create the concept of οὐσία, as well as “the soul itself,” to assuage our fears that everything flows.

In sum, the argument's conclusion that the “soul itself” apprehends common qualities such as οὐσία tells us very little indeed. Why, then, does Socrates congratulate Theaetetus so warmly at this point? Is it simply because the boy now agrees with him that Heraclitus is wrong? Yes, but there is more. What 185e shows is that the boy *wants* there to be something beyond perception of the ever-changing world of particulars. He wants οὐσία to belong to all particulars, and thus to be stable. He wants to think about it and to do so he affirms the ability of the soul itself to operate through itself.³²

The Platonic pronomial formula, “itself through itself,” finally attests to the *belief* that, despite the passage of time and the unreliability of our memory, despite the evanescence of all now present, we are able to think for ourselves and thereby to seek what is stable. The only hope we have—and it may be no more than a hope—for finding something beyond the passage of time is to turn the soul in on itself, i.e., to reflect.

To reiterate, the conclusion of the argument of 184b-185e is, in one sense, meager. It neither clarifies the ontological status of the “soul itself” nor does it explain its putative power of self-reflexion. However suggestive it may be, it does not definitively refute Heraclitus, nor does it protect us from the materialists. What it does do is testify to a desire. Theaetetus desires something to be beyond the perception of changing particulars. In the language of midwifery, he is pregnant and hopes to give birth to an offspring which will catapult him beyond the confines of his present existence. He wants more than he has. It is this desire that shapes the boy's character. He is “beautiful and good” not because he is a proper Athenian exhibiting civic virtues, but because he utters the phrase “soul itself through itself,” i.e., because he is now committed to the search for a reality characterized by the intensive pronouns.

Numerous passages could, I believe, be marshaled to support the thesis sketched above. As Griswold has argued, at *Protagoras* 347b-348a, versions of the pronominal phrase, "the voice itself," are repeatedly used to suggest a "moral ideal," i.e., a taking responsibility for one's own beliefs and utterances.³³ As in the material cited above, the impact of the pronoun here is not primarily metaphysical. Instead, it expresses a demand for a psychological or ethical autonomy. Similarly, in the concluding myth of the *Gorgias*, the final judgment a human being receives is from a judge who, like the judged, is naked. In his utterly exposed state, the judge "with his soul itself looks upon the soul itself" of the judged (αὐτῆ τῆ ψυχῆ αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν θεωροῦντα 523e). As Fussi has argued, with such language "Socrates is not expounding a metaphysical theory." Instead, he is telling a story about the capacity to distinguish between the interior and exterior dimensions of the human self. As Fussi puts it, the story "illustrates a development of the mind...[Socrates] is not dealing with the ontological status of the soul, he is speaking of human experience."³⁴

In the *Apology* we find a phrase, "the city itself" (αὐτῆς τῆς πόλεως 36c), which would be extremely difficult to decipher in strictly metaphysical terms (i.e., as naming a specific entity). Understood in the context of its utterance, however, it makes good sense. In describing his service to the city, Socrates says, "I tried to persuade each of you not to care for what belongs to you, but about becoming excellent and intelligent, and to care not about the affairs of the city, but about the city itself." Here the pronominal phrase is used to describe the psychological reorientation, the "turning around" (see *Republic* 518e, 521c, 527b) Socrates effects in his interlocutors.

Plato was clearly aware of the metaphysical significance of the phrase "X itself" or "X itself by itself." In the *Sophist*, for example, the Stranger offers a basic division among beings: τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτά, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλα (255c). Obviously in Plato we find the precursor for the "official" Aristotelian identification of the καθ' αὐτό formula with the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, with the "essence" (*Metaphysics* V.1022b24 ff.). In other words, nothing in this chapter challenges the truism that Plato was one of the founders of Western metaphysics. The argument offered in the pages above is, however, meant to give us pause. When, in reading the dialogues, we turn to the famous passages discussing the status of, and the relationship between, sensible particulars and "forms," the text is stunningly sparse. As a result, there simply isn't sufficient evidence to establish firmly Plato's metaphysical theory. This gap can be explained by stating that the presentation of such theory was not the dialogues' primary purpose. Instead, Plato's main concern was "psychological," i.e., to give an account of the human soul. Even if the few pages of the Platonic corpus in which equal and just and good things are contrasted with the equal itself, the just itself and the good itself, do not tell us all we want to know about metaphysics, they do tell us a huge amount about who we are as philosophers. We are those who, captured by that old limb-loosener, *Eros*, become lovers of the itselfs. In

turn, these itselfs, sometimes called "forms" or "ideas," are best conceived, perhaps even defined, as the ultimate objects of philosophical desire.

Notes

1. My Greek text is J. Burnet, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967). Translations are my own.

2. Compare similar locutions at 74e1, 74e3, 75b2.

3. Alexander Nehamas, in "Plato on the Imperfection of the Sensible World," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 12 (1975), 116, says the following: the imperfection of the sensible particulars "does not consist in their being approximately what the Forms are exactly; it consists in their being accidentally what the Forms are essentially."

4. Including R. D. Archer-Hind, *The Phaedo of Plato* (London: MacMillan, 1883); H. Williamson, *The Phaedo of Plato* (New York: Macmillan, 1904); H. Tredennick (Middlesex: Penguin, 1954); R. Bluck, *Plato's Phaedo* (London: Routledge, 1955); R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedo* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965); H. Fowler (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1971).

5. Archer-Hind, *Phaedo*, 80.

6. K. Mills, "Plato's *Phaedo* 74b7-c6," *Phronesis* 2 (1957), 134.

W. D. Geddes, *The Phaedo of Plato* (London: MacMillan, 1885) agrees that the manuscript support for τὸτὲ μὲν . . . τὸτὲ δ' οὐ is inferior. However, since the Bodleian manuscript, "to which all editors agree in assigning the highest value" (xxxviii), reads τὸ μὲν . . . τὸ δὲ with, however, τὸτὲ written above" (56), he argues that the latter has some philological justification. To this he adds a philosophical argument: "The applications of the Idea to outward things are variable in their results, appearing to attain better realization at one time than another, but this does not affect the invariableness of the Idea. . . . The preferable reading seems therefore τὸτὲ μὲν . . . τὸτὲ δ' οὐ" (57). Geddes refers to *Laws* 893d as a parallel usage of the phrase.

Several nineteenth century commentators preferred τὸτὲ μὲν . . . τὸτὲ δ' οὐ. These include D. Wytttenbach, *Platonis Phaedo* (Leipzig: Hartmann, 1825) and G. F. W. Grosse, *Platons Phädon* (Halle: Hendelschen Verlage, 1828). They were following the lead of G. Stallbaum's 1822 edition of Plato (Leipzig). Dorothy Tarrant, "Plato's *Phaedo* 74a-b," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77(1957), argues, "It must further be urged that the reading τὸτὲ μὲν . . . τὸτὲ δ' οὐ is far more consistent with the next step in the argument" (125). A recent edition favoring τὸτὲ μὲν . . . τὸτὲ δ' οὐ is that of P. Vicairé, *Platon Phédon* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1983).

7. Compare *Theaetetus* 166d for a similar usage.

8. Archer-Hind, *Phaedo*, 80. Wilhelm Wagner, *Plato's Phaedo* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1891), makes the same point: "equality in as far as it is perceived by the senses is not certain and unchangeable, as men are apt to disagree" (124).

9. N. R. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951) makes this same point. His translation reads, "equal to one thing but not to another," and he argues specifically against "in the eyes of one man but not of another." His reasoning against the masculine is this: it "would seem pointless since we could only infer that one of the two had made a mistake. Plato is saying that sticks and stones without themselves

changing . . . have contrasted predicates in different relations" (111). It may, in fact, be impossible to misperceive a form.

10. C. J. Rowe, *Plato's Phaedo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 169.

11. David Bostock, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 75.

12. *Republic* 479a-c is, according to Bostock, *Plato's Phaedo*, 75-78, a close parallel.

13. R. P. Haynes, "The form equality, as a set of equals: *Phaedo*: 74b-c," *Phronesis* 9 (1964): 21.

14. David Bostock, *Plato's Phaedo*, 74.

15. Gallop, *Plato's Phaedo*, 122. Gallop nicely summarizes these options and describes his own translation as "deliberately ambiguous."

16. See note #5.

17. Compare the question asked of Apollodorus in the *Symposium* 172b: οὐ αὐτὸς παρεγένου. . . ἢ οὐ;

18. Paul Woodruff reminded me of this in a personal conversation. See *Theaetetus* 201b.

19. Diskin Clay, "Plato's First Words," *Yale Classical Studies*, 29(1992), reads the 'Αὐτός as signalling Phaedo's authority. So when Phaedo responds to Echecrates' inquiry by simply saying 'Αὐτός (57a4), the pronoun "established his authority for what was said and done" (120). As my argument will soon show, Clay is on the right track here, but does not go far enough.

Athenaeus, in the opening of his *Deipnosophistae*, parodies the first lines of the *Phaedo*: 'Αὐτός, ὃ 'Αθήναι μετεληφῶς τῆς καλῆς ἐκείνης σουσισίας. . . ἢ παρ' ἄλλου μαθῶν (I.2). Hermogenes (*De Methodo*, I.518) argues that the 'Αὐτός indicates the high regard in which Phaedo is held. Geddes dismisses this, however, as "mere fancy" (Geddes, *The Phaedo of Plato*, 1). Aristophanes lampoons the 'Αὐτός at *Clouds* 217 where Socrates is identified simply as "himself." He also uses the phrase αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸν (194) to describe the "anus itself" looking at the heaven. Obviously, then, Plato himself did not invent the phrase.

The use of the intensive pronoun to express direct, personal knowledge of an event, rather than hearsay, is common. Geddes notes the αὐτόμαρτυς in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, 988, as well as the 'Αὐτός of *Seven Against Thebes*, 41 and *Oedipus the King*, 7.

20. The intensity of this desire is expressed when Socrates describes philosophers as ἐρασταί at 66e3 and uses the verb ἐπιθυμοῦμεν at 66b7.

21. An "early" usage of this locution is found at *Euthyphro* 5d.

22. C. J. Rowe, *Plato's Phaedo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) says this about ἀπαλλαγῆ: "the word and its cognates are often used, for example in tragedy (Aesch. Ag. 20), of release from something undesirable" (137).

23. Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), remains an excellent source on this topic.

24. Gallop, *Plato's Phaedo*, 86: "By defining death as he does, Socrates seems to prejudge this question in favour of the soul's survival."

25. Peter Ahrens Dorf, *The Death of Socrates and the Life of Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

26. Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 72-73.

27. Gail Fine, "Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V," *Archiv Fur Geschichte der Philosophie* 60 (1978): 121-39.

28. Translations from the *Republic* are borrowed from Allan Bloom, *Plato's Republic* (New York: Basic Books, 1967).

29. This point requires taking a stand on whether the doctrine here under consideration is that all perceiving is knowing, or that all knowing is perceiving. See Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 10.

30. Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 58

31. Perhaps this is why there is a joke about οὐσία earlier in the dialogue (144d). *Theaetetus*' property, another meaning of the word, is being squandered.

32. Compare also 189e where thought itself is defined as "the talk which the soul itself has with itself."

33. Charles Griswold, "Relying on your own Voice: An Unsettled Rivalry of Moral Ideals in Plato's *Protagoras*," *Review of Metaphysics* 53 (1999), 283-307.

34. Alessandra Fussi, *Images of the Soul in Plato's Gorgias*, Doctoral Dissertation. (The Pennsylvania State University, 1997), 84.