

PLATO, ARISTOTLE, AND THE *ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΙ*

DIRK BALTZLY

INTERPRETING the arguments that Aristotle attributes to Plato in the *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* involves at least two factors. On the one hand, we want to understand the very compressed arguments that Aristotle presents. We also want to know whether this line of reasoning is one that we can detect in Plato's dialogues. The interplay between these factors is quite complicated. We will prefer to disambiguate Aristotle's arguments in one way rather than another if we find that the one interpretation is more compatible with Plato's dialogues. But the arguments for the theory of Ideas in Plato are, to say the least, not transparent either. So, we may read Plato one way rather than another because it accords well with the manner in which Aristotle describes his reasoning in the *Περὶ ἰδεῶν*. Where we should start in this circle is not obvious.

In her recent book Gail Fine begins with an account of Plato's conception of, and arguments for, Ideas and argues that Aristotle's treatment in the *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* is not grossly unfair to Plato.¹ Aristotle does not aim 'to record and criticize arguments to which Plato is straightforwardly committed', but he does attempt to make precise a variety of impressionistic and vague Platonic claims and to criticize the outcome (p. 28). In a sense, according to Fine, Aristotle challenges 'us Platonists' to say exactly what Plato means if we are dissatisfied with his way of making the matter precise. In the course of doing this, she claims, Aristotle may fail to credit Plato with distinctions which he does not explicitly draw, or supplement Plato's incomplete arguments with Aristotelian premisses

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¹ *On Ideas: Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Theory of Forms* (Oxford, 1993).

which Plato may not have accepted. But in the case of the argument from relatives, she believes that Aristotle is by and large true to Plato. On her view of the matter, Plato rejects any Heraclitean doctrine of flux and eschews semantic arguments for Ideas. Aristotle's version of the argument from relatives does likewise and, more importantly, argues from the narrow compresence of opposites² in sensible relatives to the existence of a non-sensible Idea (p. 143).

In this paper I take issue with some of these claims. Much of what Fine says about relatives and the compresence of opposites is correct: there is an argument from what she calls narrow compresence in sensibles to Ideas. However, she is mistaken in taking this genuine Platonic argument from relatives alone to be continuous with a more general argument based on what she calls broad compresence.³ On her view, the argument from relatives is not an attempt to show that there are Ideas for all *πρός τι* terms, nor is it intended to apply only to *τὰ πρός τι*. I disagree. Finally, I argue that Aristotle's argument does misrepresent Plato's position in one crucial respect. Here too, Aristotle has supplemented Plato's reasoning with a premiss which Plato would reject because Aristotle reckons the premiss to be both true and relevant to the issue at hand.

In what follows I shall first summarize what I take to be Plato's reasons for supposing that there must be Ideas corresponding to *πρός τι* terms. The second section enters into the dialogue between Fine and Owen⁴ over the proper interpretation of both Aristotle's argument and Plato's reasoning about relative terms. The final section provides the details of a different interpretation of Aristotle's argument from relatives.

² In Fine's terminology, *x* undergoes narrow compresence of opposites at time *t* if at *t* *x* is *F* in virtue of one feature and not *F* in virtue of the very same feature. Both universals and particulars can undergo narrow compresence. (Fine, p. 47.)

³ *x* suffers from broad compresence if *x* has features which are inessential to its being the very thing that it is. Thus Fine writes, 'square, for instance, is not both shape and not shape in the narrow sense, it is both shape and not shape in the broad sense. For it is shape and, since it has features that are not essential to the nature of shape as such, it is also not shape' (p. 100).

⁴ G. E. L. Owen, 'An Argument in the *Περὶ ἰδεῶν*', in *Logic, Science and Dialectic* (Ithaca, 1986), 165–79.

1. Plato's argument: relatives and homonymy

Let us begin with a statement of Aristotle's argument as it is translated by Fine.

[82. 11] The argument that establishes from (ἐκ) relatives that there are ideas is the following (τοιούτος):

- I. In cases where some same thing is predicated of a plurality of things not homonymously but so as to reveal some one nature, it is true of them [83. 1] either (a) because they are fully (κυρίως) what is signified by the thing predicated, as when we call Socrates and Plato men; or (b) because they are likenesses of the true ones, as when we predicate man of pictured (men) (for in their case we reveal the [83. 5] likenesses of man, signifying some one nature in all of them); or (c) because one of them is the paradigm, the others likenesses, as if we were to call Socrates and the likenesses of him men.
- II. And when we predicate the equal itself of the things here, we predicate it of them homonymously. For (a) the same account (λόγος) does not fit (ἐφαρμόζει) them all. (b) Nor do we signify the truly equals (τὰ ἀληθῶς ἴσα σημαίνομεν). For the quantity in sensibles changes (κινεῖται) and continuously shifts [83. 10] (μεταβάλλει) and is not determinate (ἀφωρισμένον). (c) But neither do any of the things here accurately receive the account of the equal (ἀκριβῶς τὸν τοῦ ἴσου λόγον ἀναδεχόμενον).
- III. But neither (can they be called equal non-homonymously) by virtue of one of them being a paradigm, another a likeness. For one of them is not a paradigm or a likeness any more than another.
- IV. And indeed, if (εἰ δὲ καί) someone were to accept that the likeness is not homonymous with the paradigm, it always follows that these equals are equals by being likenesses of what is fully and truly (κυρίως καὶ ἀληθῶς) equal.
- V. [83. 15] But if this is so, then there is something which is the equal itself and which is fully (κυρίως) (equal), in relation to (πρός) which, by being likenesses, the things here both come to be and are called equal. And this is an idea, being a paradigm †and likeness† of the things that come to be in relation to it.

The structure of Aristotle's argument is complex and the details are disputed. I take it to have the following logical structure. That it in fact has this structure is part of what will be shown, but it seems appropriate to try to bring some order to Aristotle's account of the argument as soon as possible.

- (P1) When one thing is predicated of many not homonymously but so as to reveal one true nature, this can happen in three ways: (a) as when we predicate man of many men or (b) when we predicate man of many pictures of men or (c) when we predicate man of a man and pictures of men.
- (P2) Equality is not predicated of sensible things non-homonymously in either way (a) or way (b).
- (P3) If there were no Ideas, sensibles could not be called equal non-homonymously in way (c).
- (C) So there are Ideas. (And, by the by, there would still be Ideas even if one thought that sensible equals were not called equal non-homonymously.)

Since non-homonymy is so central to the argument, it seems best to begin with this. The first thing that causes puzzlement is that it seems that the notion of non-homonymy at work in I(c) is not Aristotle's own. At least it is not the relation which he defines at the outset of the *Categories*.⁵ I(a) is clearly a case of Aristotelian non-homonymy, for the same name and the same formula are both predicable of Socrates and Plato. Even I(b) can be seen as a case of Aristotelian non-homonymy if we concentrate on the relation between different pictures of men. When we say that Socrates' portrait and Plato's portrait are both man-likenesses, then we 'signify some one nature in them all'. The puzzle is I(c). This seems to be a clear case of what Aristotle calls homonymy in the *Categories* account. Why, then, does he here identify it as one of non-homonymy? It is possible that he is simply being a bit lax here. Aristotle uses 'homonymy' in a variety of ways. None of them, however, suggests that he would think that a man and a picture of a man are called 'man' with reference to one nature. A better hypothesis is that *Plato* would treat this as a case of non-homonymy, and this argument is one that Plato, or Platonists, employ.⁶ But this only

⁵ *Cat.* 1^a1-4 ὁμώνυμα λέγεται ὡν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος, οἷον ζῶον ὃ τε ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ γεγραμμένον· τούτων γὰρ ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος . . . συνώνυμα δὲ λέγεται ὡν τό τε ὄνομα κοινόν καὶ ὃ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ὁ αὐτός, οἷον ζῶον ὃ τε ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ βοῦς.

⁶ Cf. *Phaedo* 78 D 10-E 3 τί δὲ τῶν πολλῶν καλῶν οἷον ἀνθρώπων ἢ ἵππων ἢ ἱματίων ἢ ἄλλων ἀντιανοῦν τοιούτων ἢ ἴσων [ἢ καλῶν] ἢ πάντων τῶν ἐκείνοις ὁμωνύμων; and Owen, p. 168. The clearest Platonic example of I(c) homonymy is the three beds of *Rep.* 597 B 5-11. In the discussion that follows, there is no suggestion that the word 'bed' is not used in the same sense at least with regard to the first two. Because

gives us a fresh puzzle: why would Plato think that it is correct so to regard it?

(a) *Platonic homonymy: ideas and sensibles*

Concerns about non-homonymy of type I(c) in Plato are inextricable from questions about the nature of the participation relation between Ideas and sensibles. One of the ways that Plato describes this relation is in terms of the language of model and copies.⁷ Frequently, when the talk of model and copy is brought out, the language of homonymy is also in the vicinity.⁸ This much, at least, is clear. The harder questions are, first, *why* he supposed a separated model to be necessary and, second, why it is appropriate to think that both the *F* itself and its sensible likenesses are non-homonymously *F*.⁹ In what follows I shall briefly outline the pattern of reasoning which I think carried him to that conclusion.

(i) *Truthmakers and complete-being*. In the most general of terms, there are two principles which motivate Plato to postulate the existence of Ideas. First, like many good Aussie philosophers, he

the god makes only the one Idea, he is *ὄντως κλίνης ποιητής* and *φουτοργόν*. The craftsman, by contrast, makes *κλίνη τις* and so is *κλινοποιός τις* but none the less a *δημιουργός κλίνης*. There is a suggestion that the painter's bed may not be a bed in quite the same sense: *καίτοι πρόπω γέ τιμι καὶ ὁ ζωγράφος κλίνην ποιεῖ ἢ οὐ; ναί, ἔφη, φαινόμενην γε καὶ οὗτος* (596 E 10–11). This may reflect the dialectical aims of the *Republic* 10 argument. None of the passages where Plato likens the relationship between Ideas and sensibles to that between model and copies (n. 7) suggests that sensibles are incorrectly or ambiguously named after the Ideas.

⁷ *Parm.* 132 D 2 *μάλιστα ἐμοιγε καταφαίνεται ὡδε ἔχειν· τὰ μὲν εἶδη ταῦτα ὡσπερ παραδείγματα ἐστάναι ἐν τῇ φύσει τὰ δὲ ἄλλα τούτοις εἰκόναι καὶ εἶναι ὁμοιώματα καὶ ἢ μέθεξις αὐτῇ τοῖς ἄλλοις γίνεσθαι τῶν εἰδῶν οὐκ ἄλλη τις ἢ εἰκασθῆναι αὐτοῖς; Tim.* 28 A 8 *ὅτου μὲν οὖν ἂν ὁ δημιουργὸς πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχον βλέπων αἰεὶ τοιοῦτῳ τιμὴ προσχωρῶμενος παραδείγματι τὴν ἰδέαν καὶ δύναμιν αὐτοῦ ἀπεργάζεται καλὸν ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὕτως ἀποτελεῖσθαι πᾶν . . .* 29 B 3 *ὡδε οὖν περὶ τε εἰκόνας καὶ περὶ τοῦ παραδείγματος αὐτῆς διοριστέον. Cf. Euthph.* 6 E 6; *Rep.* 484 C 9, 540 A 9.

⁸ In the *Timaeus* the relation of copy to model is to the fore from 50 A 4, where the analogy of the moulding of gold is introduced. At 52 A 5 the sensible world is described as *τὸ δὲ δῶννημον ὁμοῖον τε ἐκείνῳ*. Similarly, in the *Parmenides* the *παράδειγμα* passage quoted in n. 7 (132 D 2) is followed by 133 D 3 *τὰ δὲ παρ' ἡμῶν ταῦτα ὁμώνυμα ὄντα ἐκείνοις*.

⁹ There is a problem of terminology here. The Platonic passages quoted in n. 8 speak of homonymy while Aristotle's argument catalogues the variety of ways in which things may be non-homonymously predicated. The relation that Plato refers to by using the term 'homonymous' is the same relation that Aristotle calls non-homonymy or synonymy. I shall argue that, on Plato's view, the name and the account of *F* are predicable of both sensibles and Ideas. Alexander is tempted by just this hypothesis at 51. 13–16 and 77. 10–13. See also 94. 3–9.

accepts the notion of truthmakers. When a sentence is true, there is something in the world (broadly construed) which makes it true.¹⁰ One can be very particular indeed about what truthmakers are. For instance, one might think that all true sentences are made true by *facts*. But one may also be catholic about truthmakers: if ‘Plato and Aristotle exist’ is true, the truthmaker may be something which lacks the kind of propositional structure that facts have—perhaps it might simply be the mereological sum consisting of Plato and Aristotle. What reason is there to think that Plato is committed to the existence of truthmakers, whatever form they may take? Consider the examination of the sentences ‘Theaetetus sits’ and ‘Theaetetus flies’ in the *Sophist*. The details of Plato’s treatment of not-being in the *Sophist* are a matter of much controversy. One thing we may all agree on is that Plato is concerned that both these sentences should be *about something*, in particular, Theaetetus.¹¹ Further, though the details of what makes the false sentence false are also open to question, it is clear that it is something *about Theaetetus* which gives both sentences the truth-values that they have.¹² The correct answer to one of Socrates’ ‘What is *F*?’ questions will similarly be a true sentence whose form is ‘The *F* is the *xyz*.’ In what follows, the question of the truthmakers for answers to Socratic questions will loom large. But the notion of truthmakers on its own is not sufficient to motivate the theory of Ideas.

In addition to thinking that there are things or beings which make the true sentences true, Plato imagines a strong parallelism between

¹⁰ The staffroom consensus is that David Armstrong is responsible for the term ‘truthmaker’. It certainly occurs frequently in his work, and David Lewis provides a nice discussion of the role that truthmakers play in Armstrong’s philosophy in his critical notice of *A Combinatory Theory of Possibility*, in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 70 (1992), 211–24. John Fox, ‘Truthmaker’, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 65 (1987), 188–207, and John Bigelow, *The Reality of Numbers* (Oxford, 1988), 127–78, understand the making involved in terms of entailment: if *p* is true, there must be something whose existence entails that it is true. A more formal characterization of the relation of making true, as well as some historical reflections on truthmakers in Husserl, Brentano, Meinong, Russell, and Wittgenstein, can be found in Kevin Mulligan, Peter Simons, and Barry Smith, ‘Truth-makers’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 44 (1984), 287–321.

¹¹ *Soph.* 263 c 5–11 *ΞΕ*. ἔπειτα δέ γε τινός. *ΘΕΑΙ*. οὕτως. *ΞΕ*. εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔστιν σός, οὐκ ἄλλου γε οὐδενός. *ΘΕΑΙ*. πῶς γαρ; *ΞΕ*. μηδενός (δέ) γε ὦν οὐδ’ ἂν λόγος εἴη τὸ παράπαν· ἀπεφίναμεν γάρ ὅτι τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἦν λόγον ὄντα μηδενός εἶναι λόγον.

¹² 263 d 1–4 *περὶ δὴ σοῦ λεγόμενα, (λεγόμενα) μέντοι θάτερα ὡς τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ μὴ ὄντα ὅς ὄντα, παντάπασιν [ὡς] ἔοικεν ἢ τοιαύτη σύνθεσις ἕκ τε βρῆμάτων γιγνομένη καὶ ὀνομάτων ὄντως τε καὶ ἀληθῶς γίγνεσθαι λόγος ψευδής.*

being and truth.¹³ The argument from opposites at the conclusion of *Republic* 5 is perhaps the most straightforward statement of this commitment.¹⁴ It seems clear that Plato accepts that being can come in degrees.¹⁵ If I am correct to claim that he thinks that being and truth are parallel, this implies that he thought that truth comes in degrees as well.¹⁶ What are we to make of this idea?

The argument of *Republic* 5 is best understood against the backdrop of Socratic questions. The account which answers the question 'What is beauty?' must be completely true. It must give the *one reason* that *always* makes beautiful things beautiful. So the proper λόγος of the beautiful is about an ὄν—a thing which is.¹⁷ Thus far this is reasonably uncontroversial: there is always something (some *thing*) which makes a true sentence true. Plato adds to this truism the idea that this ὄν must have a degree of being which is commensurate with the sort of complete, exceptionless truth which its corresponding λόγος has: it must be completely or purely. With respect to the *truthmakers* for such λόγοι, we should interpret being completely

¹³ One can garner some prima-facie evidence for such a parallelism simply by noticing how many times Plato links the concepts of truth and being or pure being as if it were *just obvious* that they go hand in hand. Consider the following not atypical remarks from the *Republic*: 501 D 1–2 *πότερον μὴ τοῦ ὄντος τε καὶ ἀληθείας ἐραστὰς εἶναι τοὺς φιλοσόφους*; 508 D 4–6 *οὕτω τοῖνυν καὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄδε νόει· ὅταν μὲν οὐ καταλάμπει ἀλήθειά τε καὶ τὸ ὄν, εἰς τοῦτο ἀπερείσηται, ἐνόησεν, 525 C 4–6 ἐνεκα πολέμου τε καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς βρασιώνης μεταστροφῆς ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἐπ' ἀλήθειαν τε καὶ οὐσίαν.*

¹⁴ I provide a detailed interpretation of the argument from opposites in 'Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V', forthcoming in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 80 (1998). In what follows I shall simply summarize the results of this investigation.

¹⁵ Most obviously at *Rep.* 477 A 3–4 *ὅτι τὸ μὲν παντελῶς ὄν παντελῶς γνωστόν, μὴ ὄν δὲ μηδαμῆ πάντῃ ἄγνωστον.* But see also *Phdr.* 247 D 2–4 [*νοῦς*] *τὸ ὄν ἀγαπᾷ τε καὶ θεωροῦσα τάληθῆ πρόφεται καὶ εὐπαθεῖ ἕως ἂν κύκλω ἢ περιφορᾷ εἰς ταυτὸν περιενέγκῃ. ἐν δὲ τῇ περιόδῳ καθορᾷ μὲν αὐτὴν δικαιοσύνην καθορᾷ δὲ σωφροσύνην καθορᾷ δὲ κτλ.* Note that the being and truth that νοῦς is nourished on are pure.

¹⁶ Commentators have already noted the apparent ease with which Plato passes from consideration about the *things* which are both beautiful and not beautiful to the νόμμα about them (*Rep.* 479 B 9 and D 4). This ought to suggest that both the things and the νόμμα are and are not. If we take the sense of ἔστι which is relevant to the latter to be the veridical sense, this implies that they are both true and not true. Only J. C. B. Gosling, '*Republic* V: ta polla kala', *Phronesis*, 5 (1960), 116–28, seems to embrace this consequence. He claims that the sight-lovers' νόμμα are 'partially true'. I prefer to say that they are ambiguous and are true on one interpretation but false on another.

¹⁷ Hence Socrates gets his interlocutors to agree that the object of their search 'is something', e.g. *Phaedo* 65 D 4 *τί δὲ δὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ὦ Σιμμία; φαμέν τι εἶναι δίκαιον αὐτὸ ἢ οὐδέν;* *H. Ma.* 287 C 4 *οὐκοῦν ἔστι τι τοῦτο ἢ δικαιοσύνη;* *Phaedo* 78 C 9–D 1 makes explicit the relationship between this being or substance and Socratic questioning, *αὐτῇ ἢ οὐσία ἧς λόγον δίδομεν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἐρωτῶντες καὶ ἀποκρινόμενοι κτλ.*

or purely as predicative: it is shorthand for being completely or purely *F*.¹⁸ One must be careful in saying what this comes to, for here we verge on the problem of self-predication. I shall say that *x* is-completely *F* if no sentence of the form '*x* is not *F* in relation to ψ ' is true.¹⁹ As I understand the argument of *Republic* 5, the problem with the sight-lovers is that their νόμιμα about beauty do not observe Socrates' requirement that there be one reason or cause which explains why all the many beautifuls are beautiful. They may say that 'the brightly coloured is beautiful' and also that 'the pure and austere is beautiful'. Taken as claims about the way that some sensibles are, these are true. Some brightly coloured things are beautiful. Taken as assertions about the one thing by virtue of which all the many beautifuls are beautiful, they are false. This is why the riddle about the eunuch, with its systematic ambiguities, is apposite to the discussion of the sight-lovers' claims about beauty (479 c). The 'no more true than false' character of what they say is matched by the 'no more beautiful than not beautiful' objects which make true—to the extent that it is true—what they say. Those who are entirely ignorant of beauty believe things which are not true under any interpretation. The problem of what their false beliefs are made false by is not taken up by Plato on this occasion.²⁰

¹⁸ G. Vlastos, 'Degrees of Reality in Plato', in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Platonic Studies*, 2nd edn. (Princeton, 1981), 58–75.

¹⁹ The notion of complete-being takes us into the troubled question of self-predication in Plato. Though self-predication is not the focus of the argument from relatives in the way that it is for Alexander's versions of the Third Man, it is not an issue that can simply be ignored. I believe that Plato's use of claims like 'The Just Itself is just' expresses a defeating condition for potential candidates for what justice is rather than a positive attribution of the property of justice to the Idea. Plato's point is that if a candidate for the αἰτία of justice is such that there is some instance in which it makes something unjust, or even fails to make that to which it is present just, then this thing is not the real αἰτία of justice. Thus, my suggestion is that, for Plato, 'the *F* Itself is *F*' effectively comes to the stricture that the truthmaker for the proper account of *F*-ness and the explanatory principle for the many *F*s must be free from the compresence of opposites. In practice it amounts to the claim that 'the *F* Itself is not not *F*'. This is well illustrated by passages like *H.Ma.* 291 D 1–3, where Hippias begins to see that what Socrates is looking for is something which will not be properly said to be not beautiful in any context. But given the sort of thing that the *F* Itself is, this is a case where one cannot infer '*Fa*' from ' $\sim\sim Fa$ '. This failure of a familiar logical equivalence should not surprise us. In ordinary discourse 'not here' is equivalent in meaning to 'somewhere else', but it does not follow from the fact that the Idea of the Good is not here that it is somewhere else. The Good isn't anywhere. That is just the sort of thing that it is.

²⁰ In the argument in book 5 Socrates identifies the object of ignorance with that which is not (477 B 10, 479 C 7) and even πάντως μὴ ὄν (478 D 7). 478 B–C poses a

These are things which I claim Plato accepts and which lie behind the argument of *Republic* 5. But why would he believe them? The requirement of complete-being and the language/truth parallelism are not a simple-minded insistence on metaphysical tidiness on Plato's part. Plato was well aware that what is F in relation to χ but not F in relation to ψ is not an impossible or contradictory object.²¹ But the Ideas are not merely truthmakers for the right account of beauty, justice, and so on. Plato also regards them as *explanatory principles*. We may think of the correct account of beauty in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of the concept, but Plato thinks of it in terms of an *αἰτία* which is present to each of the many sensibles.²² Moreover, he is committed to the view that the explanation for why all the many F s are F is not merely logically innocuous, but epistemically transparent. If that on account of which all the many F s are F were such that it in some way failed to be F , it would not be clear how it explained F -ness and not its absence.²³ This commitment to what I am calling

problem about the object of opinion which ought to apply equally well to the false content of the ignorant person's belief.

²¹ See the discussion of the principle of opposites at *Rep.* 436 B 8–9 δῆλον ὅτι ταῦτόν τάναντία ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν κατὰ ταῦτόν γε καὶ πρὸς ταῦτόν and 437 A 1–2 ὡς ποτέ τι ἂν τὸ αὐτὸ ὄν ἅμα κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ τάναντία πάθοι ἢ καὶ εἶη ἢ καὶ ποιήσειεν. C. Kirwan, 'Plato and Relativity', *Phronesis*, 19 (1974), 112–29, argues that Plato did not fully recognize that a thing could be both like x and unlike y without thereby being an impossible object until he wrote the *Parmenides*. However, even he is willing to concede that these passages from *Republic* say that this is possible, though he thinks that Plato has still not grasped the full implication of this principle (p. 120). I do not find his remarks on *Phaedo* 102 D–E convincing. There Socrates allows that Simmias can be both large and small, but that the largeness in him cannot. To insist that the passage tells in favour of the view that there is no real compresence of largeness and smallness because the large in Simmias must flee when he enters into a comparison with Phaedo is just to beg the question against the reading according to which largeness and smallness in different relations can abide in the same individual. In any event, both Kirwan and I agree that at some point Plato comes to the realization that a middle-sized Simmias is not a contradictory object.

²² Cf. *H.Ma.* 299 E 4 τὸ αἴτιον καλῆ εἶναι with *Phaedo* 100 B ff. Socrates rejects colour and shape and αἱ ἄλλαι αἰτίαι in favour of participation in τὸ αὐτὸ καλόν. This αἰτία has παρουσία εἴτε κοινωνία εἴτε ὄπη δὴ καὶ ὅπως προσγενομένη. Cf. *Lys.* 217 B 6, *Gorg.* 497 E 1 for παρουσία; also *H.Ma.* 289 D 8–9 τί ἐστὶ τὸ καλὸν ᾧ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα κοσμεῖται καὶ προσγενομένου αὐτοῦ καλὰ φαίνεται and 294 A 1–2 τοῦτο λέγομεν ὁ παραγεγόμενον ποιεῖ ἕκαστα φαίεσθαι καλὰ τούτων οἷς ἂν παρῆ ἢ ὁ εἶναι ἢ οὐδέτερα τούτων;

²³ P. Woodruff, *Plato: Hippias Major* (Indianapolis, 1982), takes a similar view. What he calls strict predication I call the relation of complete-being. Following Vlastos, 'Reasons and Causes in the *Phaedo*', in *Platonic Studies*, 76–110, he calls

explanatory transparency comes across most clearly in Socrates' complaints in *Phaedo* 99 ff. about explanations that he once thought he understood.²⁴ How, he asks, can two be that by virtue of which ten is more than eight when two is itself something small in relation to some numbers? In the terms in which I have cast the discussion, this amounts to the claim that two cannot be the *αἰτία* by which ten is large (or larger than eight) since two fails to be-completely large.

(ii) *From truthmakers and complete-being to Ideas*. The condition that the requirement of complete-being imposes on the truthmaker for the correct account of what *F* is leads fairly obviously to an argument for an Ideal *F* over and above the many *F* things, at least for *some* values of *F*. Terms that can be used attributively, like 'good' or 'beautiful', inevitably give rise to what Fine calls the narrow compresence of opposites. *x* undergoes narrow compresence of opposites if at *t*, *x* is *F* in virtue of one feature and not *F* in virtue of the same feature. Both universals and particulars can undergo narrow compresence. Just as Paris is beautiful in virtue of his looks in relation to men and not beautiful in relation to gods, so too bright colour is beautiful in this painting, but not in another. Thus, if we are looking for a truthmaker for the correct account of beauty, it cannot be the many beautifuls—neither the particulars nor the properties. None of them passes the requirement of complete-being. Moreover, one cannot suppose that property instances, as opposed to the property generally, can be the truthmaker. In effect, this suggestion supposes that one could make the indivi-

the *δὲ δ* which Socrates seeks the 'logical cause'. The logical cause of the beautiful or the fine must be strictly fine. Woodruff writes, "The fine is not foul under any qualification (cf. 291 D 2). Otherwise it could not be trusted to make things fine, but being in part fine and in part foul, it would bring both qualities with it as a logical cause. But the fine must be a dependable cause and make things *only* fine, if it is to be what the expert on fineness knows' (p. 155).

²⁴ D. Gallop, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford, 1975), 186–7, isolates the following constraints on explanation introduced by Socrates' complaints: (i) no opposite, *F*, can count as the 'reason' for a thing's having a property, if its opposite, *G*, can also give rise to that property (97 A 7–B 3); (ii) nothing can count as a 'reason' for a thing's having a property *F*, if it can also give rise to the opposite property, *G* (101 A 6–8); (iii) a 'reason' for a thing's having a property *F* cannot be itself characterized by the opposite of that property, *G* (101 A 8–B 2). (i) is a particular case of the general insistence that the *αἰτία* of *F* is single. (iii) just affirms what I call the requirement of complete being. (ii) goes hand in hand with it. Suppose, contrary to (iii), that some purported *αἰτία* of *F*-ness were itself *G*. Then, if this *αἰτία* were present to some *x*, it might make it *F* or it might make it *G*. After all, it has both features to 'pass on' to that to which it is present.

dual shares of *F* the *ἄντα* which make true the correct *λόγος* of *F*, while dispensing with the notion that there is some distinct Idea of which they are all shares.²⁵ This is because the requirement of complete-being is not the only constraint on candidates for the proper *αἰτία*. One must isolate the *one thing* on account of which all the many *F*s are *F*. The individual share or property instance which (one might say) makes *this F* thing *F* is not that by which *all* the *F* things are *F*. It is just this point which Socrates makes in response to Hippias' suggestion that Beauty is a beautiful girl.²⁶

The argument in outline, then, is that in order for there to be knowledge of what *F* is, it must be possible to answer Socrates' 'What is *F*?' question. If this is to be possible, there must be a truthmaker corresponding to the correct answer which is both the *one thing* by which all the *F*s are *F* and itself *completely F* in the specified sense. There are no candidates among the sensible *F*s: all of them fail at least one of the requirements. So, if knowledge is to be possible, there must be a non-sensible truthmaker and this is the Idea, the *F* Itself. Note that this is not yet an argument for a *separated* Idea in Aristotle's sense of separate. All that it shows is that the Idea is non-identical with any of the sensibles. It does not show that it would exist even in their absence. But this is as it should be, for the texts in Plato which this line of reasoning most resembles (*Phaedo* 74 A–C; *Rep.* 479 A–D, 523 C–D) do not claim that the Ideas enjoy ontological independence from sensibles. Unlike Fine, I do not doubt for a minute that Plato consistently thought that the Ideas are separate. However, his reasons for this view are distinct from the argument considered here.²⁷

²⁵ I owe this objection to Allan Silverman.

²⁶ *H.Ma.* 288 A 9–11 ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ ἐρῶ ὅτι εἰ παρθένος καλὴ καλόν, ἔστι δι' ὃ ταῦτ' ἂν εἶη καλὰ; Socrates here rehearses the answer that he has learnt from Hippias. An exact translation is difficult. I would follow Woodruff, *Plato: Hippias Major*, and understand something like, 'And I shall answer that if a fine girl is a fine thing then it is on account of *this* that all these other things are fine.'

²⁷ In my view Plato supposes that Ideas are ontologically prior to sensibles because they are epistemologically prior and because the epistemic and ontological orders of priority are the same. Thus, to *know* that a sensible *F* is *F* presupposes that one knows what *F*-ness is. This knowledge consists in the grasp of the correct account, which in turn is made true by the Idea. Contrast this view with Aristotle's *Categories* and *Posterior Analytics*. On his view the universal is epistemically prior in the sense that it is more knowable by nature (even if in the temporal order of things we come to the universal by repeated encounters with particulars). Yet in the *Categories* such secondary substances depend upon primary substances. Aristotle thinks that sensible individuals are primary substances, but this should not obscure the other,

(iii) *Truthmaking and homonymy*. Let us now return to our starting-point: why would Plato think that we predicate man non-homonymously of both the painting of Socrates and Socrates? Consider the relationship between the Beautiful Itself and one of the many sensible beautifuls, say Helen of Troy. Plato characterizes the former as the model and the latter as the copy. As we have just seen, the Idea is the truthmaker for the correct account of beauty—something whose existence must be postulated since nothing else meets the conditions for this role. In particular, Helen cannot do so, because while she is beautiful in relation to mortal women, she is not beautiful in relation to goddesses (cf. *H.Ma.* 289 A 1–B 7). In this respect, she is a bit like the picture of Socrates of which it is true to say that it is a rational animal (as opposed to, say, a horse or an artichoke) and also false to say that it is a rational animal (after all, it isn't really alive). There is a sense in which the essence of man is truly predicable of the likeness, for what the picture represents is a rational animal. But the definition is not *made true* by the likeness: what is pictured is a rational animal, but what makes a picture of a man a picture of a rational animal is not simply the existence of pictures. It is partly this feature of the relationship between Ideas and sensibles that Plato attempts to capture in calling the former paradigms and the latter likenesses. A definition can be *true of* something but without being *made true* by it. But this distinction between making true and being true of is not one which can be made in terms of a different *λόγος τῆς οὐσίας* for the truthmaker and the participant. It is for this reason that he thinks terms are predicated non-homonymously—in Aristotle's sense—of both.

(b) *Platonic relatives*

(i) *Owen and Fine on πρὸς τι*. Apart from non-homonymy, the other key to this argument is Plato's view of relatives. Plato, notoriously, does not define or discuss at length the distinction between absolute (τὰ καθ' αὐτό) and relative terms (τὰ πρὸς τι). Owen treated the contrast between πρὸς τι and καθ' αὐτό or κυρίως semantically. On his view, the argument from relatives is a semantically motivated argument for a limited range of Ideas. Where *F* is an incomplete

deeper dimension in which he disagrees with Plato. Even if they happened to agree about what primary substances are, Aristotle thinks that the order of understanding and the order of ontological dependence can run in different directions, while Plato thinks that they cannot.

term, we must hypothesize an Idea since we cannot understand the *meaning* of 'F' unless we are acquainted with something which is completely *F*. However, Owen seems to vacillate between two notions of incompleteness. Sometimes it sounds as if a usage is incomplete if it *requires* a complement for its meaningfulness. At other times, it seems as if incomplete terms are those whose usage *admits* a complement. Either way there is trouble, for it is just not clear that 'Socrates is large' makes no sense unless it is completed with 'in relation to Cebes'. Thus, this way of explaining the καθ' αὐτό/πρός τι distinction leaves Plato with a very odd view indeed. In the second case, it seems that 'Matt is a gentleman' is an incomplete predication since it admits the complement 'when he is sober'. But it seems unlikely, given his other examples of πρός τι terms, that Plato would regard 'gentleman' as a relative on account of this fact. Owen also argued that the complete/incomplete term distinction provides us with an Academic concept of πρός τι which is wider in its application than the class of terms that Aristotle labels relatives. As evidence of this, he cites passages from Hermodorus, Xenocrates, Diogenes Laertius, and Sextus regarding Plato's categories.²⁸ In addition, Owen thought that Alexander provides evidence of such an Academic distinction in 86. 6, where he deduces difficulties for the Platonists from the assumption that number is a relative.²⁹ Finally, the existence of such an Academic use of πρός τι would explain how it is possible for the argument to be substantially true to Plato's dialogues: it is supposed to show that there are Ideas which fall outside the Aristotelian category of relatives, but not outside the Platonic ones, e.g. Goodness and Beauty.

Even if it were possible to disambiguate the complete/incomplete distinction in such a way as to make it yield a division of καθ' αὐτό from πρός τι that corresponds with Plato's examples from the dialogues, it is doubtful that this is the distinction recorded in the reports of Plato's categories. In fact, detailed examination shows that there is no *one* distinction which is catalogued in Hermodorus, Xenocrates, *et al.*³⁰ Fine claims that Alexander's remark at 86. 6 is

²⁸ Hermodorus ap. Simpl. *In Phys.* 248. 2-5; Xenocrates ap. Simpl. *In Cat.* 63. 21-64. 12; D.L. 3. 108-9; Sextus, *M.* 10. 263-6.

²⁹ *In Metaph.* 86. 6 ἀλλ' εἰ ὁ ἀριθμὸς πρός τι (πᾶς γὰρ ἀριθμὸς τινὸς ἔστι), καὶ ἔστι πρῶτος ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν ὄντων, εἴ γε καὶ τῆς δυάδος ἣν ἀρχὴν ὑπέθευτο, εἴη ἂν κατ' αὐτοὺς τὸ πρός τι πρῶτον τοῦ καθ' αὐτὸ ὄντος. τοῦτο δὲ ἄτοπον.

³⁰ See Fine, *On Ideas*, ch. 12, as well as J. Annas and J. Barnes, *The Modes of Scepticism* (Cambridge, 1985), 128 ff., on the Sextus passage.

not completely out of line with standard Aristotelian usage. In fact, Aristotle at least begins his *Categories* discussion with the view that a relative is that which is *of* or *than* something, though he goes on to refine it. But in any event it is not clear that the sense of *πρός τι* in 86. 6 is the same as the one that is in play in the argument from relatives.

If Owen was wrong to think that Platonic relatives are to be understood in terms of incomplete predications, then how are we to understand them? Fine argues that this question will get no answer, since there is no fixed Platonic usage of *καθ' αὐτό* and *πρός τι* (p. 174). She thinks that in the Argument from Relatives Aristotle uses *καθ' αὐτό* to indicate the category of substance and *πρός τι* to pick out relatives as they are understood in the *Categories* and elsewhere in the Aristotelian corpus (p. 182). She also agrees with Owen that the argument is intended to show that there are Ideas which fall outside the Aristotelian category of relatives, like the Good Itself. She adds that it also fails to show that there are Ideas for terms *within* this category, like 'slave'. Thus, it seems that on her view, the range of Ideas which the argument from relatives is intended to generate is both larger and smaller than Aristotle's category of *πρός τι*. The lesson that Fine would draw from all this is that the argument is an argument *from* relatives *only in the sense that the example Aristotle uses to illustrate it is a relative term*. It does not mean that the argument is supposed to be confined to relative terms.³¹ Thus it becomes unimportant how we understand the *καθ' αὐτό/πρός τι* distinction.

This needs to be questioned. Fine says that the Argument from Relatives is not intended to produce an Idea of slave, but she provides no argument for this claim. Nor, I think, can she do so, consistent with accepting Owen's reason for thinking that the argument from relatives is not confined to Aristotle's category of *πρός τι*. Owen notes that the likely source for Aristotle's argument, *Phaedo* 74 A 9–77 A 5, includes not only the relatives equal, larger, and smaller (which are Aristotelian relatives), but also beautiful, just, good, and holy, and 'all things upon which we set the seal *ἀντὸ δ' ἔσται*' (75 C 10–D 2) (which are not). Suppose it is correct to

³¹ . . . contrary to Owen, the label "Argument from Relatives" does not imply that the argument is meant to show that there are forms for all and only relatives. It indicates only that the argument proceeds from a relative . . . not that all and only relative predicates can be substituted for "equal" (Fine, *On Ideas*, 174–5).

connect Aristotle's version of the argument with *Phaedo* 74–7 and that the argument is therefore intended to generate Ideas for larger and smaller as well as equal. But Plato characterizes these terms in just the same way that he characterizes 'master' and 'slave': they are such as to be of or than another.³² Since the *Parmenides* seems to affirm the existence of an Idea for slave, and since Plato regards δούλος and μείζον as on a par, there is every reason to think that the argument under consideration is intended to generate an Idea for slave and presumably all other Aristotelian πρὸς τι. In the next section I shall defend a Platonic account of πρὸς τι which incorporates all the Aristotelian relatives, as well as the additional predicates, like 'good' and 'beautiful', which Owen sought to include in the Academic distinction.

Before we turn to this, however, let us consider further Fine's account of the Platonic line of reasoning which Aristotle's argument discusses. On her view, Plato is interested in the phenomenon of the narrow compresence of opposites, particularly as it is manifested by sensible properties. The narrow compresence of opposites on the part of bright colour and other sensible properties leads Plato to conclude that beauty is a *non-sensible property*. The so-called argument from relatives calls attention to this narrow compresence in a particular case involving a relative, but the phenomenon is exhibited outside Aristotle's category of relatives as well. She thinks that Plato generalizes from narrow compresence to broad compresence. x undergoes broad compresence if x has features which are inessential to understanding what x is. So, for instance, one does not understand what square is by understanding this square, for it has features which are not relevant to that understanding, e.g. having an area of four centimetres. Thus, it is not surprising that she sees nothing distinctive about relatives in Plato's thought which would make it appropriate to talk about an argument *exclusively designed* to show that there are Ideas for such terms.³³

³² *Rep.* 438 B 1–2 ὅσα γ' ἐστὶ τοιαῦτα οἷα εἶναί του, which he illustrates with τὸ μείζον τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν οἷον τινὸς εἶναι μείζον. Compare this with *Parm.* 133 D 7–E 4, where master and slave are distinguished by the similar genitive construction: εἴ τις ἡμῶν του δεσπότης ἢ δούλος ἐστιν, οὐκ αὐτοῦ δεσπότης δῆπου, ὃ ἔστι δεσπότης, ἐκείνου δούλος ἐστιν, οὐδὲ αὐτοῦ δούλου, ὃ ἐστὶ δούλος, δεσπότης ὃ δεσπότης, ἀλλ' ἀνθρώπος ὢν ἀνθρώπου ἀμφοτέρα ταῦτ' ἐστίν· αὐτῇ δὲ δεσποτεία αὐτῆς δουλείας ἐστὶν ὃ ἐστὶ, καὶ δουλεία ὡσαύτως αὐτῇ δουλεία αὐτῆς δεσποτείας.

³³ It must be noted that Fine discusses the argument from broad compresence to Ideas in the context of the Argument from the Sciences (Alex. Aphr. *In Metaph.* 79. 3–80. 6) and remarks that, of the arguments surveyed in the *Περὶ ἰδεῶν*, the

Fine's account of the specifics of the *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* argument from narrow compresence will be criticized in the next section. I am in sympathy with the general drift of her account of Plato's pathway from narrow compresence to Ideas, though I do not accept all the details.³⁴ However, we should not suppose that Plato accepts the generalization from narrow to broad compresence. Charity dictates that we ought to credit Plato with the best argument that the text will support. Given the constraints that Plato accepts on answers to the question 'What is beauty?', it is reasonable for him to dismiss the property of being brightly coloured because it suffers from narrow compresence. It is not, however, reasonable for him to suppose that there must be an Idea of Square because all the sensible squares have *inessential features* (and thus suffer broad compresence), for the Idea has features that are inessential to the understanding of squareness as surely as the sensibles do. It is no part of the essence of squareness that it be eternal, perfect, and all the other features of Ideas *qua* Ideas. Aristotle criticizes Plato for supposing that the object of our knowledge when we understand the essence of man is something that has features that are *incompatible* with the essence of man. However, it is no part of his criticism that he supposes the Idea of man to have features that are *inessential* to the essence of man.³⁵ This would be very surprising if Plato accepted the argu-

Argument from Relatives alone *explicitly* adverts to compresence (p. 152). Is it narrow or broad? Her exegesis of II(b) involves narrow compresence (p. 152), but in summing up the result of the argument, she simply talks of compresence (pp. 143, 159, 167). The root of her ambivalence is perhaps the thought that Plato accepts both arguments. Thus, if the main thrust of the argument from relatives is that there must be a non-sensible property which makes all the many *F*s *F* when all the sensible properties which one might nominate for this role undergo narrow compresence, and the main thrust of the argument from the sciences is that there must also be an Idea where properties or particulars undergo broad compresence, then Plato must think that there is an argument from *any* form of compresence to an Idea. The difference between the individual arguments can only be one of emphasis.

³⁴ I think that the account of Ideas as both truthmakers for the answers to Socratic questions and as explanatory principles present to their participants does a better job of preserving the sense in which Ideas seem to occupy an intermediate position between universals and particulars. Fine must steadfastly oppose any reading of a passage in Plato which makes the Ideas too substantial (in the Aristotelian sense). Perhaps this can be done, but it seems to me that it resolves a matter which Plato's own remarks about the Ideas leave open. Is it clear, for instance, that in the guided tour of the realm of Being in *Phaedrus* 247 c–d, the author consistently thinks of the Ideas as properties and not particulars?

³⁵ *Top.* 148^a14–17 Πλάτων ὀρίζεται τὸ θνητὸν προσάπτων ἐν τοῖς τῶν ζώων ὀρισμοῖς· ἡ γὰρ ἰδέα οὐκ ἔσται θνητὴ οἷον αὐτοάνθρωπος ὥστ' οὐκ ἐφαρμῶσει ὁ λόγος ἐπὶ τῆν

ment from broad compresence that Fine attributes to him. Let us return to the notion that the argument is intended to apply only to members of a class of terms which Plato—though perhaps not Aristotle—would call *πρός τι*.

(ii) *Plato and πρός τι*. Relative terms, we are told, are those things which have their being in relation to another.³⁶ Although Plato's definition—if one can call it that—is vague, some of his examples suggest the following analysis: Where *R* and *C* are a relative and correlative pair, if *x* is *R*, then there is some *y* such that *x* is *R* in relation to *y* and *y* is *C* in relation to *x*.³⁷ Thus, if Jones is a slave, then Jones is a slave of some master. Contrary to Owen's interpretation of Plato's distinction, this is not a semantic claim. Plato does not think that 'Jones is a slave' is meaningless as it stands or that one needs acquaintance with some paradigm which is a slave but not of anyone in order to understand sentences in which the word 'slave' appears. Rather, this is a metaphysical claim about the way that some *ὄν* is: *ὁ δούλος* is what it is only in relation to another *ὄν*, *ὁ δεσπότης*. Language gets into the picture only because Plato takes certain syntactic features to be a reliable marker of this metaphysical relation. In all likelihood, this is why Aristotle begins his discussion of relatives with just such a syntactic criterion: *πρός τι δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται, ὅσα αὐτὰ ἄπερ ἐστὶν ἐτέρων εἶναι λέγεται ἢ ὁπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρός ἕτερον* (*Cat.* 6^a36–7).³⁸ Various ancient commentators

ιδέαν. Metaph. 1059^a10–14 ἔχει ἀντίθεσιν ὥστε ἀνάγκη γένει ἕτερα εἶναι. φανερόν τοίνυν ὅτι οὐκ ἐνδέχεται εἶναι εἶδη τοιαῦτα οἷα λέγουσί τινες: ἔσται γὰρ καὶ ἄνθρωπος ὁ μὲν φθαρτός ὁ δ' ἀφθαρτος. καίτοι τῷ εἶδει ταῦτα λέγεται εἶναι τὰ εἶδη τοῖς τισὶ καὶ οὐχ ὁμώνυμα.

³⁶ *Soph.* 255 c 12–13 ἀλλ' οἰμαί σε συγχωρεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτά, τὰ δὲ πρός ἄλλα αἰεὶ λέγεσθαι. Cf. *Parm.* 133 c 8 οὐκοῦν καὶ ὅσα τῶν ιδεῶν πρός ἀλλήλας εἰσὶν αἶ εἰσιν, αὐταὶ πρός αὐτὰς τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχουσιν κτλ.

³⁷ I do not propose to consider the nature of the relation between sensibles and Ideas for relatives. H. N. Castañeda argued that Plato imagined monadic Ideas bound by laws of factual enchainment, so that if Simmias is taller than Cebes this is because Simmias participates in Tallness and Cebes in Shortness, and their participation in these Ideas is 'toward' one another ('Plato's *Phaedo* Theory of Relations', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 1 (1972), 467–80). M. Matthen, by contrast, multiplies the number of participation relations so that Simmias participates-with-respect-to-Cebes in Tallness ('Plato's Treatment of Relational Statements in the *Phaedo*', *Phronesis*, 27 (1982), 90–100). However we understand the relation between these sensibles and their corresponding Ideas, it will turn out that if *x* is *R*, then there is some *y* such that *x* is *R* in relation to *y* and *y* is *C* in relation to *x*.

³⁸ Compare *Rep.* 438 a 7–B 1 ὅσα γ' ἐστὶ τοιαῦτα οἷα εἶναι του, τὰ μὲν ποιά ἅττα ποιοῦ τινός ἐστιν, where the examples include the pairs larger/smaller, more/less, double/half, the non-comparative terms hot/cold, knowledge/knowable, a specific kind of knowledge like building/house-building, and, of course, thirst/drink; *Parm.*

identify this criterion as Platonic and it is not utterly implausible to do so, for Plato seldom offers us anything more specific.³⁹ However, this is not the end of the story. Aristotle thinks that there are some relatives which do not exhibit this syntactic marker. Thus the non-comparative terms 'large' and 'small' are said not to be contraries because they are relative terms which rely on an implicit comparison.⁴⁰ In this it seems likely that he is again following his teacher, for Plato too is tempted by the thought that at least no sensible thing is καθ' αὐτὸ μέγα. Nor is Plato particularly careful in distinguishing comparative from non-comparative adjectives.⁴¹ This suggests a disjunctive account of the Platonic category of πρὸς τι. A term is a relative if (a) it is of or than something—a metaphysical relation indicated by a genitive or dative complement; or (b) it is 'appropriately related' to a term that meets the first condition. The second disjunct is admittedly vague, but this simply reflects the uncertainty about the extension of τὰ πρὸς τι given Plato's rough characterization. For instance, λευκότερος takes the relevant genitive complement, and one may say that what is paler is always paler *than* some darker

133 C 8 ὅσαί τῶν ἰδεῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλας εἰσὶν αἶ εἰσι, which works with the examples of master/slave and knowledge/knowable; *Chrm.* 168 B 2 ἔχει τιὰ τοιαύτην δύναμιν ὥστε τινὸς εἶναι. The last passage considers things of the same kind as knowledge and its object (167 C 5 ἐν ἄλλοις γάρ που τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐὰν σκοπῆς. Among these are vision/colour, hearing/sound, sense/sensible, desire/pleasure, wish/good, love/beauty, fear/the dreadful, opinion/the opinable, greater/smaller, double/half, more/less, heavier/lighter, older/younger, as well as motion and heat. The correlatives of these πάθη are not specified, but consideration of *Euthph.* 10 B 1–2 τὸ φερόμενον διότι φέρεται φερόμενόν ἐστιν, ἢ δι' ἄλλο τι; suggests that the pairs denoted by active and passive participles may be πρὸς τι pairs. It is clear that Aristotle includes them among τὰ πρὸς τι at *Metaph.* 1021^a14–19.

³⁹ Four *Categories* commentaries attribute the definition to Plato: Porph. 111. 28–9; Simpl. 159. 12–15; Olymp. 112. 20; and David 215. 21 ff. Amm. 70. 10–14 and Philop. 109. 26–31 deny this on the ground that it slanders Plato. I am indebted to Thom Bole for the references to Olympiodorus and David.

⁴⁰ *Cat.* 5^b14–18 εἰ μὴ τὸ πολὺ τῷ ὀλίγῳ φαίη τις εἶναι ἐναντίον ἢ τὸ μέγα τῷ μικρῷ. τούτων δὲ οὐδὲν ἐστὶ ποσὸν ἀλλὰ τῶν πρὸς τι· οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μέγα λέγεται ἢ μικρόν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἕτερον ἀναφέρεται. This passage seems to be contradicted by *Metaph.* 1020^a22–4. H. Bonitz, *Aristoteles: Metaphysik* (Berlin, 1848), holds that the two are genuinely irreconcilable, while Alexander seems to think that μέγα admits of both a relative and καθ' αὐτό sense (*In Metaph.* 397. 33–5).

⁴¹ Most notably in *Theaet.* 153 E ff. He begins from the thought ἠγὼν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ἐν ὄν τιθέντες. This is first illustrated with examples of colour, but he then turns to size. If things were καθ' αὐτὸ μέγα then they would not become different when brought into comparison with something else without having undergone a change in themselves. By 154 C the non-comparative forms have given way to illustrations involving μείζον and πλέον. See also nn. 38 and 43.

thing. Thus 'paler' seems to be a relative. But it seems questionable whether one ought to say that the non-comparative term 'pale' is a relative. Perhaps it does not, like 'large', involve an implicit comparison.⁴² The most generous understanding of 'appropriately related' yields the account of *πρός τι* and *καθ' αὐτό* offered by Xenocrates. According to him, *τὰ καθ' αὐτό* is simply the Aristotelian category of substance, while *τὰ πρός τι* encompasses all the other categories since these accidents are accidents *of* some subject. A more conservative understanding of the appropriate relation would isolate non-comparative terms which admit of an attributive use. The idea that a thing may be good or beautiful *for a thing of its kind* is perhaps the sort of thing that Aristotle has in mind when he writes ἡ ὁπωσοῦν ἄλλως πρός ἕτερον—a clause that was presumably intended to cover terms like 'large'. We may also include alongside attributives those terms, like 'just' or 'pious', which are sensitive to the description under which their subjects are characterized. Thus, an action might be pious in so far as it is the prosecution of a murderer, but impious in so far as it is the prosecution of one's own father. If we take this more conservative approach to the extension of *τὰ πρός τι*, then it turns out that this class includes the terms, like 'beauty', which give rise to the narrow compresence of opposites that Fine thinks is the basis of the argument from relatives. But the relatives so understood also include terms like 'slave', and Fine thinks that the argument was not intended to generate Ideas in these cases.

(iii) *Plato's Ideas and πρός τι*. Above I gave the broad outlines of a Platonic argument for Ideas. Now it is time to see whether relatives like 'master' and 'slave' fit into that picture. The argument is roughly that the exceptionlessly correct account of *F* requires a truthmaker which in no way fails to be *F*, and for those values of *F* where we find the narrow compresence of opposites, this requires the postulation of an Idea of *F*. What is distinctive about ὁ δούλος is that this being is what it is in relation to another. This, however, is incompatible with the slave being-completely a slave, for there is a true sentence like 'Jones is not the slave of Smith'. (Let us suppose that Jones belongs to Brown instead.) Hence, whatever the truthmaker is for the right account of slavery, it cannot be the

⁴² This is doubtless the reason why the later accounts of 'Plato's categories' which Owen examined do not yield the same division. They are not accounts of a genuinely Platonic division. Rather, they are ways of trying to make specific a division that is drawn vaguely in Plato's dialogues.

slave that we see going to market. Plato's solution, as the *Parmenides* makes clear, was to suppose that there are Ideas of Master and Slave which are what they are in relation to one another and which do not enter into relations with other things. Thus, it is not the case that Slave Itself fails to be-completely because it is not the slave of Smith. This is part of the point of the separation of the Ideas. They are *αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό* because their complete-being is not mortgaged to relations with sensibles.⁴³ This is not an arbitrary specification of their natures except in so far as their natures are specified as models or paradigms. Though copies are copies *of a model*, a model is not a model *of a copy*. It is this asymmetry that allows Plato to insist that Slave Itself is *οὐ πρὸς τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν* (*Parm.* 133 D 1–2).⁴⁴

This is a rather brief treatment of deep and complex issues in Plato's metaphysics. It would take a great deal more to make the interpretation absolutely convincing. For the moment, however, I hope to have established that it is not wildly implausible. But since our quarry is Aristotle's version of the argument from relatives, let us now turn to that.

2. The structure of Aristotle's argument

Plato's dialogues suggest that sensible equals are a case of I(b) non-homonymy, for the sensibles are likenesses of Equality Itself. The next puzzle about the argument that Aristotle provides in the *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* is why II denies that equal is predicated non-homonymously of sensible equals. The puzzle is an old one and it has been given several solutions. The earliest is that adopted by the copyist of the L and F manuscripts of Alexander's text. He simply changes the argument so that *αὐτοῖσον* is predicated of the sensibles synonymously but not strictly so (*συνωνύμως, οὐ κυρίως δέ, recensio altera* 83. 15). Cherniss proposed keeping the words in the better manuscripts in

⁴³ Note that later in the *Parmenides* Plato provides the same treatment of the *πρὸς τι* pair large/small: *Parm.* 150 c 4–6 ἀλλὰ μὴν αὐτὸ μέγεθος οὐκ ἄλλου μείζον ἢ αὐτῆς μικρότητος, οὐδὲ μικρότης ἄλλου ἑλαττον ἢ αὐτοῦ μεγέθους.

⁴⁴ See also *Phileb.* 54 A 7–10 ὁρθότατα. πότερον οὖν τούτων ἕνεκα ποτέρου, τὴν γένεσιν οὐσίας ἕνεκα φάμεν ἢ τὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι γενέσεως ἕνεκα; with *Tim.* 28 A ff. Aristotle also notes that some relatives are so called, not because they are what *they are* in relation to something else, but because something else is related *to them*: *Metaph.* 1021^a26–30 τὰ μὲν ὄν κατ' ἀριθμὸν καὶ δυνάμιν λεγόμενα πρὸς τι πάντα ἐστὶ πρὸς τι τῷ ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἄλλου λέγεσθαι αὐτὸ ὅ ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῷ ἄλλο πρὸς ἐκεῖνο· τὸ δὲ μετρητὸν καὶ τὸ ἐπιστητὸν καὶ τὸ διανοητὸν τῷ ἄλλο πρὸς αὐτὸ λέγεσθαι πρὸς τι λέγονται.

the *recensio vulgata*, but had the meanings shifted between I and II.⁴⁵ Though Alexander writes 'non-homonymously' in I(b), this is in fact what Plato would call a case of 'homonymy'—the relation of likeness to model.⁴⁶ Alexander then shifts from the Aristotelian terminology of I when he claims in II that 'equal' is predicated homonymously. The effect is to show that sensible equals are cases of the kind of predication discussed in I(b) because the argument of II rules out the possibility that they are a case of I(a) predication and III rules out the possibility of I(c) predication. This is not too wildly implausible, but when he gets to III Cherniss has to introduce yet a different sense for 'non-homonymous'. We are to understand III as 'if someone were to say that the model and the likeness are not of the same class'. He recognizes that so many shifts in the sense of the term in so short a space of text are undesirable and suggests that 'the true reading may have been *δμώνυμον τὴν εἰκόνα τῷ παραδείγματι* and that *μή* was inserted by a reader who, taking the word in the Aristotelian sense, tried to correct the passage in the manner of LF' (ibid.). The proper sense would then be 'if one were to admit that the image is always⁴⁷ derivative from the model, it still follows that . . .'. This is surely ingenious, but it would be far preferable to have an interpretation of the text that we actually have.

(a) *Owen's version of the argument*

Such an interpretation is exactly what Owen managed to accomplish. In all the kinds of non-homonymy discussed in I, there is something that is *κυρίως* or completely *F*. II is intended to show that 'equal' cannot be predicated non-homonymously of sensible equals in the manner of I(a) because none of them is completely equal. III provides a different sort of argument for what is really a corollary of II.⁴⁸ Sensible equals cannot be non-homonymously equal in way I(c), since no one of them is more a paradigm than a likeness. IV, on Owen's view, is concessive. It allows that sensibles may be equal in way I(b), and this leaves open the possibility that

⁴⁵ H. F. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (New York, 1945), 231 n. 137.

⁴⁶ Cherniss cites *Tim.* 53 A, *Parm.* 133 D, and *Phaedo* 78 E as instances of this Platonic sense of homonymy.

⁴⁷ Repunctuating with the comma after *ἀεί*.

⁴⁸ If no sensible equal is fully equal, no one of them can be a paradigm.

there is some univocity in our use of 'equal' in relation to sensibles. But, even so, none is *κυρίως ἴσον* and, if they are to be ἴσον even in way I(b), there must be *something* which is equal *κυρίως*.

As with his account of Platonic relatives, the problems facing Owen's account stem from his treatment of the argument as semantic in nature. His claim is that, for Plato, understanding 'F' requires acquaintance with something which is *κυρίως F*. This sets the stage for his detailed interpretation of II.

For the point of II(a) is that the specification of various correlates can be no part of the meaning of 'equal' if it is not merely ambiguous, and the point of II(c) is that when the common core of meaning is pared of these accretions it no longer characterises anything in this world. ('Proof', p. 177)

But this just implies that the Platonist is trying to have it both ways. Suppose that 'equal' is not 'merely ambiguous'. Then 'a is equal to b' must be logically complex. Its structure must be something like 'Ea & aRb', i.e. a is equal and a is in-relation-to-b. But if this is so, then the core meaning *does* characterize something in this world, viz. every equal thing.⁴⁹ To suppose that it does not, we must see the logical structure of the sentence as 'E_ba', i.e. 'a is equal-in-relation-to-b'. But in this case 'equal' will be merely ambiguous. Owen's interpretation leaves Plato with hopelessly confused semantic requirements.

This is not to say that there could be no successful semantic interpretation of the argument. Bostock puts the case for a semantic interpretation of the genesis of the theory of Ideas in quite general terms.⁵⁰ According to him,

Preoccupied at first with notions such as goodness, Plato is struck by the point that there are not in this world any unambiguous examples of things that are good. Considering then how we come to understand the word

⁴⁹ It does this, of course, as one element in a complex state of affairs whose constituents cannot be realized independently. Perhaps this is what Owen meant in saying that *pared of these accretions* the core of meaning does not characterize anything in this world. The passages that Owen cites as evidence of Plato's semantic views on the matter suggest a very visual model of semantic acquaintance (if, in fact, it is the grasp of meaning that is at issue in this passage). So at *Rep.* 524 D 9–E 3 we find *εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἰκανῶς αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ὁρᾶται ἢ ἄλλη τινὶ αἰσθήσει λαμβάνεται τὸ ἐν, οὐκ ἂν ὀλκὸν εἶη ἐπὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ δακτύλου ἐλέγμεν· εἰ δ' αἰεὶ τι αὐτῷ ἄμα ὁρᾶται ἐναντίωμα, ὥστε μηδὲν μᾶλλον ἐν ἢ καὶ τοῦναντίον φαίνεσθαι, κτλ.* But, if the model for semantic acquaintance is visual, the conjunction of equality with various other properties is neither here nor there. If I see Bill *and* Ted, then I see Ted.

⁵⁰ D. Bostock, 'Plato on Understanding Language', in S. Everson (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought*, iii. *Language* (Cambridge, 1994), 10–27.

'good' [sc. as we learn 'red'—by being shown instances] in the first place, he is led to claim that there must be an unambiguous example in another world, that we must once have apprehended . . . (p. 14)

This is substantially Owen's view of Plato's path to Ideas in 'Proof'. The devil is in the detail. How are we to understand the sense in which sensible instances of goodness are ambiguous and the Idea unambiguous? Bostock himself thinks that Plato abandoned the notion that Ideas are unambiguous examples of the predicates that they correspond to in the face of problems about self-predication. However, he never gave up what we may call the referential theory of meaning: that 'general words have meaning by standing for Forms (and hence to understand the word one must in some way "grasp" the Form)' (Bostock, p. 26). This semantic theory is at the root of the puzzles arising from Socrates' Dream in the *Theaetetus* and is, according to Bostock, now known to be wholly mistaken. But this raises the question: why should we prefer semantic interpretations of the origins of the theory of Ideas when the semantic theory is such a bad one? If this is our *only* alternative for making sense of what Plato says, then I suppose we shall simply conclude that he was in the grip of a bad theory. Section 2(c) attempts to provide such an alternative.

(b) *Fine's version of the argument*

Fine agrees that the source of the problem with Owen's reading is the semantic slant. According to her view, II takes up the issue of whether any *sensible property* could be the property of equality, i.e. that which explains why all the many equal things are equal. II(a) notes that if we identify equality with the measurement of some particular pair of equals, say three inches, there will be many accounts of equality—as many as there are measurements of equal pairs.⁵¹ Thus, on her view, II(b) and (c) involve the compresence of opposites at the level of properties. Owen argued, convincingly I think, that II(b) cannot imply that sensible things are continually

⁵¹ 'II(a) says the equal itself is predicated homonymously of things here since the same definition or *logos* does not fit them all. . . . Suppose that *a* and *b* are each three inches long; we might infer that to be equal is to be three inches long. But three inches does not explain why *c* is equal to *d* (suppose they are each five inches long); to explain their equality we need to mention (given that at this stage we are restricted to sensibles) a different sensible length, five inches. The different *logoi*, that is, are specifications of the different measurements of sensible objects' (p. 151).

changing in all respects.⁵² For if this premiss invoked a radical doctrine of flux, it would undermine the conditions of non-homonymy given in I(a)–(c): Socrates would not be *κυρίως* a man or even a likeness. Fine takes II(b) to be making the point that the very same property—being three inches long—‘changes from being equal to being unequal, in that although three inches is equal in this context (where this three-inch thing is equal to this three-inch thing), it is unequal in another context (where this three-inch thing is unequal to a five-inch thing)’.⁵³ II(c) simply puts this point in the formal mode of speech by saying that none of the sensible properties that we might mistakenly identify with the property of equality accurately receives the account of equality (p. 153). III makes explicit what ought to be obvious already: no sensible property with which we might try to identify equality is any more a paradigm than any other. The upshot is that there must be a *non-sensible* property which is what equality really is.

I have deep misgivings about this account. Properties are explanatory elements, according to Fine. The accurate way to describe what happens to the property of being three inches long in the envisaged situation is that it is, in one context, the purported explanation for why things are equal and in another the purported explanation for the inequality of two things. Plato has plenty of vocabulary for referring to the explanation or ‘be-causal’ factor in a situation. Indeed, he uses several expressions.⁵⁴ But in *Phaedo* 74 B 7–9 (surely the most obvious source for Aristotle’s argument to draw on) Socrates does not ask, ‘Did it ever seem to you that the sensible equals are *that on account of which* things are sometimes equal and sometimes unequal?’ Rather, he asks whether *stones and sticks*, while remaining the same, appear equal to one but not to

⁵² Fine, *On Ideas*, 54–7, notes that both Plato and Aristotle use the language of flux and change to describe the narrow compresence of opposites: see *H.Ma.* 289 A, *Soph.* 242 E 2–3, with Arist. *NE* 1155^b 4–6, 1176^a 5–8, *Top.* 159^b 31, and *Phys.* 185^b 20. T. Irwin (‘Plato’s Heracliteanism’, *Philosophical Quarterly*, 27 (1977), 1–13) and J. Annas (*Aristotle’s Metaphysics M and N* (Oxford, 1976)) both defend the view that Plato never took sensibles to be changing in all ways at all times.

⁵³ *On Ideas*, 152.

⁵⁴ For the instrumental dative cf. *Euthph.* 6 D 11, where he asks for ‘that by which all the holy things are holy’ (ὃ πάντα τὰ ὅσια ὁσιά ἐστῶν). For ‘that on account of which’ see *Prot.* 360 C 1–2 τοῦτο δι’ ὃ δειλοί εἰσιν οἱ δειλοί δειλίαν ἢ ἀνδρείαν καλεῖς; and *Meno* 72 C 7–8 ἐν γέ τι εἶδος ταῦτόν ἅπαναι ἔχουσιν δι’ ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί. Sometimes he will even speak of what ‘makes’ *F* things *F*, e.g. *H.Ma.* 300 A 9–10 ἔχουσιν ἀρα τι τὸ αὐτὸ ὃ ποιεῖ αὐτὰς καλὰς εἶναι τὸ κοινὸν τοῦτο.

another. I suggest this is because his concern is with truthmakers, not with sensible properties. The sticks and stones cannot be what the exceptionlessly true account of equality is about because they both are and are not equal.

Another difficulty with Fine's account concerns sensible and non-sensible properties. It seems that 'being of like measures' is as sensible a property as 'being three inches long'. Indeed, it may be that being of like measures has more of a claim to being a sensible property than being three inches long. One can tell at a glance, without a ruler or any other measuring instrument, whether a pair has the property of being of like measures. Moreover, Plato seems to regard being of like measures as at least a necessary condition of equality.⁵⁵ Thus, if the argument was intended merely to establish the existence of a non-sensible property of equality, then by Plato's own lights the argument ought to be deemed a failure, for there is a fairly obvious sensible property which fits the bill.

In general, I think that the problem with Fine's approach is twofold. First, we ourselves cannot distinguish rigorously between observational and non-observational properties or universals. To suppose that Plato has a firm grasp of this distinction is, I think, very optimistic. But, more charitably, there is no reason to think that he would have been *particularly interested* in such a distinction among properties, for this distinction is one which is most at home in the context of empiricist, instrumentalist epistemologies. Plato distinguishes between the sensible and the *intelligible*, but this is less a distinction between observational and non-observational properties than it is between things which are ontologically and epistemically secondary and those that are primary.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Parm.* 140 B 7 ἴσον μὲν ὄν τῶν αὐτῶν μέτρων ἔσται ἐκείνῳ ᾧ ἂν ἴσον ᾗ. Cf. 151 B 7–C 1.

⁵⁶ Fine recognizes the epistemic priority of the Ideas in her rejection of the Two Worlds thesis ('Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V–VII', in S. Everson (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought*, i. *Epistemology* (Cambridge, 1990), 85–115). Like me, she thinks that it is possible to know that a sensible has a feature according to Plato. It is not a consequence of the *Republic*'s epistemology that only Ideas can be known. However, with regard to the ontological priority of the Ideas, i.e. separation, she thinks that nothing in the middle dialogues shows that Plato is committed to it. The most that she will say is that 'separation fits well with the tenor of the middle dialogues, and the casual way in which separation emerges in the *Timaeus* perhaps suggests that Plato takes it for granted' (*On Ideas*, 61; cf. 'Separation', *OSAP* 2 (1984), 31–87).

(c) *An alternative*

The Equal Itself is the being which corresponds to the correct account of that on account of which all equal things are equal. Let us suppose that the correct λόγος is 'because they have the same measures'. Why would this be predicated homonymously of the things here? The short answer seems to be that it wouldn't. Take two pairs, $\{a, b\}$ and $\{c, d\}$. a and b are both three inches long, while c and d are both five inches long. Compare this with the case in I(c) where man is predicated of Plato and Plato's picture. In this case we reveal 'one true nature' in the sense that *the thing in the picture* is a man—something which, *in the context of the picture*, is rational rather than irrational, an animal rather than a plant, and so on. We reveal 'one true nature' in each case for rather different reasons. So too, it ought to be possible to say that having the same measures is predicated non-homonymously of both $\{a, b\}$ and $\{c, d\}$ though the measures in question in each case are different. I propose that when the argument says that τὸ ἴσον αὐτό is predicated homonymously, what is at issue is not whether the definition is predicable of them but whether any of the sensible equals can be the *truthmaker* for the account of what equality is. II provides reasons for thinking that none of them can. Let me review the details of these reasons.

II(c) presents the most fundamental reason why this is not possible. Sensible equal things cannot be the truthmaker for the account of what equality is since they fail the requirement of complete-being. II(b) says that τὸ αὐτὸ ἴσον is predicated homonymously because the quantity in sensibles changes and continuously shifts. Along with Owen and Fine, I do not think that II(b) can endorse a Heraclitean view of the sensible world. Rather it makes the point that quantity is always relative to the choice of count-noun or measure. Thus, as Plato points out in the *Parmenides*, I am both one human being but many members. Since equality supervenes on quantity, it too is not determinate.

II(a) is problematic for my view, for if I am right, then the same λόγος is *true of* all the sensible equals—any two which are equal have the same measures—but the λόγος is not *made true* by them. This is an important distinction for Plato, for if the same account is not true of all the sensibles, then what would be the point of coming to know the λόγος τῆς οὐσίας which is the Idea?⁵⁷ Something must

⁵⁷ Even if one thinks that Plato is committed to the Two Worlds thesis, there is

give, and I would like to suggest, perhaps stubbornly, that what ought to give is Aristotle's account of Plato's reasoning. This will seem less *ad hoc* if we look a bit more closely at the manner in which Aristotle puts the point.

Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not think that there is one reason why all the many *F* things are *F* for all values of *F*. Hence his criticism of the Idea of the Good in the *Ethics*. I suspect that Aristotle thinks that equality is another such case. Things are equal which are one in quantity.⁵⁸ But quantity comes in two distinct kinds: the countable plurality and measurable magnitude.⁵⁹ Aristotle insists in *Posterior Analytics* that one cannot prove geometrical truths from the first principles appropriate to number or vice versa, and it seems clear that this has to do with the fact that there are two distinct kinds of quantity. It is in this context that he uses the curious term *ἐφαρμόζειν* that we find in *II(a)*.⁶⁰ In *Post. An.* 73^b6 he says, 'While the things on which the demonstration depends [sc. the axioms] may be the same, still of the things whose genus is different—as for example arithmetic and geometry—one cannot apply arithmetical demonstrations to the accidents of magnitudes, unless magnitudes are numbers.'⁶¹ Of course Aristotle does *not* think that magnitudes are numbers. The grounding of the counterfactual becomes clearer when we turn to *Post. An.* 88^a32 and examine it in the light of Euclid's Common Notion 4. Aristotle there remarks that the first principles of many sciences are different in genus and do not apply—for example, units do not apply to points, for the one

a puzzle here. For if knowledge of the Idea gives you an account of what it is to be *F* which is not applicable to the sensibles *in some way or other*, then of what use is knowledge?

⁵⁸ *Metaph.* 1021^a11–12 κατὰ γὰρ τὸ ἐν λέγεται πάντα, ταῦτά μὲν γὰρ ὦν μία ἢ οὐσία, ὁμοία δ' ὦν ἢ ποιότης μία, ἴσα δὲ ὦν τὸ ποσὸν ἔν.

⁵⁹ *Metaph.* 1020^a7–10 ποσὸν λέγεται τὸ διαιρετὸν εἰς ἐνυπάρχοντα ὦν ἑκάτερον ἢ ἕκαστον ἐν τι καὶ τὸδε τι πέφυκεν εἶναι. πλήθος μὲν οὖν ποσὸν τι ἐὰν ἀριθμητὸν ἦ, μέγεθος δὲ ἂν μετρητὸν ἦ. Cf. *Cat.* 4^b20–3.

⁶⁰ Plato never uses *ἐφαρμόζειν*. Aristotle uses it in 21 places.

⁶¹ 75^a38–^b6 οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ἐξ ἄλλου γένους μεταβάτῃ δαίξει οἶον τὸ γεωμετρικὸν ἀριθμητικῆ. τρία γὰρ ἔστι τὰ ἐν ταῖς ἀποδείξεσιν, ἐν μὲν τὸ ἀποδεικνύμενον τὸ συμπέρασμα (τοῦτο δ' ἔστι τὸ ὑπάρχον γένει τινὶ καθ' αὐτό), ἐν δὲ τὰ ἀξιώματα (ἀξιώματα δ' ἔστιν ἐξ ὦν) τρίτον τὸ γένος τὸ ὑποκείμενον οὐ τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰ καθ' αὐτὰ συμβεβηκότα δηλοῖ ἢ ἀπόδειξις. ἐξ ὦν μὲν οὖν ἢ ἀπόδειξις ἐνδέχεται τὰ αὐτὰ εἶναι ὦν δὲ τὸ γένος ἕτερον ὡσπερ ἀριθμητικῆς καὶ γεωμετρίας οὐκ ἔστι τὴν ἀριθμητικὴν ἀπόδειξιν ἐφαρμόσει ἐπὶ τὰ τοῖς μεγέθει συμβεβηκότα εἰ μὴ τὰ μεγέθη ἀριθμοὶ εἴσι; cf. 76^a22 ἢ δ' ἀπόδειξις οὐκ ἐφαρμόττει ἐπ' ἄλλο γένος.

has position but the other does not.⁶² This talk of application is, I suspect, a reference to accounts of equality like the one in Euclid: *καὶ τὰ ἐφαρμοζόντα ἐπ' ἄλληλα ἴσα ἀλλήλοις ἐστίν*. This is perfectly adequate for congruence of geometrical figures but nonsense in relation to numbers, which cannot be positioned so as to coincide. It is very likely that this account of equality, like other commons (cf. Common Notion 3 and *Post. An.* 77^a30), was known to Aristotle, and it probably has Pythagorean roots. In any event, it crops up in connection with them frequently and is, I suspect, a pun. *De anima* 408^a5 plays on the connection between the Pythagorean doctrine of soul as *ἁρμονία* and the difficulty of getting such an account to *ἐφαρμόζειν*, while *NE* 1132^b23 tells us that the Pythagorean account of justice as a square number won't *ἐφαρμόττει*.

The homonymy of equality and some other related relative terms is explicitly considered at *Phys.* 248^b12–21. Here Aristotle is concerned that if motion in a circle and motion in a straight line can be compared, then the circle and the line will be commensurable or even equal. One solution is to deny that 'quick' is predicated synonymously of linear and circular motion, for things which are predicated homonymously are not comparable (248^b10–12). But then Aristotle has a worry about seemingly synonymous predications which are also not comparable. Thus, 'much' means the same in relation to water and air, yet these are not comparable. And even if someone should deny that 'much' is predicated synonymously, certainly 'double' is since in each case it signifies the ratio of two to one (^b12–15). But then Aristotle third-guesses himself.

But here again may we not take up the same position and say that 'much' is homonymous? In fact, there are some terms of which even the definition is homonymous; e.g. if 'much' were defined as 'so much and more', 'so much' would mean something different in different cases; 'equal' is similarly homonymous; and 'one' again is perhaps inevitably an equivocal term; and if 'one' is equivocal, so is 'two'. Otherwise why is it that some things are commensurable and others are not if the nature of the attribute in the two cases is really one and the same?⁶³

⁶² Ἐτεροι γὰρ πολλῶν τῷ γένει αἱ ἀρχαὶ καὶ οὐδ' ἐφαρμόττουσαι ὅσον αἱ μονάδες ταῖς στιγμαῖς οὐκ ἐφαρμόττουσιν· αἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἔχουσι θέσιν αἱ δὲ ἔχουσιν.

⁶³ *Phys.* 248^b15–21 ἢ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος; καὶ γὰρ τὸ πολὺ ὁμώνυμον. ἀλλ' ἐνίων καὶ οἱ λόγοι ὁμώνυμοι, ὅσον εἰ λέγοι τις ὅτι τὸ πολὺ τὸ τοσοῦτον καὶ ἔτι, ἄλλο τὸ τοσοῦτον· καὶ τὸ ἴσον ὁμώνυμον, καὶ τὸ ἐν δέ, εἰ ἔτυχεν, εὐθὺς ὁμώνυμον. εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, καὶ τὰ δύο, ἐπεὶ διὰ τί τὰ μὲν συμβλητὰ τὰ δ' οὐ, εἴπερ ἦν μία φύσις; I have followed Ross's text and translation.

The example of 'much' suggests that the definition of equality in terms of having the same measures is homonymous because the specific number of measures in individual cases is different. In his commentary Simplicius supplies another reason for thinking that equal is homonymous.

The account of equals is that they are of the same measure or of the same number, but both the name and the account of these things are predicated homonymously of the things of which it is predicated.⁶⁴ (*In Phys.* 1088. 23-5)

Because numbers are distinct from magnitudes, there will be two accounts of equality: one in terms of having the same measure, another in terms of having the same number.

The use of equality as an example in the argument from relatives gives Aristotle a chance to play his pun on *ἐφαρμόζειν* again. But he also has a point: *by his lights*, there will be different accounts of equality as it applies to numbers and to magnitudes. From Aristotle's point of view, here again the Platonists have failed to recognize *πρὸς ἓν* ambiguity. He makes just the same point by using *ἐφαρμόττειν* in the *Eudemian Ethics*:

There must, then, be three kinds of friendship, not all being so named for one thing or as species of one genus, nor yet having the same name quite by mere accident. For all the senses are related to one which is the primary, just as is the case with the word 'medical' . . . And so they [sc. the Platonists] are not able to do justice to all the phenomena of friendship; for since one definition will not apply to (*ἐφαρμόττοντος*) them all, they think there are no other friendships; but the others are friendships, only not similarly so. But they, finding the primary friendship will not apply (*ἐφαρμόττη*), assuming it would be universal if it were primary, deny that the other friendships are friendships. (1236^a 17-29)

If I am right, then equality, like friendship, is something that Aristotle takes to be a case of *πρὸς ἓν* ambiguity. But in such cases the definitions, though overlapping, are not the same and so homonymous.⁶⁵ Aristotle helps Plato's argument along by providing an additional reason why the equal itself is predicated homonymously of the sensibles: it is predicated homonymously of them, because

⁶⁴ καὶ πᾶν ἴσων δὲ λόγος τὸ τῶν αὐτῶν μέτρων ἢ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀριθμῶν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτων καὶ τὸ ὄνομα καὶ ὁ λόγος ὁμωνύμως κατηγορεῖται, ὧν κατηγορεῖται.

⁶⁵ For a defence of this claim see T. Irwin, 'Homonymy in Aristotle', *Review of Metaphysics*, 34 (1981), 523-44.

equality is. But in this sense of homonymy, this is not a premiss that Plato would accept. Thus II(a) represents an unwanted intrusion into the Platonic line of argument. Aristotle puts it into the argument, not because he fails to understand Plato or wishes to misrepresent him, but because he reckons the premiss to be *true*. This would not be the only occasion on which what Aristotle takes to be the case shapes his exegesis of his predecessors' views.⁶⁶ It just happens to be particularly unfortunate in this case, since it seriously distorts Plato's argument.

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⁶⁶ Fine too thinks that Aristotle's views about what is really the case obtrude themselves into his reports concerning Plato, but in a much more significant way. She thinks that Plato regards Ideas as universals. It is Aristotle who thinks that anything which is separate must be a particular and that since Plato regards Ideas as separate (at least in the *Timaeus*), they must be both universals and particulars. For a similar account of Aristotle's relationship to earlier philosophers see H. F. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (Washington, 1935).