MICHAEL V. WEDIN, Davis, Calif./USA

PLATO ON WHAT «BEING» IS NOT

Relatively little attention has been paid Plato's treatment in the *Sophist* of the puzzles concerning being. These occur in 243b-249e, following presentation of a number of difficulties which face its more discussed counterpart, not-being. This neglect is due, in part at least, to the long and widely received view that Plato intends here merely to discredit certain rival doctrines of being.[1] We are thus to expect little illumination on the subject proper and little connection with Plato's own account of being.[2] In this paper I shall argue that Plato is concerned not with his predecessors but with the logical

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1. See, for instance, Herman Bonitz, *Platonische Studien* (Berlin 1886); Franz Susemihl, *Die Genetische Entwicklung der Platonischen Philosophie*, I (Leipzig 1855), 295; Friedrich Ueberweg, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, I (Darmstadt 1967), 294; George Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates*, II (London 1867), 414; Lewis Campbell, *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato* (Oxford 1867), p. lxxii. A more recent representative of the view is Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (London 1949). Even Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines*, II (London 1967), 389-94, is inclined towards the view, though he does attempt to assay the philosophical import of the paradoxes. Kenneth Sayre, on the other hand, *Plato's Analytic Method* (Chicago 1969), pp. 157-62, treats the argument of I - III as strictly refutative; while Wilhelm Kamlah, *Platons Selbstkritik im Sophistes*, München 1963 (Zetemata 33), 34, apparently sees their function as merely to introduce psychological rather than philosophical perplexity.

2. The first significant departure from this tradition is J.M.E. Moravcsik's thorough study *Being and Meaning in the Sophist*, "Acta Philosophica", Fasc. XIV (1962), 23-78, which argues that much more occurs in 243b-249e than straightforward refutation of predecessor doctrines. He holds that Plato here argues positive points on behalf of the concept existence, namely, that it is undefinable and necessarily all-inclusive. However, if the *Sophist* generally cannot support the distinction between "...is..." and "exists," then it seems imprudent to take 243b-249e as an exercise in the logic of existence. A special problem would, thus, face the claim of all-inclusiveness. For that claim is explicitly made out first at 256e6 in Plato's own analysis of being (what Moravcsik calls "relational being") and it would be odd to find positive solutions offered before the problem is fully set and even odder to find them solutions to a different problem. At any rate, rather than proven, the all-inclusive character of being is buried in the paradoxes, to be expressly unearthed later and then, I shall urge, in a somewhat different way (see my section IV). The above applies also to David Wiggins' *Sentence Meaning, Negation, and Plato's Problem of Non-Being*, in *Plato 1: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, ed. Gregory Vlastos (Garden City 1972), which tends to read the puzzles as treatments in the existential use of "εἶναι".

behavior of the concept being. In particular, I argue that he offers a connected analysis of what the concept is not or, alternatively, of logically improper uses of "being" and its variants. This exceeds mere refutation by yielding helpful clues to Plato's own views on the subject and, most significantly, by providing an indicator of his disposition to treat being as a formal concept.[3]

This paper interprets the first three paradoxes only, those concerning the quantity or number of what is. Each quantitative paradox, as I shall sometimes call them,[4] is generated by an argument which begins with a statement of what is apparently a predecessor's doctrine. Thus, they outwardly assume the look of strictly refutative arguments: paradox I (243e8-244a3) against dualism or, as I shall say, discrete pluralism; paradox II (244b6-244d10) against absolute monism; and paradox III (244d14-245d11) against relative monism. On the other hand, I shall show that in none of (I) - (III) is Plato arguing solely against the doctrine in question but rather against its ability to give an account of "being". Thus, from the start commentators miss the point in taking the arguments as strictly refutative.

It is important to see that (I) - (III) contain p a r a d o x setting arguments. So read, they yield a more interesting and fruitful interpretation than the received view permits. For if the same dialogue offers us both paradoxes and a positive theory of being, we have every right to expect the salient features of the theory to provide solutions to the paradoxes. This also supplies, in effect, an initial adequacy condition on any interpretation of the paradoxes. Accordingly, I devote a separate section of the paper to each paradox, stating the paradox setting argument and indicating on what

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3. See page 293 below for explanation of the notion of a formal concept.

4. To contrast them with the two qualitative paradoxes which pertain to the nature or quality of what is. The latter are aimed specifically at materialism (246e2-247d4) and idealism (248a4-249d5) but can, I think, be taken generally as directed against the ambiguity of "being" or "is" and its variants. Restriction to the quantitative paradoxes is recommended by the fact that (I) - (III) seem at once the more interesting yet less discussed of the arguments. The favoritism is particularly evident in Otto Apelt, *Die Ideenlehre in Platos Sophistes* in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Leipzig 1891), pp. 69-99; Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *Platon* II (Berlin 1962), pp. 238-54; W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford 1961), pp. 104ff.; Frazer, *The Growth of Plato's Ideal Theory* (New York 1967); Paul Natorp, *Plato's Ideenlehre* (Darmstadt 1961), pp. 278-96. Theodor Gomperz, *Griechische Denker* II (Leipzig 1902), 451ff.; ignores I - III completely in his discussion of the paradoxes of being. More recent discussions of the qualitative paradoxes are available in David Keyt, *Plato's Paradox that the Immutable is Unknowable*, "Philosophical Quarterly" 19 (1969), 1-14; G. E. L. Owen, *Plato and the Parmenides on the Timeless Present*, "Monist" 50 (1966), pp. 317-40; Robert G. Turnbull, *The Argument of the Sophist*, "Philosophical Quarterly" 14 (1964), pp. 23-34, and Gregory Vlastos, *Platonic Studies* (Princeton 1973), Ch. 11, "An Ambiguity in the *Sophist*".

assumption or assumptions the argument turns. I then suggest how these assumptions reflect certain mistakes which are explicitly avoided in Plato's own account of being. Here I discuss the extent to which the arguments turn on conflation of identity and predication and, more importantly, their tendency to use "being" as an ordinary, categorematic expression. In fact, I shall suggest that Plato may have in mind a particular and different use in each paradox: as a determinate predicate in paradox (I), as a singular term in paradox (II), and as a mass term in paradox (III). Thus, the quantitative paradoxes can be seen as posing a clear contrast to Plato's own assessment of being as a strictly connective form.

A second adequacy condition on any explanation of (I) - (III) is this. The paradoxes ought to square with Plato's claim (at 241d5-7, 243c2-5, 245e8-246a1, and 250d7-251a3) that being and not-being are equally perplexing and subject to joint illumination. In the final part of the paper I suggest that the paradoxes of being and not-being both trade on a serious conflation (for Plato at any rate) of the meaning with the extension of a term and close with an observation on the thesis that the *Sophist* expressly treats being as a formal concept.[5]

I. Discrete Pluralism and "Being" as a Determinate Predicate.

Plato's first quantitative paradox is addressed to the proponents of a certain brand of dualism who assert that

> Hot (θερμὸν) and cold (ψυχρὸν) or some such
> pair are everything (τὰ πάντα).   (243d8-9)

It has been suggested that we have here the clear expression of a certain kind of physical theory, one which states that everything that exists is characterizable as either hot or cold.[6] Plausible at first glance, there are, I think, reasons which tell against both this view and the view that Plato has in mind some particular historical predecessor or predecessors. First, his arguments in paradox (I) are not those one would typically deploy against a physical theory. He does not offer counter-examples or otherwise impune the explanatory power of the theory as a physical theory. Second, he is mainly interested in what the proponents of this doctrine have in mind when they use the expression "εἶναι." This would be a peculiar interest were Plato construing the doctrine

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5. Thus, my estimation of the paradoxes differs from Owen's assessment that they are merely prefatory to a paradox, "*Plato on Not-Being*", in *Plato I: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, ed., Gregory Vlastos, p. 262.

6. See, for example, Vlastos, op. cit., p. 296, n. 57, and Crombie, op. cit., p. 390.

simply as stating a physical theory. Third, Plato's arguments, if successful here, work as well against any doctrine which asserts the existence of at least two but not an infinite number of discrete entities. The doctrine, in other words, for which Plato explicitly makes trouble is only a particular case of a more general doctrine which I shall call "discrete pluralism" (DP).

These points are best appreciated by turning to an examination of the doctrine. I would like to begin by mentioning two textual difficulties that bear on the sense of the doctrine: The correct interpretation of "τὰ πάντα" and the status of θερμὸν and ψυχρὸν Fowler translated "τὰ πάντα" as "the universe" and construed θερμὸν and ψυχρὸν as principles.[7] Doubtless, there are passages where "τὰ πάντα" and, certainly, "τὸ πᾶν" may be translated "the universe." But this is not one, for Plato uses "τὰ πάντα" as a quantifier and not as a referring expression.[8] This has a clear bearing on the interpretation of 243d8-9, which now cannot be taken predicatively or as stating the identity

Hot and cold = the universe (or, the all, etc.)

Rather, taking "τὰ πάντα'" as a quantifier yields as the doctrine of dualism

1. There are two, and only two, things: hot (h)
   and cold (c).

or

1a. $(\exists x)(\exists y)[(x=h \& y=c \& x\neq y \& -(\exists z)(z\neq x \& z\neq y)].$[9]

As (1a) stands, h and c are merely arbitrary individuals serving as values of the bound variables. While this, I think, is the correct view of the doctrine, there are at least two other interpretations of (1) both of which require restrictions on the range of values for the quantifiers of (1a). The first of these I shall call the property interpretation (PI) and the second the basic stuff interpretation (BSI).

According to PI, hot and cold are properties of some underlying stuff. (1a) may then be thought of as restricted to attributes or predicate objects

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7. *Plato, Theaetetus and Sophist*, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. H. N. Fowler (London 1961).

8. It is clear from *Theaetetus* 204c10-d2 that Plato is prepared to treat "τὸ πᾶν" in precisely the same way, for he there argues that no logical distinction attaches to the singular and plural forms, "τὸ πᾶν" and "τὰ πάντα", respectively. This is hardly explicable apart from the quantifier interpretation.

9. It should be especially obvious from (1a) that the doctrine expressed in 243d8-9 is an instance of a more general doctrine, which we might call "discrete pluralism". For, as we shall see, if the argument of (I) works against (1a), it works against any doctrine like (1a) so long as that doctrine has at least two but not an infinite number of lead quantifiers.

as values. But on this view (1a) is self-defeating, since, according to PI itself, there must be a third thing. Moreover, PI should not be thought supported by the fact that at 243e2-3 τὸ ὄν or being is supposed a third thing besides *h* and *c*, for this alternative is proposed on the strength of the claim that being is a property of the hot and the cold and not conversely. So it could not be an u n d e r l y i n g third thing. PI is objectionable, then, for under-cutting (1a) in a manner completely unsuggested by the text.

According to BSI the hot and the cold are the fundamental stuffs of which everything else is constituted. This is apparently the interpretation favored by scholars who refer to the hot and the cold as "principles"[10] as well as by Cornford who translates "Hot and Cold or some such pair really are."[11] Here (1a) is restricted to just those items which r e a l l y are and these turn out to be basic stuffs which are two in number.

There are a number of difficulties with BSI. First, nowhere does the Greek warrant introduction of the expression "principle(s)" to characterize the hot and the cold. At 243d8-9 and 243e2 Fowler simply smuggles his interpretation into the text. Second, we are dealing with a doctrine regarding the number (πόσα) of things that are and limitation of (1a) to what r e a l l y is rather than what is s i m p l i c i t e r seems ill-placed. Third, the language of the passage precludes circumvention of the last difficulty by appeal to a distinction in degrees of reality or quality of being. For plainly absent is any suggestion, for instance at 243d9, where we might expect it, that the hot and the cold r e a l l y are (ὄντως εἶναι) or, at 243e2, that there are three rather than two r e a l things (ὄντως ὄντα).[12] In contrast, Plato uses just such language in the section on the nature (ποῖα) of things that are, where it is quite in order.[13]

Moreover, were BSI correct, some account would be due of the relative status of the hot, the cold, and their derivative objects. Now either they are on a par in point of reality or they are not. If not, then the hot and the cold

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10. Among these are Ueberweg, op. cit., p. 294; Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* II, 1 (Leipzig 1923), 648. Susemihl, op. cit., p. 105; Nicholai Hartmann, *Platos Logik des Seins* (Berlin, 1965), p. 106; Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, IV (Oxford 1931), 307; Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines*, II (London 1963), 390. Indeed, Fowler, op. cit., goes so far as to translate "τρία τὰ ὄντα" at 242c9 as "three principles".

11. Cornford, op. cit., p. 219.

12. Malcolm, *Plato's Analysis of* τὸ ὄν *and* τὸ μὴ ὄν *in the Sophist*, "Phronesis" XII (1967), 130-46, suggests this as *a* possibility while Cornford, op. cit., pp. 216-20, rests his entire interpretation on it. I have noticed that Runciman, *Plato's Later Epistemology* (Cambridge 1962), p. 72, n. 1, makes the same point against Cornford.

13. See, as a case in point, "ὄντως οὐσίαν" at 248a11.

a r e in a sense different from that in which the derivative objects a r e.
But then being itself could not be the univocal concept it is made out to be
at 243e3-2 (i.e., t h e third thing besides hot and cold). Either there are two
predicate objects corresponding to the one word "being" or there must be
some account of how, in lieu of this, a degree of reality doctrine applies
to hot, cold, and their derivative objects. There is no hint of the latter in
the text and 243e2-3 can be saved only by construing the third thing mentioned
there to be one of two predicate objects, namely, that corresponding to the
predicate "really is." What this shows is that BSI forces a restriction not only
on (1a) but also on the subject of inquiry, τὸ ὄν. For rather than a general
account, we are left with an account of a certain grade of being only. And,
surely, this restriction is too high a price to pay for the interpretation that
spawned it. For Plato's investigation of being is clearly meant to be general.
So neither BSI nor PI hold up and (1a) is left unrestricted and θερμὸν and
ψυχρὸν arbitrary individuals.

We may now turn to the argument against DP. This is directed less
against (1a) than against DP's ability to provide an account of being. It is
important to note that, contrary to the received view, Plato is not, I think,
attacking a definition of τὸ ὄν.[14] Indeed only by failing to construe "τὰ πάντα"
as a quantifier —thus presumably rating 243d8-9 an identity— and by assuming
the interchangeability of "τὸ ὄν" and "τὰ πάντα" is this interpretation forth-
coming. Moreover, it is odd, *prima facie*, to read 243d9-e2:

> What do you say about them (hot and cold)
> when you say both and each are (ἄμφω καὶ ἑκάτερον εἶναι);
> how are we to understand this "εἶναι" of yours?

as a request for a definition.[15] Rather, Plato seems to want an account of
the meaningfulness of the implied assertion that the two arbitrary individuals
are:

2. Hot (*h*) is & cold (*c*) is.[16]

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14. This seems to be the view of Gulley and Moravcsik (p. 29). Malcolm's remarks
against the view (p. 134, n. 12) accord with what I take to be the right interpretation.

15. Plato is not attacking a d e f i n i t i o n of τὸ ὄν, then it is not at all clear that
he is arguing for its undefinability. I am accordingly dubious about Moravcsik's claim
(p. 28) that the arguments of (I) - (III) show the undefinability of being (Existence, for
Moravcsik).

16. I read the deliberate "ἄμφω καὶ ἑκάτερον" construction as calling for (2) rather
than "*h* and *c* are", with conjoined noun phrase as subject. And there is a point to the
explicitness, for the text requires that there be two (ἄμφω) different (ἑκάτερον) things of
which something else is predicated and the conjoined noun phrase construction could
obscure this.

In particular he wants some account of the s i g n i f i c a n t occurrence of "is" in (2).

This request brings to the fore the paradoxical nature of DP. On the one hand, there seems nothing problematic in DP's both positing (in 1a) the existence of n objects as well as asserting (in 2) that these objects are. Indeed, Plato's language suggests that DP is committed to (2) just because (1a) implies (2). On the other hand, the argument of paradox (I) purports to show that DP cannot hold both (1a) and (2) for (2) entails that there be at least $n+1$ objects. Thus DP seems to be self-defeating.

The point on which DP is made to founder is in accounting for the meaningfulness of "is" in (2) within the confines of the doctrine's statement in (1a). The strategy of Plato's argument turns on offering an exhaustive set of alternative explanations of the meaningfulness of "is".[17] He says the meaning assignment for "is" must be either

(i)   different from both h and c;
(ii) identical with h or identical with c;
(iii) identical with h and c.

It is then argued that (i) must be the case because (ii) and (iii) yield the impossible conclusion that h and c are one thing.[18] We are, however, well advised

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17. It is important to note that the request is obviously guided by what might be called an entitative theory of meaning. Although adequate description of this theory is unlikely to be forthcoming (in the *Sophist* or elsewhere, for that matter), the basic point seems to be that a sentence constituent is significant or has meaning only if correlated with an entity or entities (a view reminiscent of Russell's *Principles of Mathematics*). The entity is, we may say, the meaning assignment for the constituent in question. The nature of the correlation is left quite unclear as is decision on whether the constituent's meaning is identical with the entity or entities or only presupposes such. And, while it is open to argue with Cornford (p. 220) that Plato here thinks such objects must be forms, nothing in the text compels this reading. Indeed, Plato h e r e needs place no restriction on selection of these objects. For the dilemma facing the discrete pluralist is strictly quantitative and depends primarily on the stipulation that entities are in some way or other necessary for meaning. Thus, the problem is how, given (1a) which countenances two, and only two, objects, it is possible to assert (2) whose meaningfulness requires more than two objects. Precisely, this difficulty is drawn out in (ii) and (iii). So let us look at these more closely.

18. See 243e4. This goes directly against one traditionally received interpretation. Due originally to Zeller's second edition of *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (II, 1, p. 415) and followed by Susemihl (op. cit., p. 296) and others, the view is that the arguments of paradox I prove that dualism r e d u c e s to monism and so Plato must proceed to consider this doctrine more carefully. The obvious difficulty with this view is that it is flatly contradicted by (i). In spite of Bonitz' telling commentary against the interpretation (op. cit., p. 164, n. 8), Zeller defended it in the sixth edition of his history (II, 1, p. 648, n. 1), arguing that "ἀμφοτέρως" in 243e5 must refer to a l t e r n a-

to take a closer look at Plato's arguments against (ii) and (iii), for, as we shall see, they are not merely refutative but designed to turn on assumptions quite relevant to Plato's own analysis of being.

The objection to (ii) is given at 243e4-6:

> For surely, when you (a) call one of the two [arbitrary individuals, *h* and *c*] being (ὄν), you do not (b) say that both [*h* and *c*] are in the same way (ὁμοίως εἶναι) because (c) in either case [i.e., whether ὄν=*h* or ὄν=*c*] they [*h* and *c*] would be (εἴτην) one rather than two.

The optative construction in (c) reflects Plato's displeasure with (ii). But how exactly is (c) supposed to follow? The following paraphrase of the argument will help:

> If (a′) the arbitrary individual *h* [or, alternatively, *c*]=ὄν (i.e., is the meaning assignment for "εἶναι"); and if (b′) "is" has the same significance in "*h* is" and "*c* is"; then (c′) *h*=*c*.

The logic of this argument presupposes that no distinction is made between identity and predication. If we read the "εἶναι" of (b) as incomplete, then the "is" of (b′) may be read predicatively as "...is..." or identicatively as "...=...". Now it is clear that (c′) follows only if (b′) is construed identitatively throughout. Suppose, for instance, that in (a′) *h* is the meaning assignment for "is". Then the incomplete expression "*h* is" may be completed as "*h*=ὄν". But now the remaining expression, "*c* is", cannot be read identitatively without resulting in the absurd consequence (c′). Thus, when in (b) Plato cautions against saying that both *h* and *c* are in the same way (ὁμοίως εἶναι), he is cautioning at least against taking both occurrences as identitative. Rather, one is to be read identitatively and the other predicatively. Of course, strictly taken (b) also rules out a purely predicative reading of (b′). But while avoiding consequence (c′), the purely predicative interpretation does not fit because (a′) makes clear that at least one identitative use is

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tives (i) and (iii), rather than alternatives w i t h i n (ii). Aside from leaving the gaping problem of explaining h o w it could be a result of (i), it is clear that the reading I will suggest for 243e5 is not only grammatically acceptable but also explains the argument in accordance with the rest of the text. Moreover, what would Zeller do with "ὁμοίως εἶναι" in 243e5? The only alternative to my interpretation (see immediately below), that one of *h* or *c* be counted as not being at all, is neither textually nor interpretively sound (though it was adopted by Susemihl, op. cit., p. 296, and recently given currency by Sayre, op. cit., p. 160).

required in assigning meaning to "εἶναι". Moreover, on the purely predicative interpretation ὄν must be something different from either h or c. But this is possible only under alternative (i). Thus, from a positive point of view, the paradox may be taken to underscore the need for distinguishing identity and predication, for (c′) follows only on conflation of the distinction.

An obvious suggestion at this point is that paradox (I) as a whole may be dissolved simply by enforcing the identity-predication distinction in the argumentation of (ii). For (c′) would not follow were one of "h is" or "c is" read predicatively and one identitatively in (b′). But then other difficulties arise. If we read (2) predicatively at all, we must now read it as containing a self-predication. Granted that h or c is identical with being and so the meaning assignment for "is," either "h is" or "c is" must count as a self-predication. On the other hand, suppose (2) not read predicatively throughout. Then might not dissolution of the paradox proceed by locating the identity-predication distinction in (2) itself? This, however, is not open to the discrete pluralist because it requires an unacceptable reassignment of values in (1a). Intending (1a) to assert the existence of two determinate and discrete entities, DP now finds itself able to assert the existence of only one such entity and the meaning assignment for being. But this goes counter to Plato's 243d9 characterization of DP as asserting the existence of s o m e s u c h p a i r (τινὲ δύο τοιούτω) as hot and cold, that is, as asserting the existence of what might be called first-level items or entities that provide meaning for determinate or first-level predicates. Consequently, the dissolution under discussion fails because it would force DP to the conclusion that there is always one fewer entity than originally asserted. Thus, (ii) cannot provide for the meaning of "is" in (2) without defeating the doctrine itself.

We have now to consider alternative (iii). Here the meaning assignment for "is" (by 243e8, the object ὄν) is identical with h and c. This is said to entail that both are one or, alternatively, that $h=c$. The move is most economically explained by reading (iii) as

(iii*) $h=$being & $c=$being

which immediately yields $h=c$. The effect of (iii*) on DP is similar to that of (ii). The discrete pluralist again cannot provide an account of the meaning of "is" in (2) within the confines of (1a). However, (iii*) differs from (ii) in not relying on any conflation of identity and predication. The move from (iii*) to the identity of h and c is quite straightforward.[19]

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19. It is possible that alternative (iii) is to be read as asserting the identity of being and the c o n j o i n t object $h+c$, that is, as (iii*): being $= h+c$. If we assume that (iii*) yields the identity of h and c by conflating identity and predication, we need to explain

The above two paragraphs clearly suggest that the necessity of distinguishing identity from predication cannot exhaust the positive lessons of paradox (I)ˑ For our first adequacy condition requires that Plato's positive account bear on the s o l u t i o n of the paradoxes and while the distinction in question is part of Plato's account it is not sufficient to resolve the paradoxes. What more is involved? Each of alternatives (i) - (iii) can be shown to involve a point fundamental to Plato's theory of being as a theory of predication. This is that being is (wrongly) ranked on a par with the entities countenanced by DP. Both alternatives (ii) and (iii) are unpalatable to the discrete pluralist because of altering his original set of entities by forcing, in the case of (ii) for instance, inclusion of the unintended object being. Thus being looks to be on a par with h and c; it just happens not to be an item countenanced by (1a). This suggestion is enhanced by the overall strategy of paradox (I). Given the unacceptability of (ii) and (iii), Plato urges that (i) must be the case and so (1a) false. But DP is faced with a dilemma in asserting both (1a) and (2) o n l y i f being and the originally mentioned objects are of equal rank. Otherwise, assertion of (2) could not have its inflationary effect on (1a).

The above interpretation is further supported by the fact that Plato casts the "εἶναι" of (2) as a complete predicate applicable to each of the objects asserted by (1a). This might incline one to take "εἶναι" there as "exists". Since, however, Plato seems to take some reading of (2) as entirely legitimate and since the *Sophist* provides no clear account of an existential use of "εἶναι", it is difficult to see how paradox (I) could turn on a misuse of "exists" in (2). For then Plato's positive account would not bear on the solution. Rather, it looks quite clear that Plato purposely casts the "εἶναι"

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where this move occurs. But no such explanation looks possible. From the fact that two conjoined objects comprise a single conjoint object we cannot infer the identity of the conjoined objects themselves. Rather, the move requires a principle to the effect that the meaning assignment for a single expression cannot be a complex object or, at least, cannot be a complex of two or more non-complex objects. Something like this receives explicit attention in Aristotle's requirement that a first-order predicate be semantically simple. First-order statements assert one thing of another, so "if one name is given to two things which do not make up one thing, there is not a single affirmation" (*On Interpretation* 18a18-19). Thus, if $h+c$ is the meaning assignment for "is", then h and c could not be two distinct objects. On this interpretation of (iii) it is tempting to speculate that Plato is covertly arguing that the analysis of τὸ ὄν cannot be given by any conjunction of objects (concepts, or whatever). If so, then some grounds are at hand for crediting him with awareness of the quite different behaviour of the concept being. For, traditionally, the analysis of standard concepts such as horse, man, etc., has proceeded in terms of other standard concepts (e.g., the concept man in terms of the concepts two-footed and animal). At any rate this was surely Aristotle's view and possibly Plato's as well. On the latter see Richard Sharvy, *Euthyphro 9d-11b: Analysis and Definition in Plato and Others*, "Nous" VI (1972), 119-137.

of (2) in the role of a complete verb to exploit the illusion that it functions as an ordinary predicate. And, if one holds the meaning of predicates to be entities, this is tantamout to ranking being on a par with entities such as *h* and *c*. Thus the search is underway for an attribute (or attribute object), like in kind to those corresponding to "ordinary" or determinate predicates, save that it applies to everything that exists. Such ill-spend labor is likely motivated by the naive thought that being is that property which belongs to everything that exists[20] and, indeed, this is just the move from (1) to (2).

This interpretation fits nicely with Plato's positive account of being. For dissolution of the paradox may now begin by reading "εἶναι" in (2) not as a predicate but as predicative occurrence of the incomplete "is".[21] Then (2) may be recast as saying, about any object countenanced by DP there is some meaningful sentence or other of the form "x is F" or "xFs", etc. This is not only independently reasonable but also one of the *Sophist's* positive results. Obviously, "εἶναι" need not occur explicitly. It is sufficient to assume its implicit occurrence on the grounds that being is required to account for the connective or concatenative feature of sentences.[22] And there is no temptation to seek the single attribute which all the asserted objects have in common.[23]

While not conclusive in showing that Plato regards being as a formal

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20. Taran, for instance, attributes such a view to Plato himself: "Being meant [for Plato] the hypostatization of that characteristic which makes anything an existent" (op. cit., pp. 276-77).

21. Here I am assuming Plato's account is primarily that of the incomplete predicative "is". This is ably argued in Malcolm, op. cit.; Frede, *Prädikation und Existenzaussage*, (1967, Hypomnemata 18); and Owen, op. cit.

22. Aristotle assumes this explicity in *Metaphysics* V, 7 where he argues for the ambiguity of "being" partly on the grounds that "a ∅s" is equivalent to a formulation containing "εἶναι" or a variant.

23. An advantage of my interpretation is that it does not require paradox (I) to argue against disjunctive definition. Moravcsik (p. 29) takes this as the moral of the argument and Runciman (p. 72) is tempted to do so. But Moravcsik himself mentions, what Runciman does not, that this renders the argument entirely general and so not directed principally against ὄν or even it and its allied concepts ταὐτόν, θάτερον, ἕν, etc. There is another objection to this airing of Plato's strategy, namely, that at 247d8-e3 Plato himself suggests, apparently without wavering, a disjunctive definition of being. And Aristotle, for one, takes the suggestion seriously enough to warrant objection at *Topics* 139a4ff and 146a23ff. I do not mean to suggest that Plato takes the definition to be correct but only that he does not seem to find its disjunctive form objectionable. In any case, as I have shown, at least (a') - (c') suggests need for the distinction between identity and predication. It is, of course, unsurprising that both Moravcsik and Runciman miss this, for it requires reading "εἶναι" in (b') as incomplete and this is obscured by construing "ὄν" as "existence". Our interpretation thus has the advantage of directing the paradox against concepts which, like being, are generally presupposed by standard predications.

concept, the truth of this interpretation would show that he does distinguish being from ordinary first-order or determinate concepts. Moreover, since paradox (I) suggests Plato's awareness of the fact that the concept being is presupposed by a n y standard predication but is not itself predicated, there is some warrant for the view that he treats being as a formal concept.

A final remark is in order regarding paradox (I). On my interpretation paradox (I) turns less explicitly on the distinction between identity and predication than on confusion over the role of "εἶναι" in predication. For even were the distinction honored, confusion on the latter score may remain in particular confusion about the kind of object or concept it signifies. Plato's main insight here is that the analysis of the technical philosophical notion of being lies in an analysis of the non-technical use of "εἶναι" and its variants in ordinary linguistic practice. It does not lie in an inspired search for a mystical Being.

II. Absolute Monism (AM) and "Being" as a Singular Term.

The strategy of the second paradox is similar to that of the first — statement of a doctrine followed by an implied assertion requiring meaningful use of "is". While at first glance this paradox may seem designed only to embarass yet another predecessor doctrine, its connection with paradox (I) is more than historical and its result more than merely refutative. But this emerges best from examination of the argument which sets the paradox.

The doctrine, stated at 244b6-7, is simply: ἓν τὸ πᾶν or everything is one. As it stands, the doctrine is crucially ambiguous. Indeed, there are two separate arguments against monism, (II) and (III), which take up a separate arm of the ambiguity. (II) contends with a referential or absolute use of "ἕν" and (III) with a predicative or, as I shall say, relative use. I interpret 244b6-7 as stating

3.   There is one, and only one, thing:

or

3a. $(\exists x) (y) (y=x).$[24]

(3) or (3a) I take as the doctrine of absolute monism (AM), for there is no restriction on the range of bound variables in (3a). Obviously, investigation of AM is motivated by a concern for more than historical completeness. As the negation of discrete pluralism (and, thus, dualism), AM is true if the latter is false. This raises an immediate dilemma for those who would argue that Plato is here merely rebutting predecessor doctrines. For if (1a)

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24. As "τὰ πάντα" before, "τὸ πᾶν" here functions as a quantifier. See footnote 8 above.

has been refuted, then (3a) m u s t be true. So there could be no sound argument against AM, if the argument of paradox (I) is sound. But, of course, we have shown that Plato argues not against discrete pluralism alone, but against it and the meaningfulness of (2) on certain assumptions about meaning. And since we have seen these assumptions to be questionable, AM must be met on its own terms.

There is an additional point here. If we think of AM as the negation of discrete pluralism, then (3a) is not the only form AM may take. For the negation of DP is secured either if there is just one object or if there are no objects at all. Thus, AM could be formulated

   3b. (x) (y) (x=y)

or "Everything is identical with everything." But since (3b) skirts ontological commitment while Plato's version of AM affirms it, we must settle for (3a), which implies (3b) anyway.

Now for the implied assertion to (3a):

   4.   (the) one alone is (244b9-10: ἕν...μόνον εἶναι).

In contrast to (3a) where "ἕν" was simply absorbed into the apparatus of quantification, in (4) "ἕν" is to be interpreted as a singular term. Given (3a), its designation is unproblematic: whatever is the value of "x" in (3a). The difficulty here, as in Paradox (I), arises in connection with the supposedly significant occurrence of "εἶναι" in (4).[25] Here as there the implied assertion cannot be counted meaningful if the statement of the doctrine is counted true. And, again, we are advised to consider exactly what confusion or difficulty Plato rests the paradox on.

One, not implausible, analysis of the difficulty is that the practitioner of AM construes (4), incorrectly of course, as a case in which "εἶναι" is not p r e d i c a t e d of (the) one but rather n a m e s it.[26] This view is encouraged by two passages which flank (4): 244b6-7, "what do those who say that everything is one mean w h e n t h e y s a y 'being' ('τὸ ὄν');" and 244b12, "...do you call something 'being' ('ὄν')?" For "ὄν" certainly has the look of a singular term and so these two passages may be taken to suggest that (4) has been made an identity statement in the mouth of the antagonist.

On the other hand, the above analysis of the difficulty fails to call attention, I think, to what Plato considers the crucial difficulty with AM. For (4) can

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25. Crombie, op. cit., p. 393, seems to take (3), uninterpreted, as the sole target of attack, thus overlooking completely the (3a) - (4) distinction.

26. This possibility is due to Malcolm, pp. 132-33.

be read predicatively and the paradox remain intact. Following the pattern of paradox (I), the problem may be seen as accounting for the meaningfulness of (4) within the confines of (3a). The flanking passages 244b6-7 and 244b12 are, accordingly, requests for the object which is to serve as the meaning assignemnt for "is". Thus, they do require an identity statement in answer, the participle "ὄv" performing the referring task. But the identity statement need not be (4) but only a statement presupposed by its meaningfulness.[27] So, (4) needs not be read as a disguised or ill-expressed identity statement.

Now, since in (4) "ἕv" occurs as a singular term, naming the sole object countenanced by (3a), and since this same object is the only possible designation for "ὄv", the problem arises how there may be two singular terms when there exists but one object to name.

But why exactly is this a problem at all? The problem can be sharpened some by considering what appears to be the prevailing vew. The view, which I shall call the quantitative interpretation, is best put by Runciman who takes Plato to claim that "for those who say that there is only one thing in the univesre it is ridiculous to say that there can be two of anything, whether names or anything else."[28] Thus, Runciman reads the decisive text, 244c8-9:

> It is quite ridiculous to grant that there are two names when
> you stipulate that there is nothing other than one thing

as asserting simply that AM is false because (4) entails

> 5. There is more than one thing: two names.

Runciman argues for (5) on the grounds that the only other alternative interpretations of Plato's remark

> 5a. One thing cannot have two names

and

> 5b. There are three things: two names and one thing

are objectionable. (5a) saddles Plato with an identity-predication confusion. (5b) depends on the difference between a name and its bearer but this, Runciman thinks, is precisely the consideration Plato introduces in his immediately f o l o w i n g remarks. Thus, according to Runciman, we are left with (5).

Runciman's (5a) is not, however, even a possible interpretation of Plato's remark. For Plato's objection in 244c8-9 is not against one thing h a v i n g two names but against their b e i n g two names at all, given only one object.

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27. Thus, I do not agree with Kamlah's claim, op. cit., p. 33, that Plato attaches no significance to the distinction between "εἶναι" and "ὄv".

28. Runciman, op. cit., p. 73. — Sayre, op. cit., p. 160, holds the view as well.

Runciman's alternative (5b) rests on the assumption that at t h i s point in the text Plato grants names full ontological status. But the ontological status of names can be completely ignored h e r e without dulling the bite of the argument; not so, however, their semantic status. For it is quite plausible that Plato is objecting to the supposition that the number of names could exceed the number of things. And this, I think, is correct. Thus, the objection of 244c8-9 is not that there exist three things but rather that there are two names and only one thing. Then the alleged absurdity must be made to turn on the fact that a linguistic expression is a name only if it has a reference.

There are at least two ways to take this requirement. Either (i) names are thought of as having a sense or meaning which is just the object which bears the name, or (ii) names are thought of as functioning merely to pick out an item. By (i), either "ἕν" or "ὄν" lacks a sense and so is not a name. By (ii), there is no object for one of the pair to pick out and so it cannot perform its function. While (ii) is tempting because it suggests that one cannot refer to what is not and so appears to mingle being and not being, it is so only on the assumption that different names cannot pick out the same object. And this assumption, in turn, depends on (i) or something like it. Thus, (i) seems the most likely explanation of Plato's objection in 244c8-9.

Of course, this account does commit Plato to an entitative theory of meaning insofar as it assumes the objection of 244c8-9 based on considerations which Plato takes seriously. And in general he does seem to require that a sentence constituent is significant only if there is an object to serve as its meaning assignment. A given predicate expression will, then, be a paronym derived from the name of the object in question.[29] And here there is no confusion between identity and predication but only an assumption about the significance of terms occurring in sentences: A term is significant only if there is an object which accounts for the significance. Failing such, no name is available for derivation of the term in question. And this, I think, is the crux of Plato's objection in 244c8-9. If so, then i t cannot be faulted for confusing identity and predication.[30]

Our interpretation is supported by the fact that, as Runciman mentions, Plato does not arrest his argument at 244c8-9 but proceeds to consider the

29. This possibility is made quite explicit by Aristotle in the *Categories*, though my use of the term is wider.

30. Robinson, *Plato's Parmenides*, "Classical Philology" XXXVII (1942), 163, finds the confusion here, as well as at 250c. But at both places Plato is setting paradoxes, so it could hardly be h i s confusion. And as we have shown there is no ʃn e e d that the "confusion" raises its head here at all.

case where there is but one name and one thing. It is here that Plato puts name and thing on a par ontologically. But, if the quantitative interpretation were correct, this move would count as mere repetition. Hence, Plato is best read as introducing a new possibility which is immune to the prior objection of 244c8-9.

This possibility is introduced at 244c11-d9. Given the full ontological status of names, (3a) may be preserved only by identifying name and nominatum. Taking "τὸ ὄν" as the case in point,[31] Plato can argue against preservation of (3a) claiming that

6.   "τὸ ὄν" = τὸ ὄν

entails

6.1   "τὸ ὄν" is not the name of anything[32]

or

6.2   "τὸ ὄν" is the name of a name.[33]

(6.1) supposes the name is reduced to the thing and, since things do not name at all, neither can "τὸ ὄν." (6.2) supposes thing reduced to name and, so, "τὸ ὄν" will name, if anything, a name. Moreover, it must name itself. For to name a different name would infringe (3a), the object of salvation in the first place. Thus, the upholder of AM is enjoined not only against issuing a statement about his prized object, the attempt of (4), but also against even naming it.[34] The argument of paradox (II) shows, then, that assertion of (3a) precludes even referring to the object it countenances.[35] The irony of this situation is apparent for, in stating his view in the first place, the AM theorist has presumed "τὸ ὄν," or whatever we take as the name of his sole object,

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31. The difficult sentence at 244d11-12: καὶ τὸ ἕν γε, ἑνὸς ὄνομα ὂν καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὖ τὸ ἓν ὄν, is ommitted by Cornford as corrupt and unintelligible (cf. Cornford, p. 222, n. 1) but, as an exemplification of the point stated in general terms at 244d6-9 reads straightforwardly: "And 'τὸ ἕν' will be the name of one thing and 'τὸ ἕν' will also be [the name] of a name".

32. 244d6-7: μηδενὸς ὄνομα ἀναγκασθήσεται λέγειν. This alternative puts the AM theorist in the peculiar position of r e f e r r i n g t o w h a t i s n o t, should he try to refer to his highly prized object. So perhaps here we have after all a blending of the problems of being and not being.

33. 244d8: τὸ ὄνομα ὀνόματος ὄνομα μόνον.

34. Crombie (op. cit., p. 393) thinks there cannot be even one name because that entails the existence of something complex. He does not mean a name + nominatum complex but a complex of an aspect, what is named, and its substance. But this is textual interpolation rather interpretation.

35. The likelihood of this applying to Parmenides himself is increased, if Montgomery Furth's interpretation [Elements of Eleatic Ontology, "Journal of the History of Philosophy" VI (1968), 111-32] is correct. For he ably argues a strongly extensional view of meaning on behalf of Parmenides' poem.

to function as a singular term.[36] If so, then we may equally conjecture that Plato uses paradox (II), among other things, to underscore the unsuitability of "being" to function as a singular term.

III. Relative Monism (RM) and "Being" as a Mass Term.

I turn now to the final and longest argument of the quantitative paradoxes. At 244d14-15 the Stranger introduces another Parmenidean dictum by way of querying

> Well then, do they say that the whole is different from or the same as the one thing that is?[37]

The implied dictum

> The one thing that is (ὄντος ἑνός), is the same as the whole (τὸ ὅλον)

looks to be read as

> 7. There exists one and only one thing and that thing is identical with the whole.

or

> 7a. $(\exists x)(y)(x=y \ \& \ x=\text{the whole})$.

Now (7a) clearly makes 244d14-15 a question about the truth value of an identity statement. Yet, it is not obvious how the immediately following text, 244e1-245b5, bears on (7a), for, as we shall see, this text serves mainly to introduce a p r e d i c a t i v e use of "ἕν".

So the first problem with the doctrine put forth in 244e1-245b5 is its presence at all in the dialogue. One traditionally received explanation is that since Parmenides asserted something like (7a), Plato is here bound to refute (7a) as part of his general review of predecessor doctrines.[38] Unfortunately, this would commit us to deciding the historical accuracy of Plato's Parmenides; and the verdict, if available at all, may not bode well for Plato.[39]

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36. If one construes (3a) as a meta-linguistic statement, then argument II does not show AM to be self-refuting. But it does show that there can be no object-language statements, on pain of refuting (3a); and this is paradox enough for AM.

37. Τί δέ; τὸ ὅλον ἕτερον τοῦ ὄντος ἑνός ἢ ταὐτὸν φήσουσι τούτῳ;

38. The tradition is at least as old as Zeller (op. cit., 1, 2, 648-49) and as young as Cornford (op. cit., p. 222ff.). Zeller justified his one-sentence discussion of paradox (III) on the grounds that he could not pursue all the details of the argument. But, of course, it is just the details of a paradox-setting argument which are significant.

39. Among those who take (7) as a seriously meant portrayal of Parmenides are Nestle in his edition of Zeller's history [II, 1. (Leipzig, 1923), p. 699, n. 1] and Cornford (*Plato and Parmenides*, p. 44, no. 3, and *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 224) who takes Plato as

So, again, it behooves us to consider the possibility that paradox (III) aims for more than mere refutation of yet another predecessor doctrine. I shall argue that (III) is meant to answer an objection to the argument of (II) as well as to rule out an additional confusion regarding the concept being.

The objection raised against the argument of (II) is as follows. Why take (3a) as the correct interpretation of the sentence "Everything is one" ("ἓν τὸ πᾶν"), and so interpret (3) as stating a doctrine of absolute monism? Surely, (3) could be interpreted in a less strict sense, as say the doctrine of relative monism (RM): (x) (y) (xDy) or Everything depends on everything. Even leaving the relation *D* unspecified, it is clear that RM is consistent with the negation of (3a), so, the refutation of AM does not bear on the status of RM and thus RM merits independent treatment.[40]

The test of this interpretation of the objection is, of course, whether Plato really has any such objection in mind? That he does is, I think, suggested by the following texts, 244e2-7:

> If, then, (i) the whole is, as Parmenides says, "from every side like the bulk of a well-rounded sphere, at any point equally measured from the midst, for there cannot be something more or something less here or there...;" then (ii) being [τὸ ὄν], since it is this sort of thing, has a middle and extremities and, (iii) since it has all these, (iv) it necessarily has parts.

and 245a1-3:

> But there is nothing to prevent (v) what is·constituted by parts (τὸ μεμερισμένον) from (vi) having the property of unity o v e r a l l i t s p a r t s (ἐπὶ τοῖς μέρεσι πᾶσιν) and (vii) being one in this way, as (viii) it is everything and whole.

The objection to the argument of (II), then, is that being may be pluralized

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arguing simply against the particular description Parmenides gives his single entity. But, as we shall see, the crux of the argument is whether there can be a n y description of such an entity. On the other hand, Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (Yale 1970), p. 130ff., and Leonardo Tarán, *Parmenides* (Princeton 1965), pp. 269-78, seem aware of Plato's lack of concern for historical accuracy. However, Taran's account of what Plato i s doing (pp. 276-77) seems incorrect, especially his claim that for Plato "Being meant the hypostatization of that characteristic which makes anything an existent".

40. Contrast this with Taylor's opinion that paradox (III) merely "complicates matters still more", *Plato: The Man and His Work* (London 1966), p. 383, and Kurt Schilling's view that Plato is simply pointing out that it is contradictory to assert that the One is absolutely one a n d a sphere, *Plato* (Wurzach, 1948), p. 261.

insofar as it is a whole of p a r t s. And while this looks to make AM false, it needs not make false the sentence used to state the main thesis of AM. For (v) - (viii) provide for an interpretation of "ἓν τὸ πᾶν" consistent with the now alleged plural character of what is. By allowing a predicative use of "ἕν", (vi) and (vii) explain how AM can be false and yet the sentence "ἓν τὸ πᾶν" true. AM is false because by (ii) there is a plurality of items in the domain of discourse and, thus, (3a) must be false. Yet because these may constitute some one whole, namely, being [taking τὸ ὂν in (ii) for τὸ μεμερισμένον in (v)]; it is possible that everything be one in the weaker sense prescribed by RM, so long as the reference class for "being" is all-inclusive. And at this point in the argument this is surely an unobjectionable assumption. So, in our earlier idiom, if it is the case that everything depends on everything, then it is the case that everything is one, for there must be some system or description of the items in question and this description may take the form "Everything is one...". Thus, runs the objection, everything is one relative to some description, as I shall say, one$_R$.[41]

At 245a-b Plato contrasts the notion of relative unity or being one$_R$ with that of absolute unity or being one$_R$. An item is said to be one$_R$ if, and only if, it does not consist of parts. Moreover, the distinction looks to apply as well to the notion of a whole. Thus, at 245b4-5 Plato begins the argument against RM by issuing a disjunction cast in terms of being *qua* relative whole:

8. (a) Being is (one$_R$ and) a whole$_R$ or
    (b) Being is not a whole at all.[42]

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41. My interpretation differs here crucially from Moravcsik's, especially on the reading of "ἐπὶ τοῖς μέρεσι" in (vi). He reads (vi) to state that each part is one. However, this is required neither by grammatical nor interpretive considerations. For, if the subject of "is one" ("ἓν εἶναι") in (vi) is the "what has parts" ("τὸ μεμερισμένον") of (v), then the disputed phrase must convey that w h a t has parts is one because the parts are unified into one thing by the property of unity ("πάθος τοῦ ἑνός"). Were (vi) to state that each part is one thing, we could not explain how τὸ μεμερισμένον is one thing. This is clear from Moravcsik's own paraphrase: "Having parts, it (τὸ ὂν) is not prevented from being affected by the One in respect of its parts (i.e., each part is a unit). Thus the totality exists, it is a whole, and it is one" (p. 31). I see no grounds in the first sentence for a n y of the conclusions in the second. In particular, how does x's being one and y's being one entail that x and y are one? And were Plato taken to argue that the whole is one because each of its parts are one, he would have succeeded only providing an instance of the fallacy of composition: attributing something to a whole on the grounds that it is attributed to the parts. Thus, if the whole is one, it could not be so b e c a u s e its parts are one.

245b4-5 confirms our interpretation, unambiguously stating that being (τὸ ὂν) is one and a whole because it (not each part) has the property of unity. Finally, I see no clear way that Moravcsik's interpretation could yield a version of RM.

42. 245b4-5: "Then is being one and a whole because of having the property of

Apparently, then, Plato's strategy is to show each of (a) and (b) unacceptable or at least unacceptable to the relative monist and, so, to deny that being could be the value of "x" in (7a).

The argument against alternative (a) is extremely brief:

> 9.   If (a), then (c) there will be more than one thing.

Given the parent text for (9)

> For if being is one by having been qualified, being will
> seem different from the one and so everything will be more
> than one.[43]

it is fairly clear that (9) depends on a predication principle which seems acceptable as far as it goes: One thing, predicated of another, is different from that other thing. And while Plato's endorsement of the principle is unsurprising, his use of it h e r e is quite curious. For why is (c) objectionable at all? Certainly, (c) contradicts AM; but how can it tell against RM which openly admits plurality?

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unity, or shall we say that being is not a whole at all". This passage makes clear that having the property of unity is sufficient both for something's being one$_R$ and a whole$_R$. Thus, I do not follow Moravcsik in claiming that "every whole is a whole in virtue of its participation of the Whole, and not in virtue of its participation of any other Form" (p. 31, n. 3). On this, see pages 290 below.

The fact that (8), as it stands, fails as a genuine disjunction is not troublesome since the errant alternative —that being is a whole$_A$— was implicitly dealt with in paradox (II). Note that even in (i), at the outset of the discussion of RM, there is presented just o n e way for something to be a whole, namely, a whole of parts. Left open is the possibility of partless wholes, which is implicitly given currency a few lines later at 245a8-9. There is stated that to be one$_A$ (αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν) is to be without parts. (Actually 245a8 reads "τὸ ἀληθῶς ἕν", which, however, clearly bears the same meaning as "αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν" immediately above at 245a5-6). Hence, if what is one$_A$ is a whole at all, it cannot be a whole$_R$ because it fails to satisfy the conditions required by (i) - (iv). But can such an item be a whole at all then? By 245a4-6, if such an item exists, it must be a whole. Moreover, the occurrence of "αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον" at 245c1 shows that Plato can express the possibility. So it looks like the option is left open and, presumably, those and only those items that are one$_A$ may be whole$_A$ as well. Thus, the argument of (i) - (iv) seems to commit AM to the possibility of partless wholes, though admittedly with meager interest in its meaningfulness.

Tarán, op. cit., p. 275, must deny this possibility since he holds that "for Plato ὅλον meant a whole of parts", citing *Theaetetus* 202b-205e in support. The decisive passage is 204a7-9: "Because i f there are parts of something, then the whole must be all the parts". But this means only that i f there are parts of, say, an F, then the whole F must be all the parts. So the passage is relevant only to wholes which have parts and makes no claim that every whole must be a whole of parts.

43. 245b7-9: πεπονθός τε γὰρ τὸ ὂν ἓν εἶναι πως, οὐ ταὐτὸν ὂν τῷ ἑνὶ φανεῖται καὶ πλέονα δὴ τὰ πάντα ἑνός ἔσται.

We might suppose that, lacking the predication-identity distinction, the uninitiated would take (c) to straightforwardly contradict the sentence "ἓν τὸ πᾶν", failing to notice that RM involves a predicative use of "ἕν". And this, of course, is a likely point to turn the argument on. But this can only be part of the matter, for such an explanation suggests that adherence to the distinction between identity and predication will save RM and it is doubtful that Plato had much interest in this kind of salvation or at least in (a) as an expression of that doctrine. So something more is to be said.

Let us begin by nothing that (9) is explained by the fact that if being is one$_R$, then being will be different from whatever item (here, the one) makes it one$_R$ or a whole$_R$.[44] From this it is obvious that Plato does not consider "being" to function in (a) as a quantifier like the "τὸ πᾶν" of "ἓν τὸ πᾶν", for, unlike the latter case, he here makes "τὸ ὄν" play some semantical role, at least for the sake of argument. Now, it seems to me, this cannot be the role of a singular term in the usual sense because (a) expresses a theory according to which being is explicitly pluralized. Hence, it seems unlikely that "being" can be construed in (a) as purporting to name one unique object. Yet it does have the look of a singular term and the entire sentence suggests that singularity applies in some way to being. I suggest that Plato is considering a use of "being" much along the lines of a mass term. For one salient feature of mass terms is, to follow Quine, that they have the look of singular terms yet do not purport to name a unique object. So, just as "water" may, on suitable occasions, be construed as referring to any bits or collections of water-bits, "being" may here be supposed able to support reference to any bits or collections of being-bits, however disparate. This explains both the grammatical fact that in (a) "being" looks to be a singular term and the semantical fact that RM, and so (a), requires pluralization. This latter we may think of as the scatter of Quine's scattered object.

Now it seems to me that (a) asserts the exact alternative had in mind by the objector to the argument of (II). For the objection was that AM could be false but RM true just because two or more items may constitute a single item. Hence, we save the sentence "Everything is one" (a), then, still asserts that there is one and only one thing, save that this be a special sort of complex thing. And, since (a) is understood as an interpretation of RM, it presupposes that everything that is (τὰ πάντα) may be conceived of as o n e   t h i n g.

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44. Sayre, op. cit., p. 161, thinks (a) objectionable because it entails the existence of parts which "must themselves be real, and the consequence follows that what is real is not one". But this can be ruled out on textual grounds alone, for 245b7-9 (see above footnote) makes clear that the "consequence" follows from the difference between being and the one.

And this, I think, is the crux of Plato's objection to RM. For looming large here is the question "One what?" or "What one thing?"[45] For ordinary mass terms there is available some specification of the object, even if overly contrived in the vein of "such and such scattered portion of fluid stuff". But what possible specification is at hand for "being"? And while the sentence "Water is o n e scattered portion of fluid stuff" is anything but natural, an analogous completion of "Being is one..." is anything but possible.

We are now able to see exactly how (7a) is related to the texts we have been discussing, 244e1-245b5. (7a) cannot be true because any whole$_R$ consists of an indeterminate field and individuating feature which renders this field a determinate whole. On our interpretation (a) is explained as follows: the reference of the mass term "being" is the field to be rendered determinate by addition of an individuating feature. The latter is said (at 245b7-9) to be provided by "the one (τῷ ἑνί)." But, of course, this will not do and Plato knows it will not. Bearing in mind that we are in the midst of a paradox-setting argument as well as Plato's keenness to the problem of incomplete predicates, it is likely that "the one" is here elliptical for an expression giving the one respect by which being is said to be one$_R$. So, if "being" is used as a mass term, it cannot be the value of "x" in (6a), for it would require an additional, individuating element in virtue of which it is one and a whole. This is especially apparent in light of the part-whole dichotomy introduced in 244e1-245b5. For now (7a) may be reformulated as

7a.* $(\exists x)\,(y)\,[(x \neq y \supset y$ is a part of $x)\ \&\ (z)\,(y$ is a part of $z \supset x = z)]$

which says simply that besides the special complex object [i.e., the whole of (7a)] there may exist only its parts. But if being is supposed the value of "x" in (7a*), then (7a*) is false because there must be an additional item —that which makes being a whole$_R$— and this cannot be a part. Yet part-

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45. I do not mean to suggest that there is no answer to this question. One might, for instance, reply "One of the highest kinds" or, with Ryle, "One of the formal concepts". But this presupposes a conception of being which Plato obviously wants to deny the advocate of RM. For by setting (a) in terms of the complex predicate "...is one$_R$ a n d a w h o l e$_R$" such an answer is precluded. Whereas we may talk about a whole$_R$ thing or whole assemblage of things, it makes considerably less sense to talk about a whole$_R$ concept. An assemblage lacking a require element may well be said not to be a whole$_R$ but in what analogous way could a concept fail to be a whole$_R$? The fact that the RM theorist denied this possibility, however, at least suggests that Plato saw the semantic properties of "being" to diverge markedly from those of ordinary stock terms. And I suggest that one mistake tallied in (III) is to suppose it to behave like an ordinary mass term.

pluralization is all (7a*) allows. At any rate, this is the sense in which (9) tells against RM.

Now part of avoiding the paradox in the first place is the realization that there is no specification of the respect in which being is one$_R$, analogous to the respect in which bits of water or brass are one something or other. And this is to realize that "being" cannot function as an ordinary mass term. Thus, there is no way to render a complete version of (a) meaningful.

Let us turn now to Plato's examination of the remaining alternative, (b). This begins at 245c1 where he issues the following conditional:

10. If (d) being is not a whole and (e) the whole itself
     (the whole$_A$) is [ᾗ αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον], then (f) being will
     lack of itself [ἐνδεὲς τὸ ὂν ἑαυτοῦ].[46]

From (f) is said to follow

(g) being will not be (οὐκ ὂν ἔσται τὸ ὄν)[47]

and, by 245c8-9, it somehow follows that

(h) everything will be more than one

because τὸ ὄν and τὸ ὅλον are different.[48] Thus, (d) and (e) apparently have three consequences.[49] Two of these, (f) and (g), look unacceptable in their own right. (h), on the other hand, is unacceptable to RM, for it contradicts the thesis that everything is one. Presumably, this is just (7a) or (7a*).

But how e x a c t l y is (h) gotten? Moravcsik has suggested deriving (h) by m o d u s t o l l e n s from the falsity of (g).[50] If (g), and so (f), is false, then either (d) or (e) must be false. If (d) were shown false, then being would be a whole$_R$, two things —being and what makes it a whole— would exist, and (h) would be true. So, if (e) can be shown true, (d) must be false. But does Plato have an argument for (e)? Moravcsik thinks there is one at 245c11-d2, which contains the following:

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46. See page 289 below for the full text of (10).

47. 245c5-6: "And by this account, that being is deprived of itself, being will not be".

48. 245c8-9: "And so, again, everything becomes more than one, since each of being and the whole have acquired their separate peculiar nature."

49. Sayre, op. cit., p. 161, contends that the argument shows only that e i t h e r (g) or (h) follows from (d) and (e), arguing: "If (e), given (d), then either (g) the Real is not, or (h) both the Whole and the Real are..." (I substitute my lettering for clarity.) But the text simply will not bear this interpretation.

50. Moravcsik, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

11. If (i) the whole is not at all [μὴ ὄντος δέ γε τὸ παρά-
      παν τοῦ ὅλου], then (j) being is involved in the same
      difficulties as before [(f), (g), and possibly (h)]; and (k)
      nothing could be (or come to be).

(k) looks to be quite unacceptable; hense, (i) looks to be false and (e), pre-
sumably, true.

Unfortunately, this is a deceptively neat picture. First, (f) and (g), and
possibly (h), are said by (j) to follow w h e t h e r o r n o t (e) is the case.[51]
For, by (i), (e) cannot be the case, yet the same difficulties follow as when
it is the case. So, exactly what role does (e) play in the argument? Second,
on Moravcsik's account, the falsity of (i) entails the falsity of (d), which means
that (a) is true. But if (a) is true, the pair of things said to exist is τὸ ὄν and
τὸ ἕν not τὸ ὄν and τὸ ὅλον as (h) requires. On the other hand, Moravcsik
interprets the text differently so as to support the view that (h) is asserted
in light of the pair [being & the one] rather than the pair [being & the whole].
We shall, then, want to look at this text, 245c1-3, and Moravcsik's interpreta-
tion of it. Third, what is meant in (f) by being "lacking of itself"?

What, then, is (e)'s contribution to the argument? Notice that (d) is
true either if the whole itself exists but being does not participate in it or
if the whole itself does not exist at all.[52] Hence, (e) gives p a r t of the first
of these truth conditions for (d), that requiring the existence of the whole
itself. And this is just the situation envisioned in (9). (11), then, is easily seen
to give the alternative truth condition for (d), namely, where the whole itself
does not exist at all.

One consequence of the interpretation of the last paragraph is that the
derivation of (h) must be explained without making either (d) or (e) false.
This is in its favor textually, since Plato looks to say that (h) follows from some
combination of (d), (e), (f), and (g). The fact that he does not explicitly indi-
cate which, if any, of these are to be rejected, suggests an interest in drawing

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51. It is clear enough that (f) and (g) follow regardless of (e)'s being the case, since
it turns out that they follow from (d). Inclusion of (h), however, requires further explanation,
since before, in (10), (h) followed b e c a u s e τὸ ὄν and τὸ ὅλον were different. So we
need another explanation of how (h) follows. If we take (h) as introduced merely to falsify
(7a), as in effect asserting — (∃x) (y) (y=x & x=the whole), then (h) would follow from (i).
Alternatively, we could simply dispense with (h), treating it as a consequence of (d) and (e)
only. Then the job of contradicting (7a) or (7a*) can be handed over to (k).

52. Exact specification of this relation (participation, falling under a concept, etc.)
does not seem essential, though no interpretation can hold that (f) is meant to state that
the relation does not hold. For the relata of (f) are the same, but here it is required that
being and the whole itself be different.

out aporetic conclusions from (d) rather than giving a m o d u s   t o l l e n s
proof as Moravcsik suggests.[53] So an interpretation in this vein would be
preferable. In fact, there is a quite economical derivation of (h) from (e)
and (g) directly. For (e) ascribes to the whole$_A$ [αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον] what (g) denies
to being [τὸ ὄν]; thus, by the principle of identity, they could not be the same.

The crucial point of adjudication between my view and that of Moravc-
sik lies in the interpretation of the text corresponding to (10):

> And, further, if (d*), being is not a whole by being qua-
> lified by this property (ὑπ' ἐκείνου πάθος) and if (e*) the
> whole$_A$ is (ᾗ αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον), then (f*) being will lack of
> itself.   (245c1-3)

Evidently, Moravcsik reads "ἐκείνου" in (d*) as referring to the whole itself
of (e*), for he says it refers to the concept of wholeness rather than the pro-
perty of unity. This is justified by the contention that for Plato x is a whole
not by participation in the one (or any other form) but   o n l y   by participa-
tion in the whole (i.e., the αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον of e*). Given this and his statement
of the argument as a   m o d u s   t o l l e n s   in which (d) is to be shown false,
it is clear that he cannot read "ἐκείνου" in any other way. For, suppose
it read as referring to the property of unity; then the argument would prove
that this property, and not the Whole, was different from being. And this,
of course, is incompatible with the justifying contention. But there are, I think,
textual considerations which call for just the reading Moravcsik rejects.[54]
Fortunately, there is also a way to disarm the contention Moravcsik advances
on behalf of his interpretation.

First the textual considerations. At 245b4-5 Plato states that being may
be one$_R$ a n d a whole$_R$ by having the property of unity (πάθος τοῦ ἑνός).
This alone looks sufficient to counter Moravcsik's interpretation. Second, the
antecedent for "ἐκείνου" is almost certainly carried through from 245b4-5.
For the intervening speech, 245b7-9, considers the case where being is a
whole$_R$ e x p r e s s l y   by having the property of unity. And (d*), which
immediately follows 245b7-9, is obviously meant to state the usual alternative,
namely, that being is not a whole$_R$ b y   h a v i n g   t h e   p r o p e r t y   o f
u n i t y. Strictly speaking, Moravcsik's candidate —that being is not a whole$_R$
by having the property of wholeness— does not pose the natural alternative.

53. Note that Moravcsik's statement of the argument would commit Plato to affirming
RM, for Moravcsik (op. cit., p. 34) seems to argue that being is shown to be one$_R$ and a
whole$_R$. But, as I have suggested, Plato had little interest in salvaging this sort of doctrine.

54. Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago 1933), p. 301, evidently reads "ἐκείνου" as
referring to the whole but seems unaware of the significance of so translating.

Now to disarm Moravcsik's contention that x is a whole not by participation in the one but o n l y by participation in the whole. *Prima facie* the contention looks to apply mainly, possibly only, to sentences with fully determinate, first-order predicates such as "...is red," "...is a horse," etc. This l o o k s fairly straightforward: Secretariat is a horse not by participation in redness. The matter is, however, less than clear. As early at the *Phaedo* Plato seems to allow that x's participation in F-ness is sufficient for x's being G so long as F-ness "entails" G-ness. Thus, x can be G because it participates in F-ness. So, even for first order predicates, the argument looks tenuous; and it is likely even further strained by concepts such as unity, wholeness, etc. For these are better thought of as belonging to the meta-theory for more ordinary concepts. Thus, it seems more plausible to argue that x's participation in F-ness, where F-ness is a n y stock form, is sufficient for x's being a whole, though not necessarily a whole F. Certainly, this is the suggestion of 245d4-6. So we need not follow Moravcsik either on the statement of the argument or on the reading of "ἐκείνου".

The appeal of Moravcsik's interpretation, that it explained the derivation of (h), has been met by our more straightforward account that (h) follows from (e) and (g) by the principle of identity. Moravcsik takes (g) as a contradiction and, therefore, thinks it implausible to derive (h) from (g).[55] But (g) is not a formal contradiction, unless read as an identity, which Moravcsik does not do. While reading (g) predicatively opens the path for our derivation of (h) from (g) and (e), it requires that being be a possible value for "F" in the formula "$(x)\,(y)\,(x=y \supset Fx=Fy)$." This, in effect, puts being on a par with ordinary properties. But, again, this is just a matter of Plato willfully participating in the misguided practices of the RM theorist, practices avoided by his own theory later in the dialogue.

Finally, it is necessary to consider the puzzling sentence "Being will lack of itself" (f). We shall begin by considering Moravcsik's account of how (f) follows from (d) and (e). He holds that if there is such a thing as wholeness and if being does not participate in it, then being will not be a whole. This he interprets as meaning that being will be incomplete, which in turn is taken to mean that there would be something which i s that does not fall under the form being. The admittedly considerable first appeal of this interpretation diminishes, I think, on closer examination. For what is it that does not fall under the concept (form, or whatever) being? Surely not the whole$_A$ [αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον], for this is explicitly said t o b e. But why

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55. If Moravcsik has in mind the proof that anything follows from a contradiction, I certainly agree with him.

anything at all? To say that being is not a whole is not obviously to say that being is incomplete i n M o r a v c s i k's s e n s e. Given the full account in (d*), it looks to say only that being cannot be brought under one heading and, so, said to be one whole of some sort. Nowhere is required that there b e something, yet something not falling under the concept being. What is at issue is rather how we think about being and Plato is driving hard, both here and in paradox (II), at those who would conceptualize it as one thing or one whole. In our earlier idiom, this means that being does not participate in any stock form and, so, is not any stock whole.

How, then, do we interpret (f)? I suggest that "being will lack of itself" means that being (τὸ ὄν) fails to satisfy a necessary condition which must be met by any being or, more figuratively, that it lacks its own necessary condition. If so, then it will be the case that being (τὸ ὄν) is not *a* being. And this is just what the participle construction of (g) reports. But what is this necessary condition and where is it found in the text? The condition

(EC) If x exists, then there is a kind G such that x is a whole G

is given at 245d4-6 and says simply that whatever is, is a whole of some kind. (EC) asserts, incidentally, part of what is contained in the Aristotelian ontological maxim that to be is to be something.

It turns out that this interpretation of (f) is quite consistent with reading "being" as a mass term. For, unlike terms of divided reference, mass terms are not individuating. Yet what exists, exists as an individuated item of some description. And while mass terms may be part of this description, they may not lay claim to the individuative part. Thus, to say that being is not a whole$_R$ can be seen as saying that being is not individuated as a whole anything and so cannot be. It fails to satisfy condition (EC). So "being", neither supplemented by nor functioning in its own right as an individuating term, looks intentionally to be used here much as a mass term. And (f) and (g) are easily seen to exhibit the behaviour expected of a mass term under such conditions.

Let me make a final, confirmatory point concerning Plato's remarks on number at 245d8-10. There he states that what is not a whole has no number at all. So, by (d), being has no number. We are thus well-advised not to consider (d) as stating or implying that something exists which does not fall under the concept being. For this would still allow number to apply to being, merely at a cardinality at least one short of the greatest (here) available. Rather, (d) leaves being quite indeterminate and surely this is an appropriate fate for the fugative reference of a mass term, taken without specification. We are left with the scatter but not the object. Thus, I suggest the possibility

that Plato uses paradox (III), among other things, to underscore the pitfalls of construing "being" as a mass term.

IV. By way of conclusion I would like to consider how our account meets the adequacy conditions mentioned at the outset. At a number of points I have indicated the relevance of Plato's positive analysis of being to the solution of the paradoxes. Paradox (I), I suggested, turned on treating "εἶναι" as a complete predicate and, of course, Plato's account takes it as incomplete. But the problem underlying paradox (I) is definite enough to permit solution only if predicative and identitative uses of "εἶναι" are distinguished. Accordingly, I have noted a tendency, especially in paradox (I), to blur this distinction — a distinction which Plato explicitly takes into consideration prior to his account of being as a vowel form. And though the latter is just the account of the connective feature in predication, the identity-predication distinction was seen to be less central than treating "is" or its variants as an ordinary categorematic expression. In this, paradoxes (I) - (III) are alike and treat "being" as having an extension on the model of an ordinary term. In particular, I have located this in their inclination to use "being" as a determinate predicate, a singular term, and a mass term. Thus, we may suppose the set of paradoxes designed, in part at least, to reflect the fact that "being" has no extension at all in the usual sense.

With the above goes another, equally fundamental confusion. (I) - (III) all reflect difficulties over the relation between the meaning and the extension of a term. For each seems to require that the meaning of a term be given by or at least depend on its extension. And this confusion may extend to "being" only if one imagines it to have an extension at all. To deny the latter is not to deny application to the concept being, indeed, even universal application but only to one sense in which it might be thought to have application. For Plato its legitimate application lies in the fact that it is presupposed by any predicative statement. And here there is no temptation to look for an ordinary extension.

In the late dialogues Plato is alive to the distinction between meaning and extension. For if we construe forms as meanings,[56] then the independence of forms from their participants amounts to the independence of the meaning of a term from its extension. Thus, for Plato at least, the relation between meaning and extension is different from that between meaning and reference, although both might be said to involve entitative theories of meaning. The reason for the difference is that Plato does seem to hold a referential theory

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56. Forms are assigned this function from at least the *Parmenides* on (see 135a-c).

of meaning. A predicate "$\varnothing$" is thought of as derived from a name "$\varnothing$"[57] and the meaning of "$\varnothing$" is just the reference of "$\varnothing$". Thus, the extension of "$\varnothing$" need not give its meaning, for the reference of "$\varnothing$" might be explained as a concept or idea and is explained in the *Sophist* as a platonic form. And these entities are obviously not to be counted in the extension of the predicate: The concept horse, whatever else it is, is not a horse.[58]

The considerations of the above paragraph also bear on the second adequacy condition. For confusion over the relation of meaning and extension is involved not only in the paradoxes of being but is, in effect, a governing assumption of the paradoxes of not-being as well. The latter argue that one cannot speak of what is not because this is to speak of nothing and to speak of nothing is to say nothing at all. The important moves here are (A) from "*a* is not" to "*a* is nothing" and (B) from "S says/thinks '*a* is nothing' " to "S says/thinks nothing". (A) depends on construing "...is not" as a complete expression much as "...is" was construed in setting the paradoxes of being. (B), then, effectively clinches the paradox with the principle that where there is no extension there is no meaning. A term without extension is without meaning and so any sentence it occurs in. Thus, there is a fundamental connection between the two sets of paradoxes.

There are some specific parallels between the paradoxes worth noting. As paradox (II) argued against use of "being" as singular term and so precluded reference to being, the second paradox of not-being (238a ff.) argues that what-is-not cannot serve as a subject of attribution and, so, in effect, that it cannot be referred to. And as the latter paradox turns on the point that what-is-not can be neither singular nor plural, the third quantitative paradox of being urges that being can be neither singular nor plural, if failing to be a whole. Thus, on general and specific points our interpretation of the quantitative paradoxes satisfies the second as well as the first adequacy condition.

Finally, I should like to comment on Plato's disposition to regard being as a so-called formal concept. Suppose we say that C is a formal concept, if C can be correlated with a bit of language "w" such that whenever "w" occurs in an ordinary sentence "S" there is an equivalent sentence "S*" in quantificational form and "w" can be either absorbed into the apparatus of quantification or written as a logical connective. This leaves as non-formal concepts only those which correlate with singular or general terms. Now,

57. For this account see *Parmenides* 130e.
58. It is worth mentioning the incompatibility of these considerations with a full strength self-predication assumption.

obviously, to show that being is necessarily all-inclusive is not sufficient to show that it is a formal concept. For "being" may simply be a necessarily all-inclusive general term. Thus, Moravcsik's interpretation of the paradoxes offers no encouragement to philosophers who wish to find Plato alive here to the notion of a formal concept. Neither does Plato's positive analysis of being show, o n i t s o w n, that he regards being as a formal concept. For when read as providing an account of the incomplete "εἶναι", it is (Owen has reminded us) anything but obvious that Plato grasps the distinction between being and any other incomplete concept. But in light of our interpretation of paradoxes of being, Plato's own account warrants a stronger claim. For if, as I have suggested, the paradoxes of being can be read as emphasizing the unsuitability of "being" for duty as either a singular or a general term, then support is forthcoming after all for Ryle's contention that the *Sophist's* positive account of being is consciously the account of a formal concept.

Ο ΠΛΑΤΩΝ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΤΙ ΔΕΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΟ «ΟΝ»

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η.

Στὸ διάλογο *Σοφιστὴς* 243b-245e θέτει ὁ Πλάτων τρία αἰνίγματα σχετικὰ μὲ θεωρίες ποὺ ἀποφαίνονται γιὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸ τῶν πραγμάτων ποὺ ὑπάρχουν. Οἱ περισσότεροι σχολιαστὲς τοῦ διαλόγου θεωροῦν αὐτὰ τὰ παράδοξα, ὅπως θὰ τὰ ἀποκαλῶ, ὡς ἀναίρεση μόνο μερικῶν προγενέστερων θεωριῶν γιὰ τὸ ὃν καὶ τίποτε περισσότερο. Σύμφωνα μ' αὐτὴ τὴν ἄποψη τὰ παράδοξα θεωροῦνται ὅτι ἔχουν μικρὴ συστηματικὴ σημασία καθαυτά.

Στὸ ἄρθρο αὐτὸ ὑποστηρίζω τὴν ἄποψη ὅτι περιέχουν τὰ παράδοξα κάποια σημαντικὰ διδάγματα γιὰ τὴν ἑρμηνεία τοῦ θετικοῦ λόγου γιὰ τὸ ὃν τοῦ ἴδιου τοῦ Πλάτωνος. Ἰδιαίτερα προβάλλουν τὴ θέση ὅτι ὁ *Σοφιστὴς* προσφέρει μιὰ ἔκθεση γιὰ τὸ ὃν ὡς τυπικὴ ἔννοια καὶ ὄχι ἁπλῶς ὡς ἕνα εἰδικὸ εἶδος ἑνὸς καθολικὰ περιεκτικοῦ γενικοῦ ὅρου. Ἡ «στρατηγικὴ» τοῦ ἄρθρου εἶναι ἀπερίφραστη: "Αν ὁ ἴδιος διάλογος μᾶς προσφέρει παράδοξα καὶ μιὰ θετικὴ θεωρία τοῦ ὄντος, ἔχουμε τότε κάθε δικαίωμα νὰ περιμένουμε νὰ δώσει ἡ θεωρία μιὰ λύση στὰ παράδοξα. "Αν λοιπὸν τὰ παράδοξα τείνουν νὰ πραγματεύονται τὸ ὃν ὡς ἔννοια πρώτης τάξης, μπορεῖ κανεὶς νὰ περιμένει λύση μὲ τὴ μορφὴ μιᾶς θεωρίας ποὺ βλέπει τὸ ὃν ὡς ὃν δεύτερης τάξης ἢ τυπικὴ ἔννοια.

Ἡ τάση νὰ δίνεται καθαρὰ ἱστορικὴ ἑρμηνεία στὰ παράδοξα εἶναι εὐνόητη, γιατὶ φαίνεται ὁ Πλάτων νὰ τὰ εἰσάγει σὲ συνάρτηση μὲ προη-

γούμενες φιλοσοφικὲς θεωρίες: (Ι) τὸ δυϊσμὸ τοῦ θερμοῦ καὶ τοῦ ψυχροῦ 243e8-244a3), (ΙΙ) τὸ μονισμὸ τοῦ Παρμενίδη (244b6-d10), καὶ (ΙΙΙ) τὴν ὁλο-κρατία [wholism] (244d14-245d11). Τὰ Ι-ΙΙΙ ὡστόσο ἐκφράζουν τὰ τρία εἴδη θεωριῶν, ποὺ θὰ μποροῦσε κανεὶς νὰ προτείνει γιὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸ τῶν πραγμά-των ποὺ ὑπάρχουν. Τὸ Ι ἀντιστοιχεῖ σὲ κάθε μορφὴ πλουραλισμοῦ, τοῦ ὁ-ποίου τὰ στοιχεῖα εἶναι ἀμοιβαῖα ἀνεξάρτητα, τὸ ΙΙ ἀντιστοιχεῖ σὲ θεωρίες ποὺ βεβαιώνουν πὼς μόνο ἕνα πράγμα ὑπάρχει, καὶ τὸ ΙΙΙ ἀντιστοιχεῖ σὲ κάθε μορφὴ πλουραλισμοῦ, τοῦ ὁποίου τὰ στοιχεῖα εἶναι ἀλληλένδετα.

Ἡ γενικὴ μορφὴ κάθε παραδόξου εἶναι ὅτι κανένα ἀπὸ τὰ Ι-ΙΙΙ δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ δώσει λόγο γιὰ τὸ ὂν στὰ πλαίσια τῆς θεωρίας. Καὶ ὅμως ἔχει καθένα τους τὴν ἀξίωση νὰ εἶναι μιὰ θεωρία γιὰ τὸ ὄν. Δὲν μποροῦν, συνε-πῶς, δικαιολογημένα νὰ βεβαιώσουν αὐτὸ ποὺ ὑποστηρίζουν. Τὸ κακὸ εἶναι ὅτι καθένα ἀπὸ τὰ σημεῖα Ι-ΙΙΙ μεταχειρίζεται τὸ ὂν σὰν νὰ ἦταν μιὰ τυπικὴ ἔννοια πρώτης τάξης. Εἶναι ἔτσι ἀναγκασμένα νὰ πραγματεύονται τὸ ὂν σὰν αὐτὸ νὰ εἶχε μιὰ «ἔκταση» (extension) κατὰ τὸ πρότυπο ἑνὸς συνηθι-σμένου ὅρου. Μιὰ ματιὰ στὴ λογικὴ τῶν ἐπιχειρημάτων ποὺ εἶναι γενεσιουρ-γὰ παραδόξων (paradox generating) τὸ ἐπιβεβαιώνει. Τὸ Ι τείνει νὰ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὂν ὡς τυπικὸ καθορισμένο κατηγόρημα, τὸ ΙΙ τείνει νὰ τὸ θεωρεῖ ὡς ἕνα μοναδικὸ ὅρο (singular), καὶ τὸ ΙΙΙ τείνει νὰ τὸ θεωρεῖ ὡς μαζικὸ ὅρο (mass). Μποροῦμε ἔτσι νὰ ὑποθέσουμε ὅτι τὸ σύνολο τῶν παραδόξων στὸν Σοφιστὴ προοριζόταν νὰ ἀντανακλᾶ τὸ γεγονός, ὅτι τὸ ὂν δὲν ἔχει καθόλου ἔκταση μὲ τὴ συνηθισμένη ἔννοια τοῦ ὅρου.

Πῶς συσχετίζεται αὐτὸ μὲ τὴ διάθεση τοῦ Πλάτωνος νὰ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὂν ὡς τυπικὴ ἔννοια; Ἂς ποῦμε ὅτι τὸ C εἶναι μιὰ τυπικὴ ἔννοια, ἂν τὸ C μπορεῖ νὰ συσχετισθεῖ μὲ ἕνα ψηφίο μιᾶς γλώσσας «w», τέτοιο ποὺ ὁποτε-δήποτε ἐμφανίζεται τὸ «w» σὲ μιὰ συνηθισμένη πρόταση «S» νὰ ὑπάρχει μιὰ ἰσοδύναμη πρόταση «S*» σὲ ποσοτικὰ προσδιορισμένη μορφή, καὶ ὅτι τὸ «w» μπορεῖ εἴτε νὰ ἀπορροφηθεῖ στὸ σύστημα τοῦ ποσοτικοῦ προσδιο-ρισμοῦ εἴτε νὰ γραφεῖ ὡς λογικὸ συνεκτικό. Τοῦτο ἐπιτρέπει νὰ λαμβάνον-ται ὡς μὴ-τυπικὲς ἔννοιες μόνον ἐκεῖνες, ποὺ συσχετίζονται μὲ μοναδικοὺς ἢ γενικοὺς ὅρους. Ἔτσι, ἂν τὰ παράδοξα ποὺ προβλήθηκαν ἐναντίον τῶν σημείων Ι-ΙΙΙ μποροῦν, ὅπως ὑποστηρίζω, νὰ διαβαστοῦν ἔτσι ποὺ νὰ δεί-χνουν τὴν ἀκαταλληλότητα τοῦ «ὄντος» γιὰ καθένα ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ρό-λους, ἔχουμε τότε μιὰ σαφὴ ἐγγύηση γιὰ τὸ νὰ πραγματευθοῦμε τὴν ἀνά-λυση τοῦ Πλάτωνος στὸ διάλογο Σοφιστὴς ὡς λόγο γιὰ μιὰ τυπικὴ ἔννοια δεύτερης τάξης.

(Μετάφραση Μ. Δραγώνα-Μονάχου)