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Plato's Explanation of False Belief in the Sophist

Scott Berman

I Introduction

In this paper, I will reconstruct Plato's explanation of false belief as it emerges from his *Sophist* and suggest why it is explanatorily better than the principal contemporary account. Since Frege, the received view in contemporary analytic philosophy of mind and philosophy of language is that human cognition of the world is always mediated through some sort of intensional object.¹ Moreover, the identity conditions of such intensional objects have been assumed to be ontologically independent of their relation to the world. This theory of human cognition is worse ontologically as compared with a theory which does not require any mediary objects because the former commits itself to a larger ontology than the latter. However, the larger ontology is allegedly justified by gains in explanatory power. If that is the case, then the postulation of such further entities is justified. On the other hand, if the alleged gain in explanatory power is, as I shall suggest, illusory, then Plato's theory of human cognition, which makes no reference to intensional objects which are ontologically independent of their relation to the world, will be a better explanation insofar as it will commit itself to a smaller ontology in that explanation and further, will actually explain something we want explained.

1 I owe a great debt, both here and elsewhere, to Penner (1988).

I focus on Plato's explanation of *false* belief specifically because it is the falsity of psychological states in general that causes explanatory problems, not their truth.² For example, based upon an allegedly naïve assumption about psychological states, having a false belief will be impossible. The assumption is that in order to be in a belief-state at all there needs to *be* something the belief is about. Otherwise, there is no belief-state. Let us call this the *Existence Assumption*. For example, if Bob has a belief about Julie, then, given the *Existence Assumption*, Bob must be in a direct cognitive relation with some particular object which exists, namely, Julie. However, if Julie does not exist, then Bob cannot be in such a relation, for it requires two *relata*, and only one exists, namely, Bob. So, there can exist no such cognitive relation, i.e., belief-state. However, such a result seems absurd. We do think it possible to have beliefs about non-existent objects which we, through ignorance, believe exist. How, then, can we explain these apparent cases of thinking about what does not exist? The *Existence Assumption* rules out any such possibility.³

The way that many contemporary theorists explain false belief is by, following Frege,⁴ postulating the existence of an intermediary object of some sort that *all* beliefs, *whether true or false*, have as their direct object.⁵ For example, many contemporary theorists would explain Bob's belief

2 Cf. Russell's (1918: 109) treatment of propositions.

3 The same question arises, by the way, if we consider some situation in the world, e.g., that it is raining outside Bob's house instead of an object, e.g., Julie. If Bob believes that it is raining outside his house, but it is not in fact raining outside his house, then the situation in which it is raining outside his house does not exist. What, then, is Bob thinking about? Of course, one could suppose that nonoccurring situations exist, but having to be committed to the existence of nonoccurring situations is notoriously wrought with difficulties. For one, what sort of identity conditions could they have? As Pelletier (1990: xiv) puts the problem:

All things and groups of things that exist are either singular or plural, but negative events are neither. The question of how many nonoccurring earthquakes are in Edmonton right now, or of whether the nonoccurring earthquake in Edmonton right now is the same or different from the nonoccurring earthquake in Calgary yesterday, simply has no answer.

We cannot even begin to say what the identity conditions *are* for such 'situations' as nonoccurring situations.

4 Cf. Frege's (1952b) and (1956).

5 Salmon and Soames (1988: 1), Fodor (1990: 70), and Peacocke (1991: 525), all confirm this exegesis. See also Anderson (1984).

about the nonexistent Julie by appealing to Bob's *Julie conception*, an object that *does* exist, and say further that this conception does not correspond to the world; so, even though Julie does not exist, Bob's *Julie conception* does.⁶ Hence, Bob can in fact be in a belief-state when thinking about the nonexistent Julie because to be in a belief-state, there only needs to be an intensional object — a *Julie conception* — not an extensional object — a Julie.⁷ Regardless, then, of whether or not any intensional object — any conception — corresponds to the world, the intensional object is guaranteed to exist and so it makes a belief about a nonexistent thing *possible*. Hence, the problem with having false beliefs given the *Existence Assumption* is abated.⁸

Many contemporary philosophers think that this intermediary object is the direct object of *all* beliefs, *whether* true or false, because

- (1) Bob, for example, *cannot tell the difference* between when his thinking is correct and when his thinking is incorrect just by introspection (e.g., Bob's belief that it is raining outside his house *seems to him* to be *the same* belief whether the belief is true or false)
- and
- (2) we can explain Bob's actions in terms of his beliefs *without ourselves having to know whether his beliefs are true or false*.⁹

6 Theorists disagree about what to call the objects of thought; some call them ideas, some call them thoughts, but currently, most call them propositions. The terminological differences between these, though, do not matter with respect to the point I am making here.

7 Hence, the external world is *irrelevant* to saying what state of mind Bob is in. We are *guaranteed* the *same* object for each state of mind whether true or false, regardless of how the world in fact is.

8 Intensional objects, however, are not usually thought to be things in the same sense of 'thing' that extensional objects are things. That is, when Bob is in a direct cognitive relation to his *Julie conception*, it is not thought that Bob is in a direct cognitive relation with the world. The result of taking this position is that the *Existence Assumption* is not to be thought of as *satisfied* or *met* but *overcome*.

9 As Lewis (1979: 134) puts (2): 'Uniform propositional objects ... facilitate systematic common-sense psychology.' While Lewis supports identifying the objects of our psychological states 'of uniform category,' he would choose properties instead of propositions (*ibid.*). However, Lewis views properties as *sets* of things located in logical space and not as *things themselves*.

Therefore, *regardless* of whether Bob's beliefs are true or false, Bob is *always* in a direct cognitive relation with some conception of the world and *never* with the world itself. With the world, Bob only can have, at best, an *indirect* cognitive relation. In other words, the direct object of Bob's belief about Julie — namely, his *Julie conception* — is *the same*, whether she exists or not.¹⁰

Plato, on the other hand, argues that beliefs *differ* in their direct objects *depending upon* whether they are true or false. And in neither case is the direct object of a belief an object with identity conditions as narrow as they are for propositions. If Plato is correct, then in order to know what Bob is thinking it will be necessary to know whether Bob's belief is true or false. The reason for this is that what Bob is thinking about differs depending upon which state of mind he is in. The problem for Plato, then, is to explain how there can *be* false beliefs, since he retains the *Existence Assumption* that psychological-states are direct, i.e., unmediated, cognitive relations to the world and not mediated by intensional objects like propositions, i.e., conceptions.¹¹

Briefly, then, how does Plato explain false belief? Plato starts with the *Existence Assumption* that a belief-state is a two-place relation between a cognizer and the world (*not* a two-place relation between a cognizer and

10 As Salmon and Soames (1988: 1) write:

Propositions are what we believe, disbelieve, or suspend judgement about. When you fear that you will fail or hope that you will succeed, when you venture a guess or feel certain about something, the [direct] object of your attitude is a proposition. That is what propositions are.

Notice here that they do not say that propositions (= conceptions, ideas, etc.) are what we believe when our beliefs are *false*. Rather, propositions are the objects of our beliefs, i.e., *all* of our beliefs *both true and false*. And Fodor (1990: 68) writes that 'The standard story about believing [whether true or false] is that it's a two-place relation, viz., a relation between a person and a proposition.' Therefore, and this is the important point, many contemporary theorists think that the direct object of any particular belief is *the same thing regardless of whether the belief is true or false*.

Psychological states like seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, and knowing are not treated in this way. These states are called 'factive'. Other psychological states, e.g., believing, wanting, fearing, hoping, and so forth are called 'non-factive'. The point I hope to make in this paper is that there is no such distinction and that all psychological states are 'factive'.

11 I would disagree, then, with Penner and Rowe (1994: 9) where they concede that a variant on Frege's analysis for false psychological states will be necessary for Plato's view.

a proposition). Hence to believe something is to believe something that is. But, if to believe something falsely is to believe something that is not, i.e., something that does not exist, then it will be impossible to believe something falsely because there will *be* no thing to have a false belief about.¹² But this is absurd. Of course it is possible to believe something false. So how does Plato, who also believes there can be false beliefs, explain them?

Plato's explanation is that when Socrates, say, believes that Theaetetus sits, when in fact Theaetetus stands, what Socrates is cognitively related to is not nothing at all, for that is admittedly impossible, but the interwoven complex unity¹³ constituted by Theaetetus and the Form of Otherness with respect to Sitting. The reason the cognitive relation is *false* is that Socrates identifies this object with the interwoven complex unity constituted by Theaetetus and the Form of Sitting. In other words, Socrates misidentifies Sitting with Standing in the same way that someone misidentifies the number 12 with the number 11 when he or she believes that $5 + 7 = 11$. On the other hand, when Socrates believes that Theaetetus sits, when Theaetetus sits, Socrates is cognitively related to the interwoven complex unity constituted by Theaetetus and the Form of Sitting. In this case, the reason the cognitive relation is *true* is that Socrates identifies this object with itself, or, in other words, he identifies Sitting with Sitting in the same way that someone identifies the number 12 with the number 12 when he or she believes that $5 + 7 = 12$.¹⁴ In neither case is Socrates cognitively related to an object which is what it is independent of whether or not Theaetetus sits, e.g., since the identity of the proposition 'Theaetetus sits' is supposed to be independent of the facts. Hence the object which Socrates is cognitively related to differs depending upon whether Socrates' belief is true or false. Knowledge of what Socrates believes, then, requires knowledge of which object Socrates is cognitively related to. Is Socrates

12 Analogously, if to eat is to eat something, then if one is eating nothing, one is doing no eating at all. Cf. *Theaetetus* 188e-9a for seeing, hearing, touching, and thinking. Cf. also the ἀπορίαι concerning Not-Being at *Sophist* 236c-9c.

13 This object does not have an essence or identity of its own though. Cf. Penner (1987: 191-231) and Schipper (1964 and 1965: ch. 4). I will discuss this thesis about identity in §II 1.

14 Such identifications, then, will not be analytic ones.

cognitively related to Sitting or to Otherness with respect to Sitting? How, then, does Plato argue for this in the *Sophist* and hence how would he address (1) and (2) above?

To anticipate briefly, Plato would address (1) by denying that Bob has an incorrigible grasp of his own state of mind by arguing that the object of Bob's state of mind is complex, or multi-faceted, and not simple, or single-faceted. And Plato would address (2) by showing that we can explain Bob's actions by means of proposition-like entities only if we identify actions, i.e., the objects of our desires, much more narrowly than warranted; Plato would say that in order to explain Bob's actions, we need to take into consideration how Bob's actions are all goal-oriented, that is, teleologically structured, and hence something with much wider identity conditions than propositions is required for any adequate explanation of Bob's actions.

I 1 Why the Falsity of Statements is the same as the Falsity of Beliefs

As a preliminary, I need to say why I take Plato's argument in the *Sophist* to be an explanation of false *belief* instead of false *statement*. The reason such a preliminary is necessary is that the major argument in the *Sophist* allegedly concerns the falsity of statements and only incidentally the falsity of beliefs. Why, then, do I use the *Sophist* as my source for Plato's explanation of the falsity of *beliefs*?¹⁵

At 263d-4b, directly after his explanation of the falsity of statements, Plato argues that since thinking (διάνοια) and discourse (λόγος) are two different names for the same thing (263e3: ταυτόν), namely a dialogue (263e4 and 264a9: διάλογος) which is carried out either inwardly (called 'thinking') or outwardly (called 'discourse'), and since belief (δόξα) is of the same nature as statement (λόγος),¹⁶ namely, an assertion or denial, i.e., the conclusion of that aforementioned dialogue, then, since there is

15 Cf. Frede (1992: 397-8).

16 As Lennox has pointed out to me, I am translating λόγος in two different ways. I realize this but the contexts in which each of the instances of λόγος make it clear, to me at least, that the first instance refers to something dynamic and the second instance refers to something static. Hence, I translate the same Greek word differently.

truth and falsity in statements, there is truth and falsity in beliefs (cf. *Theaetetus* 189e4-90a7 and 206d1-e3). In other words, Plato thinks that the account of the falsity of statements *is the same as* the account of the falsity of beliefs. And similarly, the account of the truth of statements is the same as the account of the truth of beliefs (cf. also *Sophist* 240c-1b and 241d-e).

This will seem to many philosophers to be a preposterous claim: that the account of the falsity of statements is the same as the account of the falsity of beliefs. After all, statements need not involve the well-known logical problems involving psychological states — for they need not contain a psychological verb — whereas beliefs must face those logical problems. The logical problems involving psychological states are (1) that the inferential rule Existential Generalization is violated, and (2) that the substitution of identicals does not preserve truth value. Neither of these is the case for statements.¹⁷ Hence, statements and beliefs need to be treated separately.

I would argue, however, that we should treat statements the same way that we treat beliefs and hence that Plato is not asserting something false when he says that they are the same. Unfortunately, all I can do in this paper is point out that the explanation of the falsity of statements that Plato gives in the *Sophist* does not presuppose the above distinction between statements and beliefs. In the *Sophist*, Plato treats statements as things which people *create* by putting nouns together with verbs either silently to themselves or outwardly to others via talking or writing (cf. *Theaetetus* 189e4-90a7 and 206d1-e3). So as far as Plato is concerned, the truth or falsity of statements depends upon how well or badly *people* put together those nouns and verbs. The closer we get, then, to describing the world accurately by means of those combinations, the closer we get to the truth. And the farther away we get from describing the world accurately by means of those combinations, the farther away we get from the truth. Therefore, *no statements can be abstracted away from some person*

17 The way this issue is usually discussed is between statements which do involve psychological contexts (or other opaque contexts such as quotations, etc.) and statements which do not. In the text, I am considering statements as if they never involve such contexts. In other words, I am considering statements in this paragraph as if they were free of any restrictions involving psychological contexts. The point I shall forthwith argue for is that statements *always* involve implicit psychological contexts and that they therefore have to be treated the same way as beliefs.

asserting or denying it as being how the world is. And since all statements are treated in this way, what that person states will always be dependent on, or laden with, the theory or theories which that person has concerning the world. Therefore, since Plato treats all statements as theory-dependent, all statements occur within what we would call a psychological context. In other words, since (1) a theory about the world is a belief and (2) all statements are theory-dependent, i.e., belief-dependent, we cannot treat statements differently from beliefs because all statements occur within an implicit psychological context. This is why the argument at 263d-4b is so brief. Nothing new is really being argued for in this passage. Therefore, I submit that whatever Plato says about the falsity of statements can be used to explain the falsity of beliefs since he treats them as involving the same problem: the possibility of falsity.

II Plato's Argument in the *Sophist*

II 0 How Plato Explains False Belief

Plato's explanation of false belief can be broken down into three steps. First, Plato argues that the Forms interweave (συμπλοκή) with each other. Second, Plato argues for the existence of Not-Being (τὸ μὴ ὄν). And finally, Plato argues that false beliefs are the product of the interweaving of Not-Being with thinking. I shall not examine the argument in the first step in detail except to say why its conclusion helps explain the nature of false belief. With respect to the second step — the argument for the existence of Not-Being — I shall only say what this ontological commitment amounts to and also how it helps to explain the nature of false belief. The third step brings together the previous two to explain how false beliefs are possible and it is here that we will see why Plato's view is the more plausible when compared to the principal contemporary account.

II 1 Step One: The Interweaving Of Forms

The argument for the interweaving of Forms (251c-2e) occurs in the *Sophist* after all previous ontological theories concerning the nature of Being and Not-Being — e.g., Parmenidean Monism, Presocratic Dualism, Nominalism, and Middle-Period Platonism — were found to be unsatisfactory (243d-50e). At the beginning of Plato's attempt at making some headway concerning the nature of Being and Not-Being and thence

to understanding the nature of false belief, Plato has the interlocutor representing his own views, The Eleatic Stranger, make the following strange request to the other interlocutor, Theaetetus:

Let us explain, then, how it is that we call the same thing — whatever is in question at the moment — by several names (251a5-6; trans. Cornford [1935]).

How, the reader wonders, is getting an explanation for multiple names supposed to help us in our understanding of Being and Not-Being? Remember, the goal of trying to understand Being and Not-Being is to show that false belief is possible since it seems as if having a false belief is to believe what is not, i.e., what does not exist. But naming, after all, is just a conventional process and there is nothing to stop us from giving any object whatsoever as many names as we like, right? So how could this be something that needs to be explained?

Though Plato would not agree that naming is *just* a conventional process,¹⁸ even if he did, that is not the problem Plato is addressing here. The problem is this: how is it that we can say of a man not only that he is a man but that he is white and that he is 5'6" and wise and so forth? Are we not speaking of one thing as many things? For example, when Socrates comes into the room, we can truly say of Socrates all of the following: 'Human', 'White', 'Five feet six inches', 'Wise', and so forth. Is Socrates all of these things and so, many things? If so, then we should say 'Socrates *are* here' and not 'Socrates *is* here'. But, Socrates is just one thing, not many things. Hence, the problem is how can we truly say all of those things when Socrates, who is one thing, walks into the room?

Since Aristotle, this has not seemed like much of a problem. Now that we (allegedly) understand the logical difference between being an object (or being the subject of a sentence) and being a property (or being the predicate of a sentence), the problem has disappeared. We would say that Socrates is just one thing and that various other things can be predicated of him. Moreover, the cause of the problem is not noticing that there is an ambiguity here in the use of the word 'thing'. In one sense of the word 'thing', a thing is an object, e.g., Socrates. In another sense of 'thing', a thing is a property, e.g., Humanness, Whiteness, and so forth. But these are two very different senses of the word 'thing' and should not be confused. If

18 See Berman (1994) on this very point.

they are conflated, then how one thing can be many things will be a problem. But, properties are not things in the same sense of 'thing' as objects are things.¹⁹ So when I say 'the human is wise', I am not talking about one thing as if it were two things, human *and* wise because 'human' and 'wise' function differently in the sentence. 'Human' is the subject of the sentence and 'is wise' is the predicate. Each part of the sentence refers to 'a thing' in different senses of 'being a thing'. Moreover, it is precisely *because* objects and properties are things in different senses that they can *combine with* each other, viz., properties can be *had by* objects, and thus sentences are not just lists of names, but hang together as a unit. And so Socrates is not a heap of things, but is just one thing.

However, this is not how Plato replies to the problem of one thing being many things. He queries whether things, spoken of in a univocal sense, can *combine* with each other and in what ways. Plato, unlike Aristotle,²⁰ treats all things as things in the same sense of 'thing' and argues (1) that some things can combine with *all* other things and (2) that some things can combine with *some* other things *but not all* other things (251c-2e). Plato then states that it is the discovery of these combination-relations that is the function of the philosopher (252e-4d).²¹ Moreover, Plato thinks that these combination-relations are not *logical* relations given the conceptual scheme of our, or anyone's, language, or given the conditions for being rational, but *ontological* relations which exist independently of any cognizers.²² As Plato describes it:

Dividing according to kinds, not thinking that the same form is an other one [i.e., not thinking that $F \neq G$ when in fact $F = G$ as, for example,

19 Cf. Frege's (1952a) for this same point.

20 At *Physics* I 2, end, Aristotle says: 'Thinkers of the more recent past also were much agitated lest things might turn out to be both one and many at the same time. ... Things, however, are many, either in account (as the being of pale is different from the being of a musician, though the same thing may be both: so the one is many), or by division, like the parts of a whole'. (185b26-34; trans. Charlton [1970]).

21 Since the contemporary division between philosophers and scientists was not present in Plato's time, I need to say that Plato thought of these two groups as just one group.

22 Cornford (1935: 264-5) seems to argue the same thing. Ackrill (1955: 204-8) asserts that these relations are for Plato merely linguistic or conceptual.

when someone thinks that $5 + 7 \neq 12$ when in fact $5 + 7 = 12$] or that another one is the same [i.e., not thinking that $F = G$ when in fact $F \neq G$ as, for example, when someone thinks that $5 + 7 = 11$ when in fact $5 + 7 \neq 11$] ... And the person who can do that discriminates sufficiently one form entirely extended through many, where each one [of these many] is not identical to the rest (*ἐνὸς ἐκάστου κειμένου χωρίς*), and many forms, each one being other than the rest, embraced from outside themselves by one form, and again one form connected in a unity through many wholes, and many forms, entirely marked off apart.²³ This is the knowledge of how to distinguish according to kinds in which ways each of them can combine and in which ways each of them cannot. (253d1-e2; trans. loosely after Cornford)

Plato, then, does not segregate things into just *two* different logical types: objects and their properties, the former being more basic, i.e., things which exist in the primary sense.²⁴ Rather, he thinks of all things as basic, i.e., things which exist in the primary sense, because that's the only sense there is for Plato.²⁵ And further, instead of there being only one fundamental kind of combination, viz., objects *having* properties, there are infinitely many different kinds of combinations because there are as many different logical types of things as there are things. Of course, such a position would be better expressed without differentiating logical types at all, so I will forsake such language to avoid misunderstanding. In other words, to claim that each thing is its own logical type is to effectively do away with logical types altogether.²⁶

Let me illustrate what I have in mind here by talking about chemical bonding. Scientists have discovered how more-or-less complex things called 'atoms' actually *combine* with each other to make not just heaps of atoms but a thing with even greater complexity called a 'molecule'. What they have discovered is that the strength or weakness of the bond

23 One need only think of a biological taxonomy, that is, genus-species hierarchies, to make this idea clear.

24 I shall ignore the higher logical types, e.g., properties of a property, and so on, because they do not affect the point to be made presently.

25 See Penner (1987: 4-8 with nn.).

26 Cf. Smart (1953).

between those combined atoms is a function of whether their valence electron shells are partly or completely filled and if partly, then to what extent.²⁷ But all bonds, whether weak or strong, are held together by one of the four fundamental forces of nature, viz., electromagnetism. Interestingly, *no one knows* what electromagnetism is; it is just a very-well-confirmed postulate, i.e., electromagnetism is needed to explain chemical bonding. There are two things to notice about chemical bonding: First, it is not necessary, for explaining the nature of *combination*, that one must commit oneself to a theory that contains distinct *logical types* of entities, i.e., entities which exist on different levels of existence. Atoms are capable of combination even though they exist on the same level of existence.²⁸ And, second, if electromagnetism suffices for explaining chemical bonding, even though no one knows at present what electromagnetism is, then some analogue to electromagnetism for the bonding of Forms with each other²⁹ will suffice for explaining the bonding of Forms to make interwoven complex unities, like Socrates.³⁰ I need not understand this analogue fully or at all to be able to use it as a scientific postulate (cf. *Phaedo* 100d).

I will not argue, then, that Plato has only two³¹ or three³² logical types of combination-relations. And so I will resist making Plato an inventor of technical terms. But, how do I understand Plato's theory of combina-

27 Actually, even if the atoms have completely filled valence electron shells, they can still combine, albeit very weakly, in virtue of the van der Waals forces.

28 Chemists do not think that they commit any kind of category error when they say that hydrogen and oxygen exist. Hydrogen and oxygen have different valences but do not need to exist in a different sense of 'existence' in order to bond to make water. If hydrogen and oxygen are to combine to make water, then hydrogen and oxygen need to have whatever properties they need to have in order to combine. What these properties are is a matter of discovery and not stipulation. Moreover, Plato thinks, and I agree, that since all things exist at the same level of existence, there are no *levels* of existence at all, just existence.

29 Cf. *Phaedo* 99c1-6. See also Lennox (1985) for a wonderful discussion of what he calls Plato's 'counterentropic concept of goodness'.

30 Other examples of the same sort include the bonding of letters to make words (252e9-3a12), the bonding of notes to make music (253b1-4), and so forth (253b5-7).

31 See Ackrill (1957: 220), Lorenz and Mittelstrass (1966: 131 n. 60), and Vlastos (1973).

32 See van Fraassen (1969) and Pelletier (1990: ch. 5).

tion, which does not commit him to logical types of combination-relations at all?

First, I agree with Schipper (1964 and 1965: ch. 4) and Penner (1987: 191-231) that the only things which have identities of their own are the Forms. All references to spatio-temporal things are to be explained away in terms of the Forms and the Receptacle, i.e., Space-Time (cf. *Timaeus* 48e2-52d1). Spatio-temporal things do not have an identity of their own, but borrow whatever identity they do have from the Forms. Therefore, the only things which exist ultimately are the Forms and the Receptacle. The Forms combine both with each other and with the Receptacle. Pelletier (1990: 57) objects:

Schipper's view clearly contradicts Plato's use of proper names at 263, where Theaetetus is distinguished from the things that are true of him, and what is being talked about by "Theaetetus" is exactly the entity before the stranger and nothing else.

Pelletier presupposes, of course, that Plato can't replace all occurrences of 'Theaetetus' with some other description which only makes reference to Forms and to the Receptacle. The question is: what *is* this 'entity before the stranger and nothing else' (cf. *Timaeus* 27d5-8a4)? For me to say that the object of Socrates' belief-state when he believes that Theaetetus sits when Theaetetus sits is the interwoven complex unity constituted by Theaetetus and Sitting, what that complex unity amounts to is really the interwoven complex unity of Ugliness, Wisdom, Sitting, Bravery, Youth, and so forth. Each of those things, i.e., Forms, combines with each other in that space-time region to constitute what we call Theaetetus.³³ Therefore, there is no object with an identity independent of the Forms (cf. *Parmenides* 134c ff., esp. 135b5-c3). Plato, unlike Aristotle, does not think that spatio-temporal objects, e.g., Theaetetus and Socrates, have identities or essences of their own. This is not to say that Theaetetus does not exist in some particular space-time region. He does. But Theaetetus does

33 I cannot, unfortunately, undertake here a discussion of the very large literature concerning the nature of spatio-temporal particulars. Such a discussion would take up far more space in this paper than would be prudent. I will take it up elsewhere. However, I will say that I find much to agree with in McCabe (1994), ch. 9, where she argues that personal identity in Plato is something we strive towards. Regrettably, I only read her book after this article had been type-set.

not have an identity over and above the identities of the Forms which combine with each other at that space-time region. I would agree, then, with Fine (1993: 59) who argues that Plato thinks that the Forms are not the *only* objects in his ontology, just the *basic* objects, that is,³⁴ the Forms are the only objects with identities of their own. I take this distinction to be identical to the one I have just drawn and which Penner (1987: 191-231) argues for as well.

However, it could seem as if I have given Plato no way to distinguish between necessary and contingent truths. Pelletier (1990: 57-8) puts the problem in this way:

... the analysis of positive sentences makes them be *necessarily true*, if they are true. For, in any true sentence, for example, "Theaetetus is sitting", Sitting is one of the forms that defines Theaetetus ... , and so the sentence is analyzed as necessarily true. ... Thus the proposed semantical theory gives no account of the difference to be found between "man is man" and "man is good", a difference Plato clearly believes his account to cover in contradistinction to the late-learners of 251.

This is actually a difficult question. If 'Theaetetus is sitting' is true, then is it contingently true or necessarily true? It would seem, given this reading of Plato, that the statement would be necessarily true because if one of the things Theaetetus *is* is Sitting, then by substituting co-referring expressions we get 'Sitting is Sitting'. And this is not a contingent truth, but a necessary truth. However, as Pelletier correctly states, this is just what Plato wants to avoid. Therefore, how can I give an account of the difference between contingent and necessary truths on this reading of Plato? I think I can.

The account I would give of this difference would be the following. First, I have to deny that 'Sitting is Sitting' is necessarily true because it is analytically true. According to Plato, there exist no analytic truths.³⁵ All truths are synthetic. And second, given Plato's theory of combination to be explained below, there is a difference between saying that 'Sitting combines with Sameness with respect to itself' and saying that 'what it is that is combining with all of the other things here-now true of this

34 The following is my gloss of what Fine says.

35 Again, see Berman (1994).

space-time region is Sitting'. Both statements are synthetically true. However, the former is necessarily true whereas the latter is contingently true. It is not necessary that Sitting be the thing which so combines in the latter case. But, it is necessarily the case that Sitting be the thing which so combines in the former case. All statements which involve the Receptacle are ultimately contingently true. All statements which do not involve the Receptacle are necessarily true. It is the combination of the Forms *together with the Receptacle* which allows for the possibility of contingent truths. In other words, Sitting does 'define' Theaetetus, but not necessarily, only contingently. In fact, according to Plato, there is nothing necessarily true about Theaetetus. Theaetetus is only contingently, or accidentally, Sitting, Human, Intelligent, Ugly, and so forth. Were Theaetetus necessarily any one of these things, Aristotle would have had no complaint against Plato. As it is, Plato does have a different, and I think better, view as compared to the view Aristotle has.

How, then, does Plato understand the nature of combination in a way that does not commit him to just two or three logical types of combination-relations? He illustrates how some of the Forms combine with each other at 255e-6c. Plato asserts there that the Form of Movement (1) combines with³⁶ the Form of Otherness with respect to the Form of Rest [= Movement is not Rest], (2) combines with the Form of Being [= Movement exists], (3) combines with the Form of Otherness with respect to the Form of Sameness [= Movement is not Sameness], and (4) combines with the Form of Sameness with respect to itself [= Movement is the same as itself]. He concludes from (3) and (4) that

Movement, then, is both the same and not the same; we must admit that and we must not be vexed by it. For whenever we say that it is "the same" and "not the same" we are not speaking alike; we call it "the same" because of its combination with the same with respect to itself, but we call it "not the same" because of its combination with otherness,

36 The standard translation in Platonic contexts would be 'partakes of' or 'participates in'. However, since I want to avoid any suggestion that things which combine with each other have to be on different levels of existence, or must exist in different senses of the word 'exist', I shall not use that standard translation. For a list of most of the Greek words that Plato uses for this *one* relation, see Pelletier (1990: 100). Pelletier lists 16 different Greek words. The words used in this passage are μετέχειν, κοινωνίαν, μετελαμβάνειν, and μείγνυσθαι.

a combination that separates it off from the same and makes it not the same but other, so that it is correctly said in turn that it is "not the same". (256a10-b4; my translation)

Plato, then, is not saying here that 'the same' is *ambiguous*, i.e., has different senses. Rather, he is saying that 'the same' is *relational*. The *sense* of 'the same' does not change in the two statements, namely, (3) and (4); rather, one of the *relata* changes. And just as we would say that the *sense* of '... is taller than ____' does not change when we change the *relata* because only the *relata* change, so too the *sense* of 'the same' does not change when we change the *relata* because only the *relata* change.³⁷

All this shows that Plato thinks that things combine with each other and make it possible for there to be complex things, which are referred to by complex names called statements.³⁸ And the reason that this is

37 Also, we would not say that *what a parabola is* changes just because some parabolas have different values for the *x* and *y* coordinates.

38 Cf. *Sophist* 259e4-6. Since Plato thinks that names can be true or false (cf. Berman [1994]), he would not differentiate names from statements in the way that contemporary philosophers do, namely, that statements can be true or false but names cannot. The difference between a name and a statement according to Plato, is that the former refers to a single Form whereas the latter refers to some combination of Forms, and that is all. Statements name that combination in just the same way that names name a single Form. Fine (1977: 291-4) disagrees. She thinks that Plato makes the same distinction that we do between names and statements. The former cannot be true or false whereas the latter can be. Again, see Berman (1994: 42 n. 7) for my reasons against her view with respect to the *Cratylus*. What does Plato say about the nature of statements in the *Sophist*? At 261d8-e2, he says that:

... when a succession of words signify something, they combine, while those which do not signify anything, do not.

So far, there is no suggestion here that what words which combine signify is the same whether true or false. At 262d2-6, he says:

Because now [the statement] signifies the beings in the present or past or future; it does not only (μόνον) name but accomplishes something [further] by weaving together verbs with nouns. Hence we say it "states" something, not only (μόνον) "names" something, and in fact it is this complex (κλέματι) that we name by the word "statement".

Naming is just bringing to mind a Form itself by itself. Stating is bringing to mind an interwoven complex of Forms. The Method of Collection and Division, i.e., Dialectic, is needed for statements. And at 262e5-6, he says:

Whenever there is a statement, it must be about something; it cannot be about nothing.

important is that if Plato is to explain the nature of false belief, then he will have to say what he thinks the objects of our psychological states are. If the only objects to which Plato is ontologically committed are complex objects, then he will have to explain the nature of false belief in terms of a cognitive relation involving those very same complex objects. To repeat, the complex objects to which Plato is committed are the Forms and the Receptacle. Each Form, then, is one thing, but it is also many things in terms of its relations with all the other forms. Hence, Plato thinks that to know any one of the forms, it is required to know all of its relations with all the other Forms. And with this kind of condition on knowledge, Plato must think that *given human limitations* it is impossible to know any one Form completely. However, he can also think with perfect consistency that it is possible for humans to increase their intellectual grasp on each of the Forms as they increase their grasp on all of those inter-relations (cf. 253d1-e2). Knowing something, then, will not be an all-or-nothing state of mind, but a matter of degree. But in order to understand fully Plato's explanation of *false* belief in terms of these complex objects, we need to understand first what Plato thinks the nature of Not-Being is, for that is what seems to cause the problem in attempting to explain how false beliefs are possible.

II 2 Step Two: Plato's Argument for Not-Being

At 257b3-4, Plato concludes his discussion of what 'Not-Being' refers to with the claim that Not-Being is not the opposite of (ἐναντίον) Being, only that which is other than (ἕτερον) Being. Previously, Plato had argued that 'that which is other than Being' refers to infinitely many things (256e6 and 257a6). Specifically, what 'that which is other than Being' refers to is each of the Forms other than the Form of Being. Each one of them is other than the Form of Being, e.g., Beauty, Flying, Equality, and so forth.

There is no suggestion in what Plato says concerning statements here that one and the same statement is about the same thing or things regardless of its truth or falsity. All he is saying is that true and false statements have to be about something, not that a statement, whether true or false, has to be about the same thing or things. Moreover, it is plausible to interpret 262e8-9 and 263a11-b1 as asserting that each-statement *must* be (262e8: δεῖ; 263a11: ἀναγκαῖον) true or false, that is, each statement *must* have a truth value. I read this as the very strong view that a statement's truth value is essential to it. I disagree, then, with Frede (1992: 417).

This is not to say that each one of them does not exist, only that each one of them is not the same thing as, i.e., is not identical to, Being. Each of them enters into combination-relations with Being, and because of that combination, exists; but combining with Being does not make the Form in question identical to Being. Each Form is identical only with itself.

Plato is not arguing at 256c-8e, then, that Not-Being is a single *unique* form with its own nature in addition to any of the other Forms.³⁹ When Plato says at 258c3 that 'Not-Being is a single form to be accounted for among the many beings (*ἐνάριθμον τῶν πολλῶν ὄντων εἶδος ἓν*),' he is not saying anything other than that we need to explain Not-Being by means of the many beings that there are, namely, the Forms. And the way that we can do this is by referring to some of these Forms depending upon the case. For example, Beauty is Not-Being *because* Beauty combines with Otherness with respect to Being. And what makes this true is that Beauty combines with Sameness with respect to itself. But it is also true that Beauty is Being *because* Beauty combines with Being.

This reading is supported, I think, by 257b6-c4 where Plato points out that all a 'not' indicates is 'something other from the words that follow, or rather, from the things referred to by whatever utterances come after the negative.' In other words, Not-Being is not identical with the Form of Otherness because the Form of Otherness *is* a unique Form with its own nature; instead, Not-Being is a relation *involving* the Form of Otherness and 'the things referred to by whatever utterances come after the negative' as well. And I would argue for the same conclusion as regards the troublesome passage at 257e. What the not-beautiful *is*, or what 'not-beautiful' refers to, depends upon the context. For example, to say that Socrates is not beautiful is not to say that Socrates combines with the Form of Not-Beauty; rather, it is to say that Socrates combines with the form of Otherness with respect to Beauty. And what makes this true is that Socrates combines with the Form of Ugliness. This argument, then, allows Plato to avoid the notoriously bad consequences of being committed ontologically to the Meinongian Nonbeing. Instead of having to believe in a Nonbeing, which would have a nature of its own, Plato

39 I am in agreement here with Fine (1993: 113-16 with notes) who argues that Plato is not committing himself to Forms of negations in the *Sophist*. Cf. *Statesman* 262a5-263a6, esp. 262c10-d6. See also Penner (1987: 290-1 with 359 n. 53).

explains away all references to a Nonbeing in terms of things which do have natures of their own, namely, the Forms.

To summarize, if to believe something false is the same thing as to believe 'that which is not (τὸ μὴ ὄν)', then what the discussion of Not-Being explains is how it is *possible* to believe 'that which is not'. Plato's discussion helps because now we understand that to believe 'that which is not' is not to believe in that which does not exist, that is, the opposite of Being; instead, to believe 'that which is not' is to believe in some relation amongst the Forms which involves the Form of Otherness. To see how this helps explain false belief, let us examine the third step of Plato's argument.

II 3 Step Three: Plato's Explanation of False Belief

Plato explains the nature of false belief by arguing that Not-Being enters into combination-relations with thinking (260b-4d). He introduces his hypothesis as follows:

We have next to consider whether [Not-Being] blends with thinking and discourse. ... [Because] if it does not blend with them, everything must be true, but if it does, we shall have false belief and statement, for believing or stating "what is not" comes, I suppose, to the same thing as falsity in thinking and discourse (260b10-c4; my translation)

What seems less than clear here is that 'if [Not-Being] does not blend with [thinking and discourse], everything must be true'. Or put another way, what does Plato have in mind here when he says that 'believing or stating "what is not" comes ... to the same thing as falsity in thinking and discourse'?

To get clear on this, we must first recall what Plato has in mind by Not-Being. As we have just seen in §II 2, Plato thinks neither that Not-Being *is* the Form of Otherness nor that Not-Being is the *opposite* of the Form of Being; instead, Plato thinks that Not-Being is a relation *involving* the Form of Otherness and what that relation *is* depends upon the context. Take, for example, the Form of Movement. The Form of Movement, Plato tells us, both 'is' and 'is not' (256d8-10). The Form of Movement 'is' in virtue of its blending with the Form of Being. But the Form of Movement 'is not' in virtue of its blending with the Form of Otherness with respect to Being. Hence, what makes it true that the Form of Movement is not identical to the Form of Being is that the former blends with the Form of Otherness with respect to the latter. And what

makes it true that the Form of Movement is identical to the Form of Movement is that the Form of Movement blends with the Form of Sameness with respect to itself.

This helps us understand why Plato thinks that unless Not-Being combines with thinking, 'everything must be true'. What Plato's discussion of Not-Being allows for is that the Form of Otherness can be involved in our thinking. And the reason why *this* is important is that if it cannot, then only the Form of Sameness can be involved. The problem with only having the Form of Sameness is that the only beliefs one could have would be true identity statements, e.g., a belief that Sitting is identical to Sitting (cf. 250d5ff.). One could never have beliefs that are false identity statements. In other words, let us ask: *why is it true* that Socrates's belief that Theaetetus sits is false when Theaetetus stands? I think Plato would say that:⁴⁰

When Socrates believes falsely that Theaetetus sits, Socrates believes about Theaetetus things other than the things that are, i.e., believes things that are not as being ... but things that exist, just other than the things that exist in Theaetetus's case. For I argued that in the case of everything there are many things that are and also many that are not. So what is believed is about Theaetetus, *but so that what is other is believed as the same* [i.e., *F is believed to be the same thing as G when in fact F is other than G as, for example, when Socrates believes that what Theaetetus is now doing is the same thing as Sitting when in fact what Theaetetus is now doing, i.e., Standing, is other than Sitting*], that is,⁴¹ *what is not as what is ...*

In other words, the 'things that exist in Theaetetus's case' are all the Forms which combine with that specific space-time region.⁴² Only one of those Forms, together with its relations with other Forms, is relevant to explaining the falsity of Socrates's belief, namely, the Form of Stand-

40 What follows is mostly a revised translation/paraphrase (after Cornford) of 263b7-d2.

41 I read the καὶ at 263d2 epexegetically.

42 Cf. Cummins (1975: 62) where he illustrates how properties are to be explained in a way that is, I think, very supportive of Plato's theory.

ing. Socrates's belief that Theaetetus sits, then, puts Socrates into a cognitive relation with the 'things that exist in Theaetetus's case', which in this instance includes the Form of Standing, but has the following problem with it: a Form which does exist but not in combination with that specific space-time region, namely, the Form of Sitting, is *identified* by that belief-state with another Form which also exists but happens to be combined with that specific space-time region, namely, the Form of Standing. But, the Form of Sitting is not identical to the Form of Standing. That is, the Form of Sitting does not combine with the Form of Sameness with respect to the Form of Standing, but instead, the Form of Otherness.

The only way for it to be possible to identify the Form of Sitting with the Form of Standing, then, is if it is possible for a cognizer to have an incomplete grasp on what is being cognized. If, on the one hand, it is required of cognition that any cognizer must have a complete grasp on what is being cognized,⁴³ then it would be impossible for any cognizer to make such an identification because one would never say to themselves that $a = b$ if one knows a fully and b fully where $a \neq b$ (cf. *Theaetetus* 187e-200c, esp. 190b-e). If, on the other hand, a cognizer's grasp on what is cognized is always incomplete, then such a cognizer could mistakenly identify two non-identical things in virtue of the ungrasped relations of each of two non-identical things.⁴⁴ For example, if S believes that $5 + 7 = 11$, then S believes that the number 12 is identical to the number 11. S 's grasp on the number 12 is incomplete because S does not grasp that the interwoven complex unity constituted by the number 5, the number 7, and the addition function combines with the Form of Sameness with respect to the number 12. That interwoven complex unity *is* the number 12. However, if S does not grasp that, then S does not have a complete grasp on the number 12 (cf. *Theaetetus* 205e-6c with 207d3-8a5). What Plato is rejecting then, is the view that cognizers always have a complete grasp on their own cognitive state (cf. *Theaetetus* 195b-6c).

43 See (1) in §I above.

44 This is what prevents the explanation of false belief at *Theaetetus* 189b-e from being accepted, namely, the assumption that what is cognized is either completely grasped or completely ungrasped. Once that assumption is rejected, the explanation can work. See Rudebusch (1985) for an excellent setting up of the point I make in the text.

If Plato is correct to reject this view, then claiming that cognizers cannot tell the difference between when their states are true and when they are false is unjustified. Such a claim is unjustified because in order to say that cognizers cannot tell the difference between these states is to presuppose that cognizers *know* each of them *fully*. But precisely this presupposition is ruled out once we reject the view that cognizers always have a complete grasp on their own cognitive state. Therefore, we cannot infer soundly from such introspective reports to the claim that the object of a psychological state is the same whether the psychological state is true or false because such reports may be false given that the object of a psychological state is a very complicated relation involving the Forms (which may or may not include the Receptacle). This is why Plato rejects the first motivation for giving a uniform analysis to all beliefs, whether true or false. And with respect to the second motivation, inferences that go from our apparent ability to explain other people's behavior without needing to know whether their beliefs are true or not to the claim that the objects of people's states of mind are what they are independent of their truth value is also not justified because as Penner (1991) has convincingly shown, the objects of our desires, namely, actions, are much more complex than is required by such inferences. In other words, such inferences have to oversimplify the objects of our desires to such an extent that it makes such explanations useless.⁴⁵

The question that now needs to be answered is as follows: why is it that what Plato has explained is different from the principal contemporary account? After all, it could seem as if all that Plato has done is argue that what makes a belief true is different than what makes a belief false. Plato has not, so it seems, argued that the direct object of a belief when it is true is different than when it is false. It might seem that he has argued only that the indirect objects are different. With that much, many contemporary theorists are in agreement. What Plato needs to show is that all there is to a psychological state is a two-place relation between a cognizer and a thing cognized which allows for the possibility that these cognitive relations could be false. This seems to be an impossible task as long as one is denying the existence of intensional objects, that is, objects

45 Cf. also Berman (1991), and Berman (forthcoming).

which *in their nature* may or may not correspond to the world. So, then, how does Plato do it?

What Plato assumes is that necessarily every belief is either true or false (cf. 262e8: δεῖ; 263a11: ἀναγκαῖον). That is, every belief *must* have a truth value. I read this as the very strong view that a belief's truth value is essential to it. It is not the case that every belief could be true or false. For such to be the case, a belief would have to remain the same belief whether it was true or false. This is precisely what I think Plato would deny. He thinks, on the contrary, that a belief that it is raining outside, when it is raining outside, is a different belief-state than a belief that it is raining outside, when it is not raining outside.⁴⁶ This is parallel, of course, to what we think about seeing vs. hallucinating. We decide what state of mind someone is in — seeing or hallucinating — depending upon whether or not there really exists an object seen. If there exists no such

46 I grant that Plato's view, at least as I have outlined it here, seems 'counter-intuitive'. As an anonymous referee for *Apeiron* put it:

Suppose I believe Socrates is sitting, and Socrates is sitting. Then, I take it, I could not have had *this* belief if Socrates had not been sitting, because then the belief would have been false, which is impossible for it. Thus error about what I am in fact correct about is impossible for me (and anyone else, of course). But this seems totally counter-intuitive (taking the modality as *de re*, here).

It is true that if Socrates were not sitting, then I could not have had the true belief that Socrates is sitting. However, what the comment misses is that I *could* have had a different belief, namely, the false belief that Socrates is sitting. As I will explain straightaway in the main text, we can parallel what Plato says about belief with what he, and we, think about sight. In brief, suppose I see Socrates sitting, and Socrates is sitting. If Socrates had not been sitting, then I could not have been in this perceptual state because then this perceptual state would have been falsely seeing Socrates sitting, i.e., hallucinating or dreaming Socrates sitting, but it is impossible for an instance of truly seeing, i.e., seeing, to be an instance of falsely seeing, i.e., hallucinating. However, it would not have been impossible for me to have been hallucinating had the world been different. This is what the comment misses. Had the world been different, and it could have been if Socrates had not been sitting, then I would have been hallucinating Socrates sitting. These results, I think, do not seem counter-intuitive. It seems reasonable to say that the way the world is partly determines what perceptual state I am in. So, I think that the reason Plato's view seems 'totally counter-intuitive' to the referee is that he or she probably makes a distinction between 'factive' psychological states like seeing, hearing, and so forth, and 'non-factive' psychological states like believing, wanting, fearing, and so forth. However, it is just such a distinction which I am arguing Plato would not allow, and for good reasons.

object, then although there is something going on in that person's mind, it is not the psychological activity of seeing. Instead it is the quite different psychological activity called hallucinating. Hence, we do not think that every instance of seeing could be true or false. On the contrary, we think that it is essential to an instance of seeing that it be true. 'Seeing' pink elephants is not the same activity as seeing gray elephants. Why do we differentiate these activities as being different *in kind*? We do so, I think, because of a background theory we have: Evolution by Natural Selection. Seeing and hallucinating provide different sorts of impact on survival. The former promotes it and the latter hinders it. And as many have argued, 'natural selection is a consequence-oriented force, and thus provides design without the need for an intelligent designer.'⁴⁷ Therefore, with respect to determining what state of mind a person is in — seeing or hallucinating — it is *required* that one know whether the person is actually perceptually related to an object in the world or not. Such a theory, then, could be used to defend Plato's assumption concerning the natures of both the activity of truly believing something and the quite different activity of falsely believing something. Moreover, my extension of the teleological explanation of seeing to cover believing also seems justified given the importance of such states to our survival. If it is claimed that whether our beliefs are true or not is irrelevant to our survival, then on such an assumption, it would be possible for the human species to survive even though *all* of our beliefs were completely false. If that is not possible, then such an assumption would be false. Because of the limits of space, however, I shall just assume, plausibly I think, that this assumption is false.

Now, does Plato explicitly argue for a teleological position which resembles the one I have attributed to him? It has to be reconstructed, but I think the answer is yes. Plato argued earlier in the *Sophist* that:

When things having movement and aiming at a certain set goal, continually miss their aim and glance aside, shall we say that this is the effect of symmetry among them, or of the want of symmetry? —Clearly the want of symmetry. —But surely we know that no soul is voluntarily ignorant of anything? —Certainly not. —And what is ignorance but the

⁴⁷ This quotation is from Lennox (1992: 333) where he is summarizing many others. See also Dretske (1988: 62-4).

aberration of a mind which is bent on truth, and in which the process of understanding is perverted? —True. (228c1-d5; trans. after Cornford)

Here we see Plato's teleological thinking explicitly. He is thinking of the soul as a thing in movement which has a naturally set goal towards which it is aimed, namely, truth. This, I think, is parallel to what we would say about the perceptual aspects of our mind, namely, that our perceptual faculties have as their naturally set goal the perceiving of actual perceptual objects. It would be amazing if such faculties could have survived, regardless of how they first came to be, if they were indifferent to whether there were actual perceptual objects or not, especially if they play an important role in helping organisms to survive.⁴⁸ Now it is of course true that Plato would not have had the resources to endorse teleological explanations of the sort allowed by Evolution by Natural Selection, but as long as nothing in his account is inconsistent with such a background theory, we can use it to strengthen and/or defend his case.

The last piece required for this picture of Plato's explanation of human cognition is his account of the inner experience cognizers have when having true beliefs and false beliefs. Plato argued that there are two kinds of images: a likeness (εἰκών) and a semblance (φάντασμα) (235d-6c with 264d). The difference between these two images is that likenesses are true and that semblances are false. There is no such thing as an image which is what it is whether it is true or false because Plato explicitly denies that semblances are likenesses even if semblances seem to be likenesses (236b6-7). So, although there do exist intermediary objects in psychological states according to Plato, these intermediary objects are *essentially* linked with their truth value. This is the important difference between Plato and his principal contemporary rivals. And the reason that Plato's intermediary objects and their truth values are essentially linked is that, as we have just seen, the soul's movement is toward the truth. That is, every belief-state is structured such that its natural aim, the truth, is part of it. Hence, the truth, and not just what seems to be the truth, is actually part of every belief-state. False beliefs are beliefs in which there are semblances. True beliefs are beliefs in which there are likenesses. In order to know which

48 Again, see Lennox (1992) and Cummins (1975).

state of mind a cognizer is in, one must discover whether the direct object of the cognizer's state of mind is a likeness, which is connected with the truth or a semblance, which is connected with the truth but in a way *other* than the way in which it *seems*. Actually, it might be best to drop talk of direct and indirect because this connotes a difference in kind when it is only a difference in degree. A state of mind is not constituted by a direct and an indirect object, or by a likeness (or semblance) and the thing itself; rather, a state of mind is constituted by the interwoven complex unity constituted by a likeness (or semblance) and the thing itself. And this is why Plato's earlier discussion of whether things can combine with each other is important. Only if the objects of our psychological states are complex, as opposed to simple, will there be a possibility for false beliefs. Only if it is possible to mistakenly identify two non-identical things will false beliefs be possible. As we have seen, only if it is possible to misidentify the number 12, as, e.g., when one believes that $5 + 7 = 11$, will it be possible to have false beliefs. And this possibility requires that the number 12 be complex and not simple. That is, in order for there to be false beliefs, it has to be possible for someone to have an incomplete grasp on the whole of a complex object which is then identified with a different complex object also only incompletely grasped. And to conclude, what is required to get this account off the ground is to reject the view that cognizers always have a complete grasp of what is cognized. Once that is rejected, the justification for believing in intensional objects with identity conditions separated from their extensional objects is undermined.⁴⁹

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