

The Third Kind:  
An Analysis of the Receptacle in Plato's *Timaeus*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyzes the irreducible metaphysical conditions for the generation and persistence of the cosmos, as described in the cosmology of Plato's *Timaeus*. These metaphysical conditions are the framework on which the cosmos is generated and sustained. Plato distinguishes between three fundamental kinds of being: 1) the stable, intelligible model, 2) the fleeting, phenomenal images, and 3) the receptacle, the place in which sensible things appear in the image of the formal model. An analysis of Plato's receptacle (*chora*) as a distinct metaphysical reality, illuminates the need for this third kind of being to create a relation between these irreducible and inseparable conditions. Plato's third kind reveals the nature of phenomena to be like images reflected in a mirror. This cosmology of continuity between the second and third kinds of being is in contrast to Aristotle's notion of phenomena as discrete, primary substances. Plato's receptacle embraces material and efficient causality. This mysterious third kind is the non-nothing, non-being entity that completes the account of the first two kinds by providing a place for their relation.

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## Introduction

This thesis analyzes the irreducible metaphysical conditions of the world described in the cosmology of Plato's *Timaeus*. Metaphysics is the philosophical investigation into the fundamental conditions that govern the cosmos and the way in which we know it; it is not based in reality, rather, it *is* the basis of reality. Adrian Moore calls metaphysics "the most general attempt to make sense of things,"<sup>1</sup> which can be considered as both a method of inquiry, and a designation of a kind of reality. Metaphysical reality is the set of irreducible conditions that bring order to the phenomenal world. Hans-Georg Gadamer writes that a metaphysical condition, or principle, "is precisely what comes first (*to proton*), and is thus removed from any derivation."<sup>2</sup> An examination of the metaphysics of *Timaeus*'s creation myth involves analyzing the necessary conditions of the world such that it *comes to be and persists in being*. For Plato, to be considered fundamental to the cosmos that arises from, and operates in accordance with them, these conditions must be shown to be irreducible to any other conditions. Further, the structure of their relation must also be irreducible.<sup>3</sup> Due to their foundational nature, it is difficult to speak of these conditions directly and in isolation, since they cannot appear qua conditions in the world. Rather, they can only be

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian W. Moore, *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics: Making Sense of Things* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 29.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that each condition is necessarily simple; for each kind of Being discussed, there is a unique set of principles ordering the nature and activity of that kind. Rather, this irreducibility refers to the set of conditions that will be shown to be the framework of the generation of the cosmos. Because each condition is irreducible to another, we will arrive at an irreducible relation between kinds, rather than a singular, overarching condition, such as the absolute One of Plotinus, from which all things derive.

known through intellectual abstraction from that which appears. Otherwise, they would not be metaphysical conditions, but rather, other members of the class of apparent things in the world requiring explanation.

At the outset of the *Timaeus*, Plato characterizes the presentation of these conditions and their relations as an *eikota mython*, a likely story, or myth, through which we can reflect upon the nature of the irreducible kinds of reality required for the world to be as it is, and be as we experience it. It would be a mistake to dismiss the dialogue's ability to make claims about how the world really is based on this designation. We should, however, consider *why* the account is called 'likely', as opposed to 'certain', yet nevertheless, is able to illuminate metaphysical truth. By presenting his metaphysics within a myth in the *Timaeus*, Plato creates a plane of understanding on which the conditions can appear (in a certain sense) and be manipulated and suspended for his purposes. The story follows the activity of the metaphysical conditions and allows Plato to isolate an image of them, at least in thought, which can then be compared to our experience of the world. This mythical portrayal of the conditions of the world allows us to create a narrative place to experience the activity of the conditions in relation to each other, and to entertain what other conditions (and subsequent realizations) emerge from the original premises. We can then check the story for coherence and cohesion before asking whether or not the story corresponds to reality. Giovanni Reale states that the *Timaeus* myth "does not subordinate *logos* to itself, but tries to stimulate *logos* and

fecundate it [...] therefore it is a myth that, in a certain sense, enriches *logos*.”<sup>4</sup> I propose that the active nature of story creation befits the active nature of the phenomenal world: the mythic format of the dialogue is more apt than direct philosophical discourse for expressing the evasive, and essentially entangled principles and their relations, by its use of analogies and images.

Timaeus begins his discussion with a fundamental distinction. He asks:

What is *that always is* and has no becoming, and what is *that which becomes* but never *is*? The former is grasped by understanding, which involves a reasoned account. It is unchanging. The latter is grasped by opinion, which involves unreasoning sense perception. It comes to be and passes away, but never really is (*Tim. 28a*).<sup>5</sup>

Timaeus makes a distinction between two kinds of reality: the kind that *is* and is knowable, and the kind that *comes to be* and is perceivable. The first kind of reality encompasses the forms, which exist above the main division of Plato’s divided line.<sup>6</sup> This kind is perfect and eternal, non-perceptible, and apprehended by way of reason and the intellect: it is said to *be*. The second kind of reality encompasses appearances, which lie on the lower half of the divided line. This kind is imperfect, in constant flux, perceptible, and apprehended by the senses: it is said to *become*. This second kind “must come to be by the agency of some cause” (*Tim. 28c*). It is the task of this thesis to examine the causes of the cosmos, which comprises both the intelligible and phenomenal realms.

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<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy II: Plato and Aristotle* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 1990, 31.

<sup>5</sup> For the english translation, I use Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Donald J. Zeyl, *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John. M. Cooper (Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> For the english translation, I use Plato, *Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John. M. Cooper (Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis, 1997), 509d–511e.



Timaeus argues that our universe is the most beautiful of all creations, and concludes that “it is a work of craft, modeled after that which is changeless and is grasped by a rational account, that is, by wisdom” (*Tim.* 29a). Here, Timaeus begins to expose the relation between the two kinds of reality: the second has been made in the image of the first. According to Timaeus, the accounts of the kinds of being that we provide have the same character as the subjects they set forth. When considering the first kind, as stable and transparent to understanding, we must use reason to construct an account that is irrefutable and invincible, and, as such, is as stable and unshifting as its subject. On the other hand, “accounts we give of that which has been formed to be like that reality, since they are accounts of what is a likeness, are themselves likely, and stand in proportion to the previous accounts, i.e., what being is to becoming, truth is to convincingness” (*Tim.* 29c). The phenomenal world is a likeness; it is always becoming something different, and is never static. Due to the modeled and changing nature of this world, and the affinity between knowledge and its object, it is impossible to give an absolutely true and static account of the changing, physical cosmos. The mythological approach of the *Timaeus* is appropriate because an account of the world can only ever be a *likely story*, due to the nature of its changing subject.

Given the constant flux of the phenomenal world, we cannot *know* things of the second kind in themselves; they are by nature unknowable. If the second kind were the only kind of reality, then nothing would be stable for thought, and the cosmos would ultimately be unknowable. To make sense of the second kind, we must make a ‘second

voyage<sup>7</sup> beyond what comes to be, into the supersensible realm. Plato suggests that the second kind is based on the first; changing things appear in the likeness of some model. The relative stability of the second kind stems from its relation to the first kind. However, an appeal to the first kind on its own is also insufficient as an explanation of reality as we experience it, since it cannot appear to our senses without particulars in the sensible world expressing it. Further, if the first kind alone were all that existed, then the phenomenal, changing world that we perceive would be left unexplained.

Therefore, Plato hypothesizes that there must be at least two irreducible and related kinds of reality giving rise to the world as we experience it, as perceivable and intelligible. The strict difference between the two kinds is clear; yet, if they were truly and completely opposed, then there would be no reason for them to be related in such a way that gives rise to the world as it is experienced: constantly changing yet somehow intelligible. Gadamer argues that the *Timaeus* is focussed on the phenomenal realm of Becoming “in a way that contrasts fundamentally with Plato's sharp separation of being and becoming. Nevertheless, in the *Timaeus* especially, this separation provides the framework that sustains the dialogue.”<sup>8</sup> While the *Timaeus* blurs the boundaries between being and becoming insofar as they are not shown to belong to “two different worlds,” the separation between the two kinds that is outlined in previous dialogues serves as the starting point of the dialogue. Without this separation, the insights uncovered in the

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<sup>7</sup> The most explicit mention of the hypothesis comes from the *Phaedo*, 99ff. For the English translation, I use Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997). The meaning of this will be explored in Chapter One.

<sup>8</sup> Gadamer, *Idea of the Good*, 30.

dialogue would not be possible, for it is the insufficiency of a dualistic view that fuels the investigation into the structure of the kinds of being in a more complete manner. The first chapter will examine and illustrate these first two kinds of reality and the limitations involved in a dualistic understanding of the cosmos.

In the second chapter, I will use the exposed limitations of considering only the first two kinds to examine what else must be the case such that we can make sense of the world as we experience it: namely, a third kind or condition of reality. By exposing the insufficiencies of positing merely two kinds, Plato simultaneously exposes the need for a third condition, which will account for the mutual affinity between the first two kinds. This third kind will necessarily share a common thread with the other two kinds such that it can relate them and bring them together. However, this third kind cannot be merely a mixture of the two: it must be something wholly distinct, otherwise it would be reducible to one of the others, and, as such, would not be a metaphysical condition in the sense described above. Just as two distinct modes of apprehension are needed for accessing the first two kinds of reality, namely reason and perception, as Timaeus explains, a third mode of understanding, distinct from both perception and reason, is required to apprehend this third kind. Plato refers to this mode of understanding as a “bastard reasoning” (*Tim.* 52b). Again, the reciprocal mode of apprehension depends on the nature of the kind, and we will arrive at a conception of the third kind by way of analogy.

Plato raises the notion of place to describe the third kind as the receptacle of all becoming, which provides the possibility for the existence and persistence of the second kind without diminishing the eternal nature of the first. To understand the proposed

tripartite relation between these kinds, we must see each of the three kinds as a distinct condition that cannot be collapsed into any other. By refining the account of one kind, we also shed light on our understanding of the others and their relational connection.

Namely, the conditions that govern the existence of the cosmos are necessarily interrelated in a triadic manner, such that they give rise to the world as Plato holds it to exist in the *Timaeus*.

By using the analogies of art and mirrors, as well as Plato's own analogies, I will examine the nature of the third kind, the way in which we can know it, and its relation to the two kinds as explained in Chapter One. I will also examine the consequences that the conception of the third kind has on our consideration of phenomena. The necessary relationship between all three kinds will be examined through the consideration of images reflected in a mirror, thereby shifting our understanding of the appearance of the second kind: what was initially seen in the first chapter to be independent and substantial realities, come to be seen as more intrinsically and inseparably related to the other two kinds. The second kind will be considered as qualities taken on by the third kind as opposed to a collection of distinct and discreet particulars. The Being of the first kind remains complete and independent in its eternality and perfection as needing neither things to image it, nor a place to receive those images, in order to retain its status of Being. The Becoming of the second kind will be more clearly understood as a dependent state of affairs that requires a receiver such that it may appear in the image of the first. The third kind is that which relates the first two kinds. The analysis will explain Plato's

claim that the cosmos involves “being, space and becoming, three distinct things which existed even before the universe came to be” (*Tim.* 52d).

In the Chapter three, on the heels of this discussion of space, I turn to Aristotle’s distinctions between place and substance, which he presents as an attempt to solve problems that he saw in Plato’s account of the causes of the world. Aristotle states that philosophically, Plato alone speaks of place, hearkening to the *Timaeus* directly. Since Plato asserts that his third kind is place, and Aristotle engages directly with place, Aristotle is an important commentator with whom to engage when examining the nature and role of the third kind in Plato’s cosmology. For this reason, I turn to Aristotle to elucidate the meaning of place in order to examine what Plato means by the third as a *place of Becoming*. I do not attempt to map Plato’s cosmology onto Aristotle’s, but rather, I use Aristotle’s distinctions in conjunction with our previous explanation of Plato’s kinds in order to illuminate the role that the third kind is performing in the *Timaeus*. In considering Plato’s third kind as a mirror, we come to a conception that unites Aristotle’s material and efficient causes into a single condition: the receptacle, in which particulars appear and become. This analogy distinguishes Plato’s view of particulars from Aristotle’s conception of hylomorphic primary ‘substances.’ Members of Plato’s second kind are revealed to be distinct, but not discreet, substances which appear within the context of the receptacle, which is shown to be the *one true substance*.

With each new consideration of a kind, Plato is forced to return to previous considerations and examine how the new details work to clarify and emend his account of reality. The very way in which Plato begins to examine the third kind is indicative of the

nature of the kind itself, and of the intensely interrelated nature of the conditions that ground our experience of the world. The myth in which the three kinds appear is a place in which to investigate them, and its relative success is indicative of the way in which the conditions govern the world. Namely, our access to them is limited by our own nature, as we are at once reasoning and perceiving, rational and physical beings. This is not so much a limitation, but an acknowledgement of the interrelated nature of the principles of the world that Plato is investigating from within it. The aim of this project is to expose this third metaphysical condition that will serve to relate and unite Plato's first and second kinds, such that the world can be understood as the most perfect possible product, encompassing the intelligible first kind, and the perceptible second kind, coming together in a receptive place.

## Chapter One: The First Two Kinds

### 1.1 Introduction

In this preliminary chapter, I will isolate and make explicit the first two kinds of Being in Plato's cosmology in the *Timaeus*: the intelligible and the perceptible. Referring to the distinction between these kinds, George Grube writes: "on the one hand is the Ideal, 'that which is divine, deathless, intelligible, of one kind, indissoluble, always in the same way identical with itself'; and opposed to this is the phenomenal world 'human, mortal, varied in kind, soluble, never in any way identical with itself'."<sup>9</sup> The phenomenal world exhibits the *activity* resulting from the relation between these kinds; therefore, the kinds cannot truly be separated or isolated from one another. However, in order to examine the relation between the Ideal and the Phenomenal, we must first examine each kind in its own right as best we can. Only then can we address the relations between these kinds, and the conditions that must be in place for such a relation to give rise to the world as we experience it. By isolating the kinds, the shortcomings of reducing all things to a single principle can be highlighted, this will, in turn, illuminate the necessity of the other kinds and the relations between them.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> G.M.A. Grube, *Plato's Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1935), 18.

<sup>10</sup> In many dialogues, Plato recognizes the organic order of the world in his exploration and presentation of it. The line analogy in the *Republic* begins with images on the wall, the second voyage of the *Phaedo* and the ladder of the *Symposium* begin with our experiences. Plato pursues the study of the world from phenomena to their real, intelligible causes. The analogies of the *Timaeus* also begin in the phenomenal world. However, the overarching discussion follows the priority of the kinds: beginning with the first, Ideal kind, then moving to their relation to the phenomenal world. In this way, it does not matter with which kind we begin, since they are ultimately and irrevocably related. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato refers to the two opposed approaches as right and left handed, whereby "the first consists in seeing together things that are scattered about everywhere and collecting them into one kind ... [The second] is to be able to cut up each kind according to its species along its natural joints" (265 d-e). I follow the procedure of the dialogue by beginning with the first kind, then moving to the second.

## 1.2 Being and Becoming: Plato's Second Voyage

Regardless of the method of investigation, any account of the metaphysical conditions at work in the *Timaeus* must highlight the irreducible nature of the two foundational kinds of Being. This does not necessarily mean that we must deconstruct the world, for, in the *Timaeus*, "Plato chooses to describe the universe, not by taking it to pieces in an analysis, but by constructing it and making it grow under our eyes."<sup>11</sup>

*Timaeus* opens the cosmological account by distinguishing between two kinds of Being:

Our starting point lies, I think, in the following distinction: what is it that always is, but never comes to be, and what is it that comes to be, but never is? The former, since it is always consistent, can be grasped by the intellect with the support of a reasoned account, while the latter is an object of belief, supported by an unreasoning sensation, since it is generated and passes away, but never really is (*Tim.* 28a).

From the outset, the divide is between that which *is* and that which *becomes*. We call the former, the First kind of Being, comprising Ideas that are eternal and stable, and the latter, the Second kind of Being, comprising temporal phenomena, which are in a constant state of flux. My task in this chapter is to explain Plato's account of these kinds: the ways they exist, how we know them, and how they are related. I proceed according to Plato's procedure in the *Timaeus*, beginning with the stability and eternity of the First kind, and go on to examine the motion and instability exhibited by the phenomenal Second kind.

Before embarking upon a direct investigation into the kinds qua themselves, we should take into account *Timaeus*' statement about what can possibly be said and known about the interconnectedness of these two kinds of Being:

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<sup>11</sup> Francis Macdonald Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952), 31.



Where an image and its original are concerned, we had better appreciate that statements about them are similar to the objects they explicate, in the sense that statements about that which is stable, secure, and manifest to intellect are themselves stable and reliable (and it's important for statements about such things to be just as irrefutable and unassailable as statements can possibly be), while statements about things that are in fact images, because they've been made in the likeness of an original, are no more than likely, and merely correspond to the first kind of statement: as being is to becoming, so the truth of one kind of account is to the plausibility of the other (*Tim.* 29c).

Here, Timaeus recalls the divided line analogy of the *Republic*,<sup>12</sup> stating that anything that we *know* must be modeled upon some eternal *thing*, which is to say, *the quality of the thought depends on the quality its object*.<sup>13</sup> The intelligibility of something is based on the kind of Being that it has. Forms are eternal and stable, and, as such, are devoid of particular or accidental qualities. We can have knowledge of an intelligible thing of the First kind because neither the being, nor our intellection of it changes. For this reason, it can be known.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, any consideration of phenomena must take into account their associated particularities, qualities, and motion. An account of them is necessarily less complete, and can only be a *likely story*, since the object of inquiry is itself a likeness; phenomena cannot be truly *known*, but merely opined. Plato describes this division between the first and second kinds, along with their modes of apprehension, in his divided line analogy. When the soul “focusses on something illuminated by truth and what is, it understands, knows, and apparently possesses understanding, but when it

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<sup>12</sup> See Plato, *Republic*, 509d–511e.

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle uses a similar construction: which is explored in the *Physics*.

<sup>14</sup> The degree to which forms have no particularities is delicate, since each form is a particular Form as well as being the model on which apparent particulars are modeled. The form cannot be determinate without some limitations and particular qualities. It is universal such that it is predicable of *things*, yet particular enough to be differentiated from other forms. This fine line will be acknowledged in the discussion of the third kind.

focuses on what is mixed with obscurity, on what comes to be and passes away, it opines and is dimmed” (*Rep.* 508d). Aristotle states this relation between thought and its object directly: “the changing cosmos is an image of pure being, which is the *original model*, and it is also knowable, and simply because of the fact that it is an *image* it has a different cognitive status than the model.”<sup>15</sup> From these statements, it is clear that the first and second kind are related, yet have different attributes and are thought in different ways.

Timaeus defends the validity of his account with an acknowledgement of the structural affinity between the kind of being and the account able to be given of it: the creation myth of the *Timaeus*, as with any story, can only be a probable story or likeness, since it is modeled on something that is itself a likeness: the phenomenal world.<sup>16</sup> The account cannot be perfect, since the object it is explaining is itself in motion, and, as such, inherently imperfect. Plato acknowledges the tenuous correspondence between the Second kind and its account, between the second kind and its relation to the whole cosmos, and the account of the cosmos as a whole, which includes the unstable second kind. This disclaimer raises issues concerning the interpretation (and possibly, the corresponding truth value) of the story, however it does not discredit Timaeus’ methodological approach. Rather, the discrepancy between intellection and opinion,

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<sup>15</sup> For the english translation, I use Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random house, 1941). Aristotle, *Physics* 4 209b 11-17. Also see Aristotle *Physics* 1.1, 1.2, where he alludes to Heraclitus’ theory of flux, while at 1.4 describes physicists’ modes of explanation.

<sup>16</sup> While I will generally use the fully qualified phrase ‘phenomenal world’, the term ‘world’ will also refer to this. The use of ‘universe’ or ‘*cosmos*’ is retained to describe the whole universe: the whole that encompasses all kinds of reality, including the phenomenal and intelligible worlds, as well as the necessary relation between them. See H. G. Liddell & R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (with Revised Supplement) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). s.v. κόσμος. “1. order 2. good order, good behavior 3. form, fashion 4. world order, universe” 985. Metaphysical order permeates both the phenomenal and intelligible worlds, and thus I reserve ‘*cosmos*’ to refer to the whole.

intelligible and phenomenal beings, highlights the limitations that are inherent in any account of the world and cosmos due to the very nature of the cosmos itself.<sup>17</sup>

The phenomenal world is that which we perceive in its visibility and tangibility, appearing to us as the sum total of bodies that come to be in some physical dimension: it becomes, and is, thereby, of the second kind. The apparent world is not intelligible, but rather is “grasped by opinion, which involves an unreasoning sense perception” (*Tim.* 28a). Aristotle states that “regarding the *accidental* [...] there can be no scientific treatment of it.”<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, we seem to know something about the second kind insofar as we recognize some relative stability or identity in the things that it comprises beyond their accidental qualities. This apparent ability to judge a relation between things in motion and some stabilizing constant, despite the flux of phenomena, is precisely what prompts Socrates’ Second Voyage in the *Phaedo*.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Any mention of the limits of human reason calls into question the role of the individual mind and the (im)mediacy of our access to intelligible things. There is a risk that we can sink into pure relativism, though dialogues such as the *Meno* and *Phaedo* work to dispel this risk. The story and our thoughts are particular things, so in a sense, they mediate the Truth. Gadamer considers the role of the individual, writing that “through examination of oneself and of the knowledge one believes one has, we are dealing with dialectic. Only in dialogue - with oneself or with others - can one get beyond the mere prejudices of prevailing conventions” (*Idea Of*, 43). In this sense, we engage in dialectical activity consciously and unconsciously, revealing our relationship with the world and truth regarding it. The hope is that the introduction of the third will mediate without diminishing the relation of particular thoughts to universal things. The role of the mind, along with possible analogical relation with the third kind, will be further discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random house, 1941), 6.1, 1026b. Since we do have a science of the world, it can be inferred that we are studying the underlying essences, as opposed to accidentals, when we are using empirical data as the first step in drawing more general conclusions about physical being. Science is possible, but it does not regard accidentals. Rather, it is the order which we can detect underlying those accidental or particular qualities that science knows.

<sup>19</sup> See *Phaedo* 99 ff. For the English translation, I use Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002).

Plato's inquiry into nature, as described in the *Phaedo* comes on the heels of pre-Socratic Physics, which concerned itself with questions of generation, corruption, and the being of things. Plato's inquiries often begin with the solutions offered by others:

Life is generated because of a process sustained by hot and cold; though in addition, it is procured by blood (as Empedocles maintained, for example), or from air (as for example, Anaximenes and Diogenes of Apollonia maintained), or fire (as Heraclitus maintained), or from the brain understood as a physical organ (as Alcmeon thought).<sup>20</sup>

However, Plato holds that all of these attempts yield disappointing results. In the *Phaedo* he writes, "imagine not being able to distinguish the real cause from that without which the cause would not be able to act as a cause" (*Phd.* 99b). Many of his predecessors attempted to account for the reality of perceived, changing things, by an appeal to other perceived, changing things, thereby remaining within the physical realm. For Plato, such explanations are unsatisfying because they cannot lead to a place of intellectual rest and stability: that which is physical is itself a perceived thing and needs to be explained, and therefore, the ultimate grounds proposed by the Naturalists also require an explanation.

In addition to the desire to explain the physical realm by an appeal to physical elements, the inquiries seem to raise more questions than can be answered. For example, if water is the fundamental cause of the world, then how is it that some things come to be dry? What is the origin of water? The proposed naturalistic explanations remain within the second kind, and thereby cannot satisfy the requirements of intelligibility insofar as they are unstable in their becoming. Socrates had a brief moment of excitement upon hearing of the teachings of Anaxagoras, "who said that those [heavenly bodies] were

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<sup>20</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 37.

directed by Mind” (*Phd.* 98b). He had hoped for a non-physical explanation for physical reality. Unfortunately, “this wonderful hope was dashed as [he] went on reading and saw that the man made no use of Mind, nor gave it any responsibility for the management of things, but mentioned as causes air and ether and water” (*Phd.* 98c). Even in naming Mind as the cause, Anaxagoras remained unable to escape the physical realm as he explained how various body parts were responsible for human movement, as opposed to the divine Mind, or universal Good, that might direct them.

Each naturalistic inquiry proceeded by the same method, of appealing to a physical entity to explain other phenomena. Yet, each came to contradictory conclusions: different physical elements were claimed to be foundational, leading Plato to find it inevitable that “the method is at fault and must be abandoned.”<sup>21</sup> Since these elements “are necessary to produce the structure of the phenomena of the universe, *they are not the ‘true causes’* and should not be confused with them.”<sup>22</sup> Instead, he wishes to find another method by which to explain the natural world, one that does not rest on a single physical element or any condition that is *in the world*. After the pre-Socratic investigations, we are left with the task of apprehending the condition, or conditions, that give rise to physical phenomena such that their cause is intelligible.

Plato strives to find the true cause that makes things be as they are. It cannot be another physical element, so it becomes necessary to appeal to another dimension of explanation to find this true cause that eluded the pre-Socratic Naturalists. In the *Phaedo*,

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<sup>21</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 38.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

Socrates attempts a ‘second voyage,’ which follows the ‘first voyage’ of the Naturalists. Their journey was made possible by the wind in the sails, representing the method of using the senses and sensations to investigate the causes of phenomena, and proposing various physical elements to be those causes. However, once the wind dies and the first voyage is interrupted, the sailors must turn to another method: rowing with oars, which is “very tiring and difficult, [and] corresponds to a new type of method, that lead[s] to the conquest of the sphere of the supersensible. The wind in the sails of the Physicists were the *senses and sensations*, the oars of the second voyage are *reasonings and hypotheses*; and the new method is based on these.”<sup>23</sup> To embark upon the second voyage, which will carry him past the shortcomings of the Naturalists, Socrates must engage in a rational investigation, and appeal to another kind of reality altogether.

Socrates proposes a mediated approach by which he “must take refuge in discussion and investigate the truth of things by means of words” (*Phd.* 99e), just as one can safely examine the sun by looking at its reflection on the water. Instead of looking for the cause of something in its physical attributes, Socrates now seeks that cause in a thing’s participation in a more general idea. The cause of a thing’s beauty is no longer sought in its shape and colour, but rather, in its participation in the universal Beauty: “if there is anything beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than that it shares in that Beautiful” (*Phd.* 100d). By way of a new method, namely philosophical discourse that allows for an intelligible access to Ideas, Plato comes closer

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

to the real cause of a thing, which does not rely on any particular physical element, but rather, on how an individual thing is related to a more universal idea.

The recognition of the first kind arises out of a realization that explanations for the causes of phenomena drawn merely from the second kind are insufficient. However, this new method is only possible once the limits of the first voyage have been exhausted. Since we experience things phenomenally, we must first investigate them with the available tools, namely, senses and sensations. However, this inevitably leads to an infinite regression of causes, since one never comes up against a stable, physical condition. Or, as Plato points out, one ends up with competing and mutually exclusive causes by way of the same method. Socrates begins anew, and employs a new method to reach the real causes “without which the [other] cause[s] would not be able to act as cause” (*Phd.* 99b). In this move to the supersensible, we find the emergence of a relation between phenomena and intelligibility: particulars are perceived appearances, images of the first kind from which they derive their names. However, the nature of this relation remains a problem, and is at the root of the discussion in the *Timaeus*.

Plato is committed to beginning investigations into the supersensible precisely within that which we experience. In the cave analogy of the *Republic*, the cave people do not “see anything of themselves and one another besides the shadows that the fire casts on the wall in front of them,” (*Rep.* 515b) since their heads are fixed by chains. The images that these people experience are, in fact, shadows cast by objects behind them, illuminated by the sunlight streaming into the cave from above. If one of these motionless

people were “freed from [his] bonds and cured of [his] ignorance [...] and suddenly compelled to stand up, turn his head, walk, and look up towards the light, he would be pained and dazzled and unable to see the things whose shadows he’d seen before” (*Rep.* 515c). Plato warns that the theory of Ideas must be approached through the appropriate steps and mediated exposure, and even then, may not be accessible to everyone.

In the *Symposium*, Plato describes this journey to knowledge with reference to the Beautiful. The ladder analogy constructed there shows that we begin at the bottom and successively ascend. Everyone has access to the first rung, for it is rooted in the sensible world. However, each subsequent step requires an openness of the mind to understand how the next step differs from the previous rung. The proper journey of a lover involves:

[Going] always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful.<sup>24</sup>

Since we first apprehend the world by way of perception, we must first experience the desire for a beautiful, phenomenal body. To understand this beauty fully, we cannot merely turn to the particular shape and colour; rather, we recognize that a body’s beauty stems from its imitation of Beauty. This recognition of the relation to the supersensible realm allows us to shed our reliance on particulars to grasp the intelligible. We first value a beautiful body; then, the beauty common between bodies; then, the beauty of the soul, as that which is intimately connected to Beauty; then, Beauty itself. We ascend to this

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<sup>24</sup> Plato, *Symposium*. trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John. M. Cooper (Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis, 1997), 211c.



understanding by moving along the rungs; as a rung, the sensible is necessary as a means to the end, that is, to understanding. The goal of loving is for the lover to “catch sight of something wonderfully beautiful in its nature, that is the reason for all his earlier labors” (*Symp.* 211a). Eventually, with training, we will be able to intuit the Beautiful from a particular expression of beauty; we will access that which “always *is* and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes” (*Symp.* 211a). We must rise through the experiences of particulars in their participated beauty to understand the common beauty. Only then do we understand what it means to be beautiful.

The participation of particulars in Ideas is complex: a thing is never solely hot or solely tall, but rather, participates to some degree in both hotness and coldness, tallness and smallness. Furthermore, the degree of participation in a form is relative only to other sensible things that participate in it; Simmias is taller than Socrates because of the tallness he has in relation to the smallness that Socrates has, as opposed to the fact that Simmias is Simmias. However, this does not degrade the status of the Idea. Plato writes:

Not only Tallness itself is never willing to be tall and short at the same time, but also that the tallness in us will never admit the short, or be overcome, but one of two things happens: either it flees and retreats when its opposite, the short, approaches, or it is destroyed by its approach [...] Tallness, being tall, cannot venture to be small (*Phd.* 102e).

Since ideas are stable and do not concede to any opposite, we can recognize change in the sensible world in relation to them. We perceive the growth of a child in recognizing more tallness in him, or, his greater degree of participation in Tallness. Were there only flux and change within the sensible world, we would have no standard by which to judge the

changing thing, and nothing to which we could ascribe a real cause. Plato grounds the stability and identity of changing phenomena in the stable, supersensible, forms.

### 1.3 The First Kind

As has been described, the first kind is grasped through reason, rather than through perception: it is understood in its intelligibility and stability. It is knowable due to its eternal and unchanging nature, and, as such, the first kind is known by a true, rational account. This kind is the schema, or model, by which all else becomes. Neither the first kind, nor the rational account by which one may reach an understanding of it, is perceivable; instead, each is present only in thought.

As such, the first kind is eternally self-same: we know its members even though we do not perceive them or interact with them *in this world*. Were they in this world, they would be phenomenal members of the second kind: that is, other moving things requiring explanation based on another stable source, “a stronger and more immortal Atlas to hold everything together” (*Tim.* 99d). Instead, as Reale observes,

It is necessary to achieve another dimension that brings us to the awareness of the ‘true cause’; that is, precisely to that which Mind refers. It is this *dimension of the intelligible* that can be achieved solely by a different kind of method than followed by the Physicists.<sup>25</sup>

The *laws* that order the phenomena are conditions that describe the motion of things. We can know these schemata in their stability, but we cannot know the things that *act* or *become* in accordance with these schemata outside of how they relate to the stability of

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<sup>25</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 39.

the first kind. Without such an intelligible schemata, there would be no order, no stability, and no relative intelligibility of the second kind. The first kind provides an eternal, logical reference point by which we can make relative sense of things of the second kind.<sup>26</sup> We do not perceive or practically interact with the first kind, other than as model, just as we do not reason intelligently about the second kind.

The recognition of correspondence between an appearance and its formal model involves an element of mental conceptualization through the act of reason, though this does not suggest that the first kind is merely a mental construction, but rather, the kind comprises actual, subsisting realities. The first kind *appears*, or operates, in the mind and its function is apprehended intellectually. It is the feature of the cosmos by which the world becomes intelligible, and, as such, is understood as a condition of the world that is visibly represented by apparent things. The observation of the second kind, including the movement of planets “has led to the invention of number, and has given us the idea of time and opened the path of inquiry into the nature of the universe” (*Tim.* 47b), by giving rise to a moving image of eternity. Phenomena are then judged on their conformation to an intelligible model; particulars are more familiar but less knowable than the Forms of which they are made in the image.

According to Plato, our task, as lovers of understanding and knowledge, is to know this relation by describing “both types of causes, distinguishing those which possess understanding and thus fashion what is beautiful and good, from those which,

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<sup>26</sup> For the english translation, I use Plato, *Cratylus*, trans.. C.D.C. Reeve, in *Plato: Complete Works* ed. John Cooper (Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis, 1997), 439.

when deserted by intelligence, produce only haphazard and disorderly effects” (*Tim.* 46e). The first kind is “purely intelligible and incorporeal [...] neither comes into being or perishes in any way, and it is, hence, in itself and for itself in the widest sense.”<sup>27</sup> This strong sense of Being is attributed to entities of the first kind, which are unities insofar as they unify a multiplicity of things that participate in them. The Second Voyage brings us beyond that which we experience sensibly to this other realm of being, and allows us to understand the world, insofar as possible, based on the realities grasped by reason.

#### 1.4 The Second Kind

In the above description of the intelligible, we immediately appealed to the phenomenal, thereby demonstrating the defining relation between the first and second kinds. Similarly, Aristotle writes that we “start from the things which are more knowable and obvious to us and proceed towards those which are clearer and more knowable by nature; for the same things are not ‘knowable relatively to us’ and ‘knowable’ without qualification.”<sup>28</sup> Plato’s own method, exemplified above by the Second Voyage of the *Phaedo*, the line of the *Republic*, and the ladder of the *Symposium*, highlights the same process. In each of these analogies, Plato begins his investigation with the phenomenal particulars that populate our world. Since Being of the first kind is defined by its eternity and stability, and we observe change within the phenomenal things of the second kind, then we know that the second kind cannot *be* in the same way as can the

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<sup>27</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 51.

<sup>28</sup> Aristotle *Physics* 1.1. The first chapter is dedicated to this issue, and begins with the statement that we do not know a thing until we are acquainted with its primary causes.

first. Rather, its mode of existence is Becoming, which, Plato says, occurs in the image of the first kind, and is an appearance of particulars that are in motion.

Let us use a particular phenomenal entity to illustrate the second kind and the manner in which we encounter it. There appears before me a creature that I am willing to call a dog, and, more precisely, the same dog that I saw yesterday. I recognize that he is in constant motion (growing hair, aging, and occasional locomotion), yet, he retains his identity as a particular dog throughout this ongoing Becoming.<sup>29</sup> He has come to be in the world, and I have come to know him relatively, based on his relation to the perfect and eternal model of the species ‘Dog’. The first kind, ‘Dog,’ is that which I understand about the phenomenal dog, yet I can only access this Ideal by way of experiencing multiple dogs and recognizing that it is ‘Dog’ that is common between them.<sup>30</sup> Phenomena appear in the image of the forms, yet until we turn around and are pulled out of the cave by a philosopher, we only have sensory access to the particular things themselves.<sup>31</sup> Plato does

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<sup>29</sup> All of the metaphysical conditions are always co-present: they must be in place for anything to begin, and for us to make sense of any relation. However, this is not to say that there is a single moment of relation and then the world continues in a static manner from there. The relation of kinds, of appearances to their formal models, is continual. This is, in part, why it is so difficult to isolate them: things always appear in the image of models, and models always determine how things appear. Since the world is always in flux, things are always in a state of becoming. So too are the metaphysical conditions always at play.

<sup>30</sup> For Plato, appearances can be considered as catalysts for understanding. Temporal experiences of entities of the second kind act as a ladder, which one must use to climb up the divided line, but ultimately can be removed once intelligibility is reached. In this way, recollection of the Ideas begins with phenomenal experience. Aristotle, on the other hand, holds individual apparent things to be primary substances, while forms are secondary substances (at least in the *Categories*, “in a secondary sense those things are called substances within which, as species, the primary substances are included” (Chapter 5)). One ascends towards the intelligible through the phenomenal, the path to which, for Aristotle, cannot be ignored once the apex is reached. For Aristotle, individuals are foundational, while the forms are accessed by mental abstractions, though they are real, formal principles in individuals. This tension is also apparent in Aristotle’s discussion of the order of knowing versus the order of being (*Physics*, 1.1).

<sup>31</sup> In book 6 of the *Republic*, Plato states that geometers make use of visible figures to make claims about the more general principles they represent: “they make claims for the square itself diagonal itself, not the diagonal they draw” (510e). Scientific hypotheses are not first principles, but rather, are “stepping stones to take off from, enabling [them] to reach the un-hypothetical first principle of everything” (511b).

not wish to abolish the world of appearances or disregard it, since it is intrinsically related to the first: the existence of the second kind is integral to the *expression* of the first kind and is the mode by which we can apprehend the first kind and understand its (causal) relation to the second kind. What is perceptibly real is the blonde ball of fur in front of me; but what is Real (as stable, eternal and knowable) is the universal and stable idea of Dog as species. It is his dogness and my *idea* of him, as opposed to his particular physicality, that remains stable. While he embodies the essential, eternal characteristics of 'Dog,' the particular characteristics that allow me to recognize him as the *same* dog I saw yesterday, have none of the same formal stability. The particular color and texture of his hair may vary day to day, but I construct a likely story about his identity through his relation to an unchanging form. This is not to say that there is an individual formal model for every phenomenal being, but rather, that one can find correspondences to a formal model in every individual.

It is the first kind that unifies the multiplicity of entities of the second kind: an infinite number of dogs appear in the image of the formal Dog. Regardless of the constant state of flux of Becoming, we remain familiar with particular phenomena due to some stability stemming from their relation to some stable first kind. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates says that “‘knowledge’ (*episteme*) indicates that a worthwhile soul follows the movement of things, neither falling behind nor running ahead” and “‘wisdom’ (*phronesis*) is the understanding of motion and flow” (*Crat.* 411d). Since things that flow are, by definition, not stable, understanding motion is more rightly understanding that which orders the becoming, and that which remains consistent throughout the Becoming of an apparent

thing, allowing us to call it *a thing* that Becomes. Were this not the case, we could neither experience nor speak of anything beyond motion itself, since “the accounts we give of things have the same character as the subjects they set forth” (*Tim.* 29b).

Thus, the second kind continually expresses some stable kind through the flux of its particular existence: that dog, that chair, that woman. Finding this formal dimension in every individual, then coming to the realization that *this* is what we *know* about this thing in front of us, as it is stabilized, to some extent, in the flux of phenomena, leads to the realization that the second kind has a lack that relegates it to the lower division of Plato’s line of Being. We can recognize the structural affinity of the second kind to the first kind, but as a thing in itself, it is insufficient as an object of true knowledge.

We thereby embark on the Second Voyage to the first kind to find the source of its stability, without which we would devolve into a Cratylus or Heraclitean relativism. Giovanni Reale illustrates two forms of relativism, to which Plato’s theory of Ideas is opposed. The first is from Heraclitus, who “proclaimed the *perennial flux and radical mobility of all things*,” and the other, is Sophistic-Protagorean, which “reduces every reality and every action to something that is *purely subjective* and made of the subject itself the *measure*.”<sup>32</sup> Were there no appeal to an immutable and self-identical reality of the first kind, there could be nothing beyond the unintelligible becoming of the second kind, save, perhaps, the perceiving subject: man is the measure.

The Second Voyage, from the phenomenal to the supersensible, hypothesizes a causal relationship between the first and second kinds. We have already outlined the

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<sup>32</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 53.

formal dependance of the second kind on the first, but even the first kind on its own is insufficient as an explanation of the cosmos, insofar as it cannot be present without phenomena. It exists eternally regardless of the second, but is only nameable *as* the second. An explanation of reality resting solely on the first kind would ignore the experienced, phenomenal world. Thus, we must account for both kinds of reality, since the world is “a work of craft, modeled after that which is changeless” (*Tim.* 29a). The relation remains asymmetrical, insofar as the second needs the first to become at all, while the first needs the second only to appear. Yet, both are necessary to account for and understand the world as we experience it.

It is now our task to make explicit the grounds for the relation between the kinds of Being, which is intrinsic to the appearance of the cosmos. Thus far, these two kinds have been presented in opposing terms: stable vs. changing, eternal vs. temporal, intelligible vs. perceivable. However, were there no affinity bringing these kinds, which seem to be absolutely different and opposed, together into a cohesive and complementary whole, as suggested by the language of image and model, some kind of external violence would be required to force them together. Eryximachus speaks to this in the *Symposium*, where he describes the principle of Love as the coming together of opposed elements. To cure illness, the “task is to effect a reconciliation and establish mutual love between the most basic bodily elements [...] those that are most opposed to one another, as hot is to cold, bitter to sweet, wet to dry [...] [physicians must] produce concord and love between such opposites” (*Symp.* 186e). These elements are present in the body, thus they have some common quality that allows someone with knowledge of that body to bring the



elements into consonance. Similarly, “an expert musician creates harmony by resolving the prior discord between high and low notes [...] discordant elements, as long as they are still in discord, cannot come to an agreement, and they therefore cannot produce a harmony” (*Symp.* 187b). Though in opposition, the expression of these elements can be made harmonious with careful work such that the particular, a body or a song, appears balanced and not in discord.

Timaeus, however, suggests a different relation. The qualities of the elements qua themselves, such as hot and cold, high and low, exist as models and, as such, do not change. The bodies, through which we experience the elements, exist as images that come to be, and persist, based on the schemata of the first kind. This notion does not leave us with two separated worlds that are related tenuously. Rather, the model/image paradigm implies a relation or kinship between the kinds, giving us a framework by which phenomena can be and be understood. If the second is an image, or likeness of the first, then there must be some feature of the second kind that is receptive to the order inherent in, and granted by, the first kind, as well as something about the first kind that lends itself to adopt the role of model for an appearance.<sup>33</sup> This conception of inherence as that which holds opposing features together, differs from Eryximachus’ conception of an externally forced harmony, and instead suggests that there is something common in that opposition that allows for the union of opposites without some external force. Were

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<sup>33</sup> This inclusion of a condition for receptivity serves to elucidate the second kind, but also serves as an entry point for the consideration of a third kind: a feature of the cosmos describing the condition of receptivity of second to first. The receptivity of second to first may lie in the kind itself, or it may be more fully fleshed out in the inclusion of a third. Regardless, there seems to be a relationship between the first and second conditions before the actual appearance of the second kind occurs, introducing speculative notes to the discussion of the number and the nature of the kinds.

the kinds absolutely opposed, then they could not relate at all, since relationality implies commonality as well as difference. For example, one cannot comment on the relation between hot and wet since there is no commonality by which to judge the difference. There is no way to say that they are related, even by way of direct opposition such as hot and cold.

Timaeus claims that structurally, this affinity between the first two kinds can be explained by some third condition that brings the first two kinds together:

It is not possible for two things alone to be beautifully combined apart from some third: some bond must get in the middle and bring them both together. And the most beautiful of these bonds is that which, as much as possible, makes itself and the things bound together one, and proportion is suited by nature to accomplish this most beautifully (*Tim.* 31c).

The kinds are beautifully brought together into one, not forced together violently.

Violence suggests that the kinds remain opposed, whereas a beautiful combination suggests a desire for harmony.<sup>34</sup> They cannot be utterly distinct, lest they remain apart, nor the same, lest they be one.<sup>35</sup> Thus, they require a third kind to mediate their relation.

Gadamer suggests that the *Timaeus* tackles the question of how to consider *chorismos* (separation) and *methexis* (participation) in combination with each other. In a move away from mimesis, the relationship between kinds as *methexis* suggests coexistence, and “describes things starting from the other side, the being of the pure

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<sup>34</sup> This allusion to harmonies is found in the *Symposium*, and is also indicative of Plato’s explanation in the *Timaeus* that the god invented senses and gave them to us as gifts so that we could “observe the orbits of intelligence in the universe and apply them to the revolutions of our own understanding. For there is a kinship between them” (47c). While harmony has a technical meaning which concerns the relation of audible sounds as a gift from the Muses (47d), it also connotes the peaceful and rightful kinship between intelligence and our own understanding, or more generally, the kinds. This will be further explored in the following section regarding the demiurge.

<sup>35</sup> See Aristotle *Physics* 1.6 for a warning against a collapsed monism.

relationships, and in so doing, it leaves the ontological status of what participates undefined.”<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the problem of absolute separation between kinds is avoided, and the activity and relation between the kinds is of the utmost importance.

Reale suggests that Plato presents several perspectives regarding this relationship between the intelligible and sensible spheres including: “a) a relation of *mimesis* or imitation, b) or of *methexis* or participation, c) of *koinonia* or community, d) of *parousia* or presence.”<sup>37</sup> None of these alone can provide an absolute answer to the question of how the two kinds are related. Rather, Plato is concerned with establishing the Idea as a true cause of the sensible insofar as it is the ordering *principle (arche)* of that which appears, though, “to achieve the ultimate response, it would be necessary to take into account the protologic of the *Unwritten Doctrines*, thus the perspective of the highest Principles.”<sup>38</sup> Regardless of the perspective one takes to explain the relation of sensible to intelligible, it has become apparent that the first kind is present in the second insofar as a cause is formally present in the effect. It is through this cause, or condition, that the second is known insofar as it is possible for it to be known.

### 1.5 The Demiurge

Plato calls upon the figure of the demiurge to close this separation, allowing us to consider what other conditions are at play in the relation between kinds. Timaeus states,

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<sup>36</sup> Gadamer, *Idea of the Good*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 61.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Everything that comes to be must of necessity come to be by the agency of some cause, for it is impossible for anything to come to be without a cause. So whenever the craftsman looks at what is always changeless and, using a thing of that kind as his model, reproduces its form and character, then, of necessity, all that he so completes is beautiful (*Tim.* 28a).

This highlights the axiom that something cannot come from nothing. Plato thereby argues that the perceptible world is created by some cause(s), and in the image of some eternal and perfect model. The constancy of this model is the feature according to which we can say that, while not perfect, the apparent creation is as beautiful and as perfect as possible, and, as such, is unique. This relative perfection allows us to retain the close relation between kinds; there is no dilution in the image as there would be if it were an image of an image. In order for the apparent world to be intelligible, it must also correspond as closely as possible to the formal world of which it is made in the image.

The myth of creation woven in the *Timaeus* introduces the role of the craftsman and his creative activity, however, Plato is not necessarily looking for some original creation in time, or particular creator, nor the nature of that maker himself for “to discover the poet and father of [the cosmos] is quite a task, and even if one discovered him, to speak of him to all men is impossible” (*Tim.* 29a). Instead, he is investigating the nature of a condition working in conjunction with the schematic first kind that gives rise to the ongoing and relative reality of the phenomenal world’s Becoming, such that it appears and its relation to the first kind can be understood.

The condition introduced by the figure of the demiurge suggests the presence of an efficient cause working with, but distinct from, the first kind as model and the second kind as image. The craftsman analogy does not lock us into any particular cosmology or

beginning in time, but rather, sheds light on the insufficiencies involved in an account of the world that appeals to only two kinds of Being.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, it helps to illustrate the necessary perfection of both the model and the maker, such that the world can be as beautiful as possible: the demiurge is he who creates the phenomenal world in the image of the intelligible, and is good and perfect such that the result is a unique cosmos that is as perfect and intelligible as possible. Plato writes,

It wasn't permitted (nor is it now) that one who is supremely good should do any thing but what is best. Accordingly, the god reasoned and concluded that in the realm of things naturally visible no unintelligent thing could as a whole be better than anything which does possess intelligence as a whole [...] [H]e wanted to produce a piece of work that would be as excellent and supreme as its nature would allow. (*Tim.* 30b)

The natural, phenomenal world is the most beautiful and intelligible appearance, molded in the image of the first kind. The closeness of this relation is retained due to the goodness of the generative force. Since this agent, who framed the whole universe of becoming, is himself good, he is free from jealousy. As such, he “wanted everything to become as much like himself as was possible [...] [and] this, more than anything else, was the most preeminent reason for the origin of the world's coming to be” (*Tim.* 29e).

Since Plato is working from observation of the natural world as the first rung of the ladder to understanding, any statements about the universe could not have been possible were humans not equipped to experience that world. Thus, we must investigate

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<sup>39</sup> Cornford acknowledges the role and nature of time in several places: “time is here included among the creations of divine intelligence which orders the world. It is a feature of that order, not a pre-existing framework” (*Plato's Cosmology*, 102). This conception of time suggests that the world, for Plato, does not come into becoming *at a particular time*, but rather, that time comes into existence with the appearance of things in the image of the order of the first kind. Thus, he does not seek the time of creation, since creation and time come together. Regardless of the status of time and the temporal process that one chooses to tease out of the dialogue, the three kinds remain the same in their relation. While the working out of such an issue is interesting, it is outside the scope of this thesis.

the “supremely beneficial function for which the god gave [the powers of the senses] to us” (*Tim.* 47a). Our experience of the periods of night and day, months, and years “has led to the invention of number, and has given us the idea of time and opened the path to inquiry into the nature of the universe. These pursuits have given us philosophy, a gift from the gods to the mortal race whose value never has been nor ever will be surpassed” (*Tim.* 47b). The phenomenal world, as well as the senses that we were gifted, were created such that we could experience the universe. Timaeus declares that

The cause and purpose of the supreme good is this: the god invented sight and gave it to us so that we might observe the orbits of intelligence in the universe and apply them to the revolutions of our own understanding. For there is a kinship between them [...] once we have come to know them [we can] share in the ability to make correct calculations according to nature (*Tim.* 47c).

The phenomenal world is created in the image of the first kind, and our faculties are designed such that we can experience and understand it and the model on which it was created. The individual soul is modeled on the universal Soul, thus they share characteristics in the manner of the relation between first and second kinds. So, as we proceed through our lifetime as phenomenal beings, the “soul’s orbits regain their composure [...] their revolutions are set straight to conform to the configuration each of the circles takes in its natural course. They then correctly identify what is the same and what is different, and render intelligent the person who possess them” (*Tim.* 44b). This understanding allows us to know the order in the universe, and recognize that we are each a microcosm reflecting that universe insofar as we are made in the image of it. The god is the agent that set the elements in motion according to the order of the first kind; once we

come to know it, we should “stabilize the straying revolutions within ourselves by imitating the completely unstarving revolutions of the god” (*Tim.* 47c).

The first kind functions as a model: it cannot act, since action implies a degree of instability and imperfection, thus the demiurge is the cause that adopts this slight imperfection to allow for the relation between the first and second kinds by fashioning the second kind. The demiurge forms the capacity of seeing and that which corresponds to it (of being seen), but, as Reale points out, “in fact between sight and the visible he introduces a *third element* which joins them [...] sight and the visible are joined by a *bond of greater value*.”<sup>40</sup> We now have a relation between the first and second kinds, our senses to intellection. In speaking of the efficient role of the demiurge and his creation of the senses, we have circled back to the tertiary condition outlined in the cave analogy: the condition that allows for our experience of the world, and the subsequent understanding of the relation of the kinds. In each analogy, different things embody this other condition, however, each analogy makes use of a third cause to explain the relation between kinds.

Once the third kind is exposed, it remains to be made explicit how, for Plato, there is a natural affinity between the first two kinds of being which gives rise to their natural desire to come together and form an organic whole. The two kinds must be distinct so that they are not instances of the same kind of reality; but they cannot be absolutely opposed such that they cannot be brought together. Though it is not always the case, we often speak of the relation between the intelligibility of forms and the perception of particulars as possible with linguistic allusion to space. The language used thus far to

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<sup>40</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 80.

describe this relation has all hinged on the word 'in' (*made in the image, in the phenomenal world, in experience*), suggesting that the condition missing thus far may be related to spatiality: the *inness* of place and matter.

In its role as that which allows for the mutual affinity between kinds, place is a condition that is inherent in the relation between the two kinds, but is also distinct and unique unto itself. To allow for the phenomenal copying of an intelligible model, Timaeus claims that it becomes “necessary to admit another kind of reality: the spatiality of chora, which furnishes the place of the seat for all the realities that are born and perish, precisely because that which is born and perishes, is born in some place, in which and from which, then, it perishes.”<sup>41</sup> It is now our task to give an account of Plato’s third kind that fits with, and bolsters, his depiction of the first two kinds. We will see how an examination of Plato’s third kind will necessarily force us to reconsider his original claims about the first and second kinds, while maintaining that the kinds remain distinct, yet essentially related in their foundational roles in the cosmos. The third kind does not change the nature of the first two kinds; rather, our consideration of its role in the relation between the first two kinds, works to expose details of their nature that have been left concealed to this point. This examination will cause us to fine tune our account of Plato’s three kinds in order to gain further insight into the conditions of the cosmos in Plato’s *Timaeus*.

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<sup>41</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 103.



## Chapter Two: Plato's Third Kind

### 2.1 Introduction

Thus far, I have examined the two kinds of being discussed in the *Timaeus*. This analysis has begun to expose the relation between these kinds, as well as some limitations of a dualistic account, and, the seemingly mutual affinity between the kinds.<sup>42</sup> What follows in this chapter is an investigation into a distinct third kind that can mediate and bind the first two kinds. This third cannot be merely an instantiation of either of the aforementioned kinds: an account of merely two kinds remains insufficient since to ascribe the mediating role to either of the first two kinds would be to postpone a foundational explanation. Furthermore, Plato does not simply seek an external efficient cause that forces the first two kinds together, but rather, he seeks the condition according to which these two can be said to be related most generally.<sup>43</sup> Given their characterization in opposed terms, it has become clear that there must be some other condition at play to account for the relation between the first and second kinds. Here I examine Plato's third kind, which is obscure in its nature and role, and is distinct from the other two.

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<sup>42</sup> Here, we investigate the cause of the relation between the two kinds. The additional caveat of *mutual affinity* is rooted in the dissatisfaction of having an external agent forcing the two kinds together in some state of tension. See Eryximachus' speech in *Symposium*, 186-189. Similarly, Aristotle speaks of desire (of matter for form), in which one kind desires the other. See Aristotle's comment on Empedocles, *Physics* 1.6.

<sup>43</sup> This is not to say that Plato is *not* looking for something to fulfill efficient causation, since some attention must be paid to the sort of *thing* that may aid as the efficient cause in the discussion of the demiurge. Rather, more generally, Plato investigates the condition that must be in place in order for some efficient cause to act and succeed in its work. In either case, of separable efficient cause or not, this other condition must be present such that the efficient cause can be related to the kinds on which it is working. Plato is not necessarily striving for an explanation without call for an efficient cause as such; it may be noted, however, this is not the focus of this thesis, nor is such an agent to be conflated with the third kind.

Unlike the analysis of the second kind, there is “hardly even an object of conviction” (*Tim.* 52b), or obvious investigative approach concerning the third kind. We do not apprehend it directly, by reason or by perception, but rather, we “look at it as in a dream when we say that everything that exists must of necessity be somewhere” (*Tim.* 52b).<sup>44</sup> To examine this third kind, we will employ several of Plato’s own analogies to reveal a condition that is missing from the account thus far to explain the relation between the first two kinds. I will use analogies of craft that highlight the first kind as the eternal, intelligible model by which things of the ever-changing, perceivable second kind are made in the image, in order to examine how a third kind facilitates this relation. Illustrating this third kind will allow us to move into another depiction of the relation between kinds using the analogy of a mirror: in which the first kind remains the model, while the second kind appears as reflected image, and the third kind is the mirror in which the images appear. Just as the narrative place created by an *eikota mythos* allowed us to examine the necessary conditions of its illustrated world from within, standing within analogies will allow us to consider the condition of place that “provide[s] a fixed state for all things that come to be” (*Tim.* 52b). Thus, the third kind emerges as a distinct metaphysical condition. Consequently, we also gain a basis upon which to refine our conception of Plato’s first two kinds, their relations, and, their status as an irreducible set of conditions for the structure of the cosmos and how we experience it. This investigation into the kind that acts as that *in which* things appear, approached by way of helpful, yet

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<sup>44</sup> To an extent, these questions apply to an analysis of the first kind as well: there is an object of investigation since the first kind is ontologically distinct, however, as has been highlighted in Chapter 1, it is not always clear *how* we gain access to things of the first kind insofar as they are not perceptible.

limited, analogies, sheds light on the likelihood of those analogies, and calls into question the nature and intelligibility of the features of that world including, but not limited to, space, place, matter, and substance.

## 2.2 The Distinction Between εἶδος and γένος: Illustrating the Receptacle as γένος

To delve into the nature of this mysterious third kind (and its relationship to the previously established kinds), I take a cue from Dana Miller by engaging in a preliminary distinction between a “‘third γένος’ [kind] alongside the two εἶδη [forms] of being and coming-to-be.”<sup>45</sup> Timaeus’s distinction between what is and what comes to be, constitutes the two εἶδη, and his second beginning comes with the realization that “now we must specify a third, one of a different sort” (*Tim.* 49a). This different sort is the third kind (γένος), which aids in making sense of the original relation between εἶδη, though one must be careful of confusing the multiple senses in which Plato uses εἶδος and γένος.<sup>46</sup> However, by classifying each of the first two conditions as an εἶδος, and the third as a γένος, we see how Plato formulates a new category for this other kind. There is something common between the first and second kind, insofar as Plato says that the second kind is made in the image of the first, and thus, they share some shapely resemblance, some εἶδος (though the nature of that determination differs). The third is

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<sup>45</sup> Dana Miller, *The Third Kind in Plato's Timaeus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 37.

<sup>46</sup> See Liddell and Scott. s.v. γένος: “1. race, stock kin 2. offspring 3. generally, race, of beings 4. gender 5. class, sort, kind” (344). s.v. εἶδος: “1. that which is seen, shape. 2. form, kind, nature. iii. class, kind” (482). It is apparent that both terms refer to *kind*, however, γένος seems more general while εἶδος has direct reference to shape and nature, thus making it a more specific classification and directly associated with form and a particular kind. Since γένος signifies race or kind of being, while εἶδος signifies a particularly shaped thing, it seems that the distinction between what we have outlined as the first and second kinds can be described as a difference between εἶδη, while γένος does not have the same necessary condition of shape, and is thereby less determinate than εἶδος.

not the *difference* between the two kinds, nor the difference between sensibility and intelligibility; rather, it is that which is different from the commonality that exists between the first two kinds which allows us to consider them as model and image. It is a condition unto itself, irreducible to either of the other two kinds.

Strictly speaking, εἶδος refers to a class, or kind of thing that has shape. Plato's first kind or 'Forms' are generally named εἶδη. However, as Miller points out, Plato uses εἶδος to refer to any determinate kind; not only the Platonic Forms, but either of the first two kinds of being which have determinate, yet contrary attributes. Since we can apprehend and describe both the first and second kinds by reason and perception respectively, we know that they are definite, determinate, and, isolatable in some sense. These characteristics allow us to distinguish between kinds and the particular instances of a kind: multiple apparent dogs, this dog and the general form of dog, and the form of dog and the form of justice. Particular members of the second kind are not formally εἶδη, yet, we recognize our ability to think of them as *things* in light of their degree of determination of 'εἶδος': we can distinguish between the first and second kinds because of their contrary attributes. Were there no distinction between kinds and their modes of apprehension, then perceived things "must be assumed to be the most stable things there are" as opposed to begotten things that "share the other's name and resemble it" (*Tim.* 52b). The divided line represents the plane on which the kinds of being are related and opposed, but the third kind does not exist on that line: it is the condition on which we can consider the line. As such, it is on a different plane altogether; it is the plane of relation between the other kinds, or, the "fixed state for all things that come to be" (*Tim.* 52b).

By associating the third kind with the more general ‘γένος’, Plato does not attribute any shape or form of a determinate εἶδος to it. Plato’s use of the term ‘γένος’ gestures towards the consideration of the third as a kind without shape or form, as that which allows for relation between the ‘shaped’ kinds. The third is a condition for the appearance of the εἶδη, but, it is not determinate in the manner of either. As Miller points out, its indeterminacy highlights that there is more of a difference between the third and the other two kinds than there is between the first and second kinds themselves.

With this semantic distinction in mind, let us return to the phenomenal world. Timaeus says that “anything created, then, is bound to be corporeal - visible and tangible” (*Tim.* 31b). There must be some condition, beyond the physical objects, that allows the second kind to appear, a cause binding the kinds that have been presented in opposing terms.<sup>47</sup> The third kind is that condition relating the first two opposed εἶδη, a kind which stands apart from their opposition in its less determinate designation as ‘γένος’. Without this other kind, there would be no possibility of a relation between kinds. Timaeus directly states the insufficiency of an account that posits merely two kinds: “it is impossible for any two things to form a proper structure without the presence of a third thing; there has to be some bond to mediate between the two of them and bring them together” (*Tim.* 31c). For any two things to be related (here, the first and second kinds) there must also be a binding condition, some ground on which model and its image are related.

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<sup>47</sup> The cave analogy illustrates the need for more than two kinds, though the nature of that third kind is not always clear. Any thing of the second kind requires a more real object from which it derives its relative Being. However, this relationship, of object to shadow in the cave, shows reliance on the sun as the source of illumination, as well as a cave-space to contain the perceived shadowy appearances.

The third kind, as ‘γένος’, does not exist within a binary of contrary relations. Rather, it is the relational condition of that binary, or, the plane on which the first and second kinds can be related in their difference. Having clarified this distinction between γένος and εἶδος, Miller returns to the sun analogy of the *Republic*:

Plato first distinguishes two εἶδη of things that have quite contrary attributes: visible things that “are seen but not grasped by the mind” and Forms (ιδέαζ) that are “grasped by the mind but not seen” (507b9-10). He also distinguishes a “third γένος” (507c11-d1, e1), a third kind of thing, in the presence of which (507e1) and because of which (508b9-10: the word used is αἴτιοζ) sensible things (which belong to the first kind) are perceived, and intelligible things (which belong to the second kind) are grasped by the mind (508b13-c2, e1-4) (39).<sup>48</sup>

The third kind, or *hypodochē* (receptacle)<sup>49</sup> as Timaeus names it, is the cause of our ability to experience the first two kinds. Insofar as the third kind allows us to perceive and understand, it is the place in which these kinds are connected: the place in which the particular embodies or reflects the ideal, the place in which the ideal is imaged as perfectly as possible. The *Republic*’s cave analogy reveals the need for a space in which the first two kinds can be related. So too in the *Timaeus*, Plato’s account of the first two kinds reveals the need for a third condition: “our account compels us to attempt to illuminate in words a kind that is difficult and vague. What must we suppose it to do and to be? This above all: it is a receptacle of all becoming” (*Tim.* 49a).

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<sup>48</sup> Note that Miller is quoting the *Republic* and thus seems to be using First and Second kinds inversely to the way that Plato uses them in the *Timaeus*. Here, she refers to the sensible things as the First kind, as that which one encounters first, temporally, while intelligible things are called the second kind, as that which one must build up to by way of the things in the world. This reflects the order in which we come to know things, as opposed to the order in which things are and then come to be.

<sup>49</sup> The word first appears in *Timaeus*, 49a. See Liddell and Scott, s.v. “*hypodochēion* 1. reservoir 2. entertainment, hospitality 3. harboring 4.2. acceptance, support 2. receptacle, reservoir. Direct citation of *Timaeus* 49a, IV. 2.” (1880).

## 2.3 Characteristics of the Receptacle

Timaeus describes the characteristics of this kind:

Not only does it always receive all things, it has never in any way whatever taken on any characteristic similar to any of the things that enter it. Its nature is to be available for anything to make its impression upon, and it is modified, shaped and reshaped by the things that enter it. These are the things that make it appear different at different times. The things that enter and leave it are imitations of things that always are, imprinted after their likeness (*Tim.* 50d).

The receptacle is that which allows things of the second kind to appear, yet it does not itself appear in any way. It gives nothing of itself, beyond the condition of receptivity, to the images of the second kind, nor is it changed qua itself by these images: it is characterless. With these preliminary descriptors, the receptacle sounds reminiscent of matter, in the manner in which Aristotle describes it. By Aristotle's account, matter is the subject of qualitative change, it is "the primary substratum for each thing, from which it comes to be without qualification, and which persists in the result."<sup>50</sup> As such, it must be conceived as devoid of all quality. Matter, "in itself is not any particular thing, nor a quantity nor is characterized by anything else whereby being is determined;"<sup>51</sup> it is *formless*. Together with form, it exists as a composite, or hylomorphic, thing. As such a composite, matter is inseparable from the thing that comes out of it. However, it does not simply oppose form or quality; it is potentiality as opposed to privation. As the "ultimate substratum [matter] is itself neither a particular thing nor of a particular quantity nor otherwise positively characterized; nor yet is it a negation of these, for negations also will

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<sup>50</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 192a30.

<sup>51</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1029a20.

belong to it only by accident.”<sup>52</sup> Matter “in itself unknowable”<sup>53</sup> and un-perceivable; it is neither of the first nor of the second kind. It is of a third, most perplexing, kind.

With these similarities between the ways in which Aristotle’s matter and the receptacle can be described, let us turn to Plato’s gold analogy of the *Timaeus*, which he uses to demonstrate the naming of phenomena. The third kind is like the gold of a gold sculpture insofar as it does not change, qua its material, as it takes on the likeness of a model. As gold is sculpted, its essential character remains gold, even as it exhibits the appearance of different shapes. Therefore, in a certain sense, Timaeus’ example illustrates that the receptacle is more of a thing than the things of the second kind that come and go within it. If presented with a piece of gold being continually re-molded into different shapes, and someone were to ask “what is it?” then “your safest answer by far, with respect to truth, would be to say ‘gold,’ but never ‘triangle’ or any of the other shapes that come to be in the gold, as though it *is* these, because they change even while you’re making the statement” (*Tim.* 50b). This is not to suggest that calling the gold triangle ‘gold’ as opposed to triangle is the most complete account, but rather, it is the name that is never wrong. If one were to name the apparent thing as a particular shape, then one would have to add the caveat “what is such” before the name. Thus that which is holding the shape, here the gold, is what is most real, while the particular exhibition of the shape in that moment is acknowledged to be transient, and thereby less real. Just as a gold triangle becomes a gold sphere yet always remains gold, so too is the receptacle the

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<sup>52</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1029a25.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 1036a8.



substrate that remains constant as different shapes appear in it, so, “the same account, in fact, holds for that nature which receives all the bodies. We must always refer to it by the same term” (*Tim.* 50b). The receptacle must always be named as that which remains the same; elements should not be called water or fire or earth, since the receptacle in which they appear retains its own character through the apparent changes between elements. The elements are more rightly members of the second kind, in constant flux and always changing into another, while the receptacle is the underlying condition of the changes between elements, and of all of the phenomenal world, and, as such, is more stable than the particulars of the second kind that come and go within it. We would not be wrong in calling it such; however, it also remains insufficient as a naming on its own.

The gold analogy also allows us to recognize the kinds within the analogous images: 1) the sculpture that appears in the world is a member of the second kind, insofar as it is something that comes to be and changes, 2) the model by which it is created is a member of the first kind, insofar as it *is* eternal, unchanging, and intelligible, and 3) the gold out of which it is sculpted is the third kind, insofar as it is that which receives the image of the first and persists throughout the changes. While a useful illustration, the analogy between gold and receptacle breaks down with the realization that gold has too much determinate character to be considered the moulding stuff of all the world; it may be moldable into any shape, but it will always remain gold. Because there are things other than gold sculptures, gold is an insufficient material condition for the cosmos as a whole. Similarly, since there are dry things, it seems doubtful that Water is the underlying reality of the motion and change of particulars. Thus, the receptacle must be like gold, insofar as

we always refer to it by the same term “for it does not depart from its own character in any way” (*Tim.* 50c). However, “not only does it always receive all things, it has never in any way whatever taken on any characteristic similar to any of the things that enter it. Its nature is to be available for anything to make its impression on” (*Tim.* 50c). In order for it to receive the infinitude of qualities that enter it, it can neither export any trace of itself onto the second, nor possess any of its own characteristics. Imposing any of its own character would disrupt the relation between the second kind and its model, thereby tainting the relation between kinds. Thus, the receptacle must be utterly characterless, and have no limit, if the direct relation of copy to paradigm is to remain intact.

Although limited, the analogy affords us an image to work with as we attempt to make sense of the relation between kinds, and reveals the limits that any material condition will necessarily impart on the world. If “the imprints are to be varied, with all the varieties there to see, this thing upon which the imprints are to be formed could not be so well prepared for that role if it were not itself devoid of any of those characters that it is to receive from elsewhere” (*Tim.* 50e). The receptacle possesses the characteristic ability to receive imprints, which is not associated with either of the other two kinds, and is devoid of all other character like wet and dry, “for if it resembled any of the things that entered it, it could not successfully copy their opposites of things of a totally different nature” (*Tim.* 50e). As such, it can give rise to that infinitude of things without introducing limitation by its own nature. Gold may be malleable enough to be shaped into the image of any model, however it cannot be *all* things, for its gold-character is always implicit in the thing it is shaped into: it can neither be sculpted into something other than

gold, nor account for other sensible phenomena such as scent. Its virtue as gold is precisely its limit when trying to make non-gold things.<sup>54</sup> The physical distribution of the gold will never change the character of the gold qua matter, thus a non-gold thing cannot be made out of gold matter. Similarly, a single element cannot be the origin of all things.

It is better to refer to begotten things, even the classical elements including fire, as *what is such*. What we can safely call a ‘this’ or a ‘that’ is “that *in* which they each appear to keep coming into being and *from* which they subsequently pass out of being” (*Tim.* 49e). It will lead us astray to consider these elements as substances since they “are not permanent irreducible elements, not ‘things’ with a constant nature”<sup>55</sup> at all, and should instead be considered qualities that are transient appearances in the Receptacle. The brief passage describing the changing of one element into another (*Tim.* 49c) performs two crucial duties: it dispels the pre-Socratic Physicist’s attempt to identify the cause of the cosmos to a single element, since no element can actually be called a particular thing or

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<sup>54</sup> A similar statement can be made about the first kind: the form is considered to be universal and unlimited, however, the shape of that form is precisely its virtue and its limit. The determining feature of the form is also its limit and shapes the thing that is made in its image. The form of Dog cannot shape a particular cat, since the determinate character of that form is what shapes the second kind made in its image, just as the limiting character of the matter is that which determines the the material character of the apparent thing that embodies it. In seeking to describe the degree of character of the third, we must make similar considerations as when we considered the degree of character and shape of the first kind.

<sup>55</sup> Francis Macdonald Cornford, *Plato’s Cosmology* (London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952), 178.

*this*, and, it serves to distinguish characteristics of the second and third kinds.<sup>56</sup> Now, the second kind is truly transient, appearing in the image of the first for a period of time, as opposed to having a distinct existence separable from either the first or the third kind.

As a *thing* with no character, the third is neither an element, nor that which gives the elements their particular quality, nor even a quality itself. Rather, it is the more general condition in which the elemental qualities can appear. As such, the third begins to sound like ‘place’. The classical elements could not appear or combine without a characterless place allowing them to appear. As something other than a particular element or member of the second kind, Plato speaks

Of [the receptacle] as an invisible and characterless sort of thing, one that receives all things and shares in a most perplexing way in what is intelligible, a thing extremely difficult to comprehend, we shall not be misled... the most correct way to speak of it may well be this: the part of it that gets ignited appears on each occasion as fire, the dampened part as water, and parts as earth and air insofar as it receives the imitations of these (*Tim.* 51b).

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<sup>56</sup> This analysis can be extended to thing of the second kind in general: nothing sensible should be called a ‘this’ or a ‘that’. Just as bodies of the second kind come to be, so must their foundational parts: the elements, thus we must consider their generation. We cannot consider them as syllables akin to the stable, eternal things of the first kind. It should be noted that there is a debate regarding the translation and interpretation of *Timaeus* 49d-e. Commentators, notably Harold Cherniss and Norman Gulley, have proposed alternative translations to make more explicit the nuances of Plato’s condemnation of the use of ‘this’ and ‘that’ to refer to transient appearances. Cherniss writes that “the fundamental mistake [...] is [the] assumption that Plato must here be saying what name or kind of name the phenomenal ‘phases’, ‘moments’, or ‘occurrences’ should be called, whereas he has already said that these transient moments of flux cannot be called anything distinct from anything else” (*A Much Misread Passage of the Timaeus*, 122). Gulley, on the other hand, writes that “‘this’ and ‘that’ are always wrong, since these terms suggest reference to something substantial and permanent, where as the sensible world is [full of transient likenesses] which are properly described as ‘such and such a kind’” (“The Interpretation of Plato *Timaeus* 49d-e,” 54). In *The Platonic Cosmology*, Richard Mohr proposes that a possible solution is to speak of the double aspect of phenomena: thereby “on the one hand, they are in flux; on the other hand, they are images of Ideas” (88), thus dispelling some of the tension between Cherniss and Gulley insofar as the distinctions vary depending on the sense in which one is working in that moment. Gulley’s interpretation seems to align with the view that the sensible world is merely derivative of the ideal world, thus removing the essential relation of kinds that I see Plato to be developing. John Sallis has an extended footnote on the topic of this debate (*Chorology*, 102, note 13).

The receptacle itself is formless. It places no limitations on that which it can receive, and is linked with the intelligible realm in some obscure fashion. It is *almost* incomprehensible in this near formlessness, yet we can discern just enough about its nature through our knowledge of the other kinds and their limitations that we can see why Plato can conceive of its nature with some degree of accuracy.

As a receptive space, the third kind “provides a fixed state for all things that come to be. It is itself apprehended by a kind of bastard reasoning that does not involve sense perception, and it is hardly even an object of conviction” (*Tim*, 52b). This ‘bastard reasoning’ allows us to consider the characterless receptacle as that which receives and displays the qualities of those elements, without being affected itself. The receptacle “receives all things and is formable; that is, able to be formed variously, because it is an *amorphous reality* (lacking a formal structure of its own) and does not take on the form that it quickly assumes, in a definitive fashion [...] it is comparable to an impressionable material.”<sup>57</sup> We can consider both the third qua third, but also the ramifications this consideration has for our understanding of the second kind.<sup>58</sup> These appearances are not necessarily separate or separable from their place, but instead, their appearance is more akin to the illumination of, or introduction of a particular elemental quality to, a particular part of a more general place. The receptacle is the non-elemental, material ground for the appearances of these material elements. Shape and form are brought into a place such that

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<sup>57</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 104.

<sup>58</sup> We have thus far considered two faculties: reason regarding the first kind and perception regarding the second. However, since the third kind is like neither the first or second kinds, we must have another mode of apprehension. Plato names this other mode of apprehension *bastard reason*, so the third kind is “graspable by some bastard reasoning” (*Tim*. 52b). This will be explored in more depth shortly.

some non-material moldable stuff is shaped and illuminated: the receptacle is the place in which the material world is molded into the appearance in the image of the Ideas. As such, the third kind is the condition of appearance insofar as it is neither first nor second kind, but rather, that which allows particulars to appear in the images of their models, thereby allowing for the relation between the forms and phenomena.

## 2.4 The Receptive Role of the Third Kind

As a condition of the appearance of the second kind, that works in conjunction with the forms, the third kind seems to assume a dual role: it is both the place that receives the image or second kind, and also the activity of receiving it. John Sallis writes that “the word *υποδοχή* means not only *receptacle* but also *reception*.”<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Peter Kalkavage reminds us that *υποδοχή* (*receptacle*, *hypodochē*) refers to both ‘hospitable reception’ and ‘presupposition’ or ‘assumption’.<sup>60</sup> The very word ‘receptacle’ works ontologically, as the place that receives, and epistemologically, insofar as we assume or presuppose its existence.<sup>61</sup> Both of these aspects are implicit in Timaeus’ description of the third kind as space: the receptacle is “hardly even an object of conviction [...] we look at it as if in a dream when we say that everything that exists must of necessity be

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<sup>59</sup> Sallis, *Chorology*, 99.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Kalkavage, *Glossary to Plato’s Timaeus* (Newburyport: Focus Publishing/R. Pullins Company, 2001) 144. s.v. “receptacle.”

<sup>61</sup> Similarly, the language of ‘bond’ that Plato uses to describe the two things forming a proper structure, previously described, is fitting since *bond* can easily be considered as a noun (thing) or a verb (action): this bond is both that which does the connecting, as well as the act of being connected. With this dual meaning of existence and activity, the words ‘bond’ and ‘receptacle’ themselves push us to consider the third kind as both a thing and an action. Similarly, ‘receptacle’ refers to a thing that receives, and the presumption we make that there is a place for reception. See Kalkavage, *Glossary to Plato’s Timaeus*, 144. s.v. “receptacle.” This dual sense of ‘thing’ and ‘activity’ will be developed in the following section.

somewhere” (*Tim.* 52b). It is a thing that we only access by inference and hypothesis. Since it is necessary and formless, it is neither of the intelligible first kind, nor is it perceivable in itself, thus, it is not of the sensible second kind. As that which allows for the relation between the kinds, the receptacle cannot be an entity of either the first or second kinds, but instead, is a condition that is presupposed in our apprehension of both.

Thus far, Timaeus’s discussion of the third kind has primarily proceeded by negation: it is neither apparent nor intelligible, and is aligned with a sort of emptiness that receives, as opposed to a substance that fills. We cannot directly apprehend the receptacle by intellection or perception, but rather, we do so by a sort of bastard reasoning. It is implicit in our understanding that “everything that exists must of necessity be somewhere, in some place and occupying some space, and that that which doesn’t exist somewhere, whether on earth or in heaven, doesn’t exist at all” (*Tim.* 52c). Plato further elucidates the relation between the first two kinds:

Since that for which an image has come to be is not at all intrinsic to the image, which is invariably borne along to picture something else, it stands to reason that the image should therefore come to be *in* something else, somehow clinging to being, or else be nothing at all. But that which really is receives support from the accurate, true account - that as long as the one is distinct from the other, neither of them ever comes to be in the other in such a way that they at the same time become one and the same, and also two (*Tim.* 52d).

There is a logical necessity that there be three kinds to make sense of the paradigm-image relation. The cause of becoming cannot be intrinsic to the thing that becomes, for that would be to suggest that things can be self-causing. Rather, an image must appear in something other than itself in order to become, and retain the ontological difference between Being and Becoming that has previously been outlined. Thereby, Plato suggests

that the third kind receives the appearance, fulfilling the need for a “fixed state [...] which exists always and cannot be destroyed” (*Tim.* 52b) in which a transient image can appear. This third condition cannot be made up of either of the first two kinds, otherwise there would not be an absolute distinction between first and second kinds. If one condition encompassed another, then one would “come to be in the other in such a way that they at the same time become one and the same, and also two” (*Tim.* 52d). Plato arrives at the third kind by the need for there to be something that is distinct from the first two kinds: a place in which the second appears in the image of the first.

As a condition that “receives imprints,” the characterless place that is the receptacle must be empty. However, this should not be conflated with a void. As Cornford explains, “Plato’s Space is not a void which remains completely distinct from particles moving in it; it is a Recipient which affords a basis for images reflected in it, as in a mirror - a comparison that could not be applied to atoms in a void.”<sup>62</sup> A true void could not receive any sort of image, for there would be nothing to take on qualities, nothing to imprint the images upon. In such a conception of place as void, it could not follow that the third kind is a place of reception, but rather, that it would be a place that has no relation to apparent things; it would merely be the empty space in which particles move around. Were the third to be a nothingness, there would be no way for the first two kinds to come together in a model/image relation. The third kind may be invisible and obscure, but is not nothingness. However, if the receptacle is a distinct kind with a describable

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<sup>62</sup> Cornford, *Plato’s Cosmology*, 200.



nature, then it can be a place to receive the image of the first and allow the second kind to Become.

To consider how the characterless nature of the third allows it to be receptive, we can turn to Aristotle's comments on the human activity of thinking. For Aristotle, soul is a particular kind of nature or internal principle that accounts for the motion and change of particular living bodies.<sup>63</sup> Aristotle uses an analogy of the eye to illustrate the activity of soul, asking us to "suppose that the eye were an animal - sight would have been its soul, for sight is the substance or essence of the eye that corresponds to [the formula that states what it is to be an eye] [...] The eye being merely the matter of seeing."<sup>64</sup> The act of sight requires both an object and instrument of sight, thus "when seeing is removed, the eye is no longer an eye, except in name."<sup>65</sup> Take away either of these components and sight can no longer be actualized. Both the object of sight and the eye itself must have certain qualities; perceivable things must be visible and the eye must be constructed in a particular way to facilitate seeing. The eye is the only thing capable of sight, since its construction determines its potential to see. The actuality of this potential is seeing.

The determination of the eye that allows it to see, by the same token, also prohibits it from doing anything *but* see: the limitation is the determination. If mind is that which allows you to think any possible thing, then it cannot have restrictions in the way in which the eye is limited. Mind is related to what is thinkable just as sense is

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<sup>63</sup> See Aristotle, *De Anima* 2.1, trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random house, 1941).

<sup>64</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412b19.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

related to that which is sensible, though it would be “a mistake to say that the soul is a spatial magnitude,”<sup>66</sup> as that would suggest that it possesses some quality, which would impart a physical limitation on its activity of thinking.<sup>67</sup> Aristotle states:

The thinking part of the soul must therefore be, while impassible, capable of receiving the form of an object; that is, must be potentially identical in character with its object without being the object [...] it cannot reasonably be regarded as blended with the body: if so, it would acquire some quality [...] It was a good idea to call the soul the place of forms’ (*De Ani.* 429a 25).

Mind, as that which thinks, must have the capacity to receive forms. In this association with intelligibility, the mind can have no organ, no second kind of thing to house its activity. Instead, mind is the place in which the forms come to be known by human activity and, as such, can neither be nothing nor be limited by a physical organ. This consideration of mind allows us to consider the characterless nature associated with Plato’s third kind. For Plato, things of the first kind do not appear (in the mind or otherwise) as substantive things. They function as thoughts, yet they *enter the mind* in the sense that we can describe thinking in this way. Gadamer writes that “Socrates wants to say that just as things are only visible in the one light of day that floods around them, so too the idea is visible only to the extent that it emerges in thinking.”<sup>68</sup>

There are similarities between Aristotle’s description of mind and Plato’s description of the third kind: the mind is the place of thinking while the third is the place

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 407a5.

<sup>67</sup> See *De Anima* 3.4 ff.

<sup>68</sup> Gadamer, *Idea of the Good*, 88.

of becoming.<sup>69</sup> Plato's receptacle is a *thing* that can receive all forms and image them, just as the mind can receive all forms and think them.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the third cannot be suited to just one sort of perceivable thing, in the way that the eye can only see, but rather, it is a place receptive to all forms, to produce all images of the second kind.<sup>71</sup> This is not to suggest that the first or the second kind enter the third kind as they are, for this would be to forget that all three kinds are necessary for the expression and understanding of each kind in itself. Rather, the receptacle receives something of the first kind so as to image the second, and, as such, receives both kinds and neither kind. This is the crux of the irreducibility of kinds.

## 2.5 The Activity of the Receptacle

Due to the trinitarian nature of the conditions and their relations, it can be difficult to tease out the receptacle as an *entity* since it is always present, and presented as, a complex of appearances. While it never appears directly (since it is essentially characterless, and not of the second kind), it does *assume* the character and acquire the qualities of the classical elements which, according to Timaeus, are the first moments of

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<sup>69</sup> Just as the mind must have a certain mind-character to accept all thoughts, yet not limit them, so too must the receptacle be quasi-characterless to receive, but not limit, all appearances. This relation of mind and receptacle, and the extent to which forms enter them, is one of the great debates of Neo-Platonism. It leads to the question of whether thoughts or minds are individual, and if there is only one mind. This remains outside the scope of my project, however, I would argue that narrowing in on a description of the receptacle and its relation to the first and second kinds is useful in such debates regarding the mind.

<sup>70</sup> See *De Anima*, 3.4.

<sup>71</sup> The alignment of receptacle with mind (though one deals with things of the second kind, the other the first) illustrates the receptivity to impression as opposed to substance, and the reliance on serial as opposed to spatial magnitude. We know things in succession and in time, not just in substance and space.

determination of the second kind.<sup>72</sup> The nature of the receptacle is “to be available for anything to make its impression upon, and it is modified, shaped, and reshaped by the things that enter it” (*Tim.* 50d). As the place that receives and relates the distinct first and second kinds, “the wet-nurse of becoming turns watery and fiery and receives the character of earth and air, and as it acquires all the properties that come with these characters, it takes on a variety of visible aspects” (*Tim.* 52d). By receiving the shapes of the elements, the third becomes a place in which the likeness of the first kind becomes apparent. The things that enter it “make it appear different at different times” (*Tim.* 50d).

The receptacle “is filled with powers neither similar nor equally balanced, no part of it is in balance. It sways irregularly in every direction as it is shaken by those things, and being set in motion it in turn shakes them” (*Tim.* 52e). This shaking back demonstrates that the reception of the fundamental forces is what produces the elements, and is the cause of the activity of the third kind: it receives and reciprocates. According to Plato, “it is a fact that before this [shaking] took place, the four kinds [elements] all lacked proportion and measure” (*Tim.* 53b). When the first elements came to be in the receptacle, they did not enter as formed elements, as images of the first kind; rather the original imbalance of powers presented itself as the set of elements.<sup>73</sup> This imbalance gives rise to the first moment of physical determination, causing the receiver to be off

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<sup>72</sup> The receptacle is identical to that which occupies it, just as Aristotle showed the mind to be continuous with the process of thinking and the thoughts that *appear*: *de Anima* 407a “mind is one and continuous in the sense in which the process of thinking is so, and thinking is identical with its thoughts which are its parts; these have a serial unity like that of number, not a unity like that of a spatial magnitude.” They appear together, though they remain distinct ontologically since the receptacle/mind is the third kind, and the thoughts/things which appear are of the second kind. Also, see *De Anima* 3.4.

<sup>73</sup> See *Timaeus*, 48c.

balance, in turn, causing motion. That reciprocal motion moves the first *things*, which are not yet determinate, but rather, only “possess certain traces of what [the elements] are now” (*Tim.* 53b). Plato illustrates that the *elements* are neither like syllables or atomic building blocks, but rather, come into the third kind merely as traces. As these traces “are moved, they drift continually [...] separating from one another. They are winnowed out” (*Tim.* 53a). By this winnowing, the powers, or qualities of the elements, separate based on the traces of their natural character: “the kinds most unlike each other further apart and pushing those most like each other closest together into the same region. This, of course, explains how these different kinds came to occupy different regions of space, even before the universe was set in order and constituted from them” (*Tim.* 53a).<sup>74</sup>

Throughout the separation of elements, the “thing that is to receive in itself all the elemental kinds must be totally devoid of any characteristics” (*Tim.* 50e), or, as Timaeus says, it must not “show its own face” (*Tim.* 50e). The third kind has its own activity that contributes to the becoming of the second kind, as does the ordering activity of the first

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<sup>74</sup> Becoming can be traced to the quality of the elements themselves, though the qualities of these elements alone are insufficient as metaphysical conditions. The elements come together here by their sheer difference as opposed to by some modeled order. There is a paradigm on which these elements are modeled: the initial conditions by which they become is modeled on a first kind, however, the activity of formation is not intelligent (by some planning creator), but rather, they come to be out of the necessary impact in their original moment of Becoming. Things that come to be within the receptacle need this place of mixing as well as some dependance on a first kind which causes them to be put together, but in this conception, there is no dependance on an external efficient cause, such as the demiurge.

kind.<sup>75</sup> Thereby, all three kinds are interrelated; the cosmos arises from that interrelation, insofar as the actualizing activity of the relation between the three kinds allows the second kind to become in the image the first. In this way, no one kind needs to come before the others in time; they are all actualized simultaneously in this activity.

## 2.6 Apprehending the Third Kind by Bastard Reason

The essentially reactive activity of the receptacle is indicative of the nature of the kind itself. It receives qualities determined by the first and exhibited through the second; it is moved in such a way that is determined by the first and is evident in the appearance of the second. This receptive activity eludes reason, for it is not a positive thing to be examined, but rather, the lack of any positive or active thing. We gain insight into its nature by stripping away all that is sensible and intelligible. Thus, we know the receptacle by neither reason nor perception, but rather, through a backwards or “bastard reason with the aid of insensibility” (*Tim.* 52a). This third mode of apprehension is unique to the third kind, differing from both the intelligibility of the first kind and the perceivability of the second: the third epistemological mode seems to be a mixture of the two, yet different from them, in much the same way that the third kind is related to yet distinct from the first two kinds ontologically. Unique to the apprehension of the third kind, bastard

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<sup>75</sup> Even if one wishes to retain the demiurge figure, one does not require some conception of creation *ex nihilo*. As Carl Sean O’Brien suggests, “it is not as if the Demiurge can claim credit for all order, since even some kind of order existed in the pre cosmos. The demiurge only orders in a manner which furthers his objective: increased intelligibility, seen, for example, in his formation of the elements, ordered on geometric principles” (21). The order is implicit in the form of the elements, and the demiurge further orders the phenomenal world in his desire for the world of becoming to be relatively intelligible. In this sense, there is no distinction between ordering and creating. (24) See Carl O’Brien, *The Demiurge in Ancient Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

reasoning is also indicative of *how* that kind differs from the other kinds themselves. It is neither understood nor perceived, instead, “we look at it as if in a dream when we say that everything that exists must of necessity be somewhere, in some place” (*Tim.* 52b). We know it must be there by an assumption or hypothesis in our account of the other kinds, and begin to grasp this third kind by outlining what it is not: by illustrating the implications of an analogue then outlining the shortcomings of such an analogy. This is a bastardization of reason, insofar as it moves not towards determination, but towards indeterminacy. We enter into an analogical mode of apprehension by constructing images to examine what must be the case as we strip away forms and appearances.

This mode is bastard<sup>76</sup> insofar as it does not exclusively rely on the intellection of forms or perception of phenomena, but rather, on the acknowledgement of the absence of both: “we come to know about what place is on the basis of the fact that we have no sense perception of it.”<sup>77</sup> We know place precisely *because* it is not something that we can perceive nor intuit. This is a bastard discourse insofar as the legitimacy cannot be established. Generally, Plato uses the term ‘bastard’ to refer to something of mixed origin. For example, a daimon is a bastard because of its mixed lineage as the offspring of gods and non gods; the lineage of a bastard child of an Athenian and alien is impossible to legitimize. Similarly, the legitimacy of a bastard discourse cannot be established since its origin is indeterminate.<sup>78</sup> The third kind is not mixed as though it were made up of parts

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<sup>76</sup> Plato, *Apology*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 27d.

<sup>77</sup> Miller, *Plato's Third Kind*, 133.

<sup>78</sup> See Sallis, *Chorology*, 120.

of each of the kinds: it remains distinct, yet possesses characteristics of each. Rather, its lineage seems mixed insofar as attributes of the third are predicable of both the first and the second kind, while the attributes of the first and second are mutually exclusive. Thereby, the account of such is not trustworthy in the way that an account of the first kind is, since neither the object nor the mode of apprehension, is determinate.

Plato considers the third to be invisible, though not merely as the other side of visibility. Rather, “the invisibility of the third kind is a more insistent invisibility,”<sup>79</sup> which is essentially indeterminate. Despite this invisibility, “Timaeus does not deny [the receptacle] at all appearing but grants that, in a part where it holds a trace, for instance, of fire, it appears as fire. Even if *as fire*, it nonetheless appears; it appears, even if never *as itself*.”<sup>80</sup> The third eludes our perception through invisibility, and alludes reason through its necessary formlessness. This invisible, formless character begins to be exposed by the sheer fact that it can only be approached by way of analogy or bastard reason.

The third is eternal insofar as it does not become in the way the second becomes, yet it is not determinate in the way of the first. It can be apprehended by perception, but only with respect to things of the second kind which appear, and apprehended by reason only with respect to its status as that which has no form. According to Sallis, we apprehend it through the “act of recognizing that all objects demand situation, then, that leads to the ‘hybrid’ or ‘bastard’ reasoning that in turn forces recognition of *chora*.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Sallis, *Chorology*, 112.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.



Timaeus describes this bastard reasoning as a dream in which “an image goes unrecognized as an image, an image that in the dream is simply taken as the original [...] it is precisely such differences that go unrecognized as such in the dream of the *χώρα*.”<sup>82</sup> The attributes of the first and second kinds appear in the receptacle, and since we cannot recognize the difference between image and original, there is a “conflation of the image of the *χώρα* with *χώρα* itself.”<sup>83</sup> This conflation should not suggest, however, that the receptacle is a mixture of the first two kinds, as that would collapse the tripartite relation and distinction between the kinds. Further, Reale writes that “the material Principle that constitutes the sensible world *cannot* be reduced *totally* to the structure of the ideal Principle, and for this reason it is the source of *being-in-becoming* (to a form of being *intermediate* between *pure being* and *not-being*).”<sup>84</sup> Insofar as it shares attributes with each the first and second kinds, but is apprehended in a manner distinct from our apprehension of either, the third kind is essentially different from both. This irreducibility signifies the third kind as the condition that allows for the being-in-becoming that exists as the model-image relation of the first and second kinds.

## 2.7 Ramifications for the Second Kind

In light of these characteristics of the third kind, let us re-consider our account of the second kind. This will allow us to achieve a deeper perspective on the third kind

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 102.

itself, since a better conception of one kind will lead to a better understanding of those which are related to it. Until now, we have spoken of Plato's second kind as a copy made in the image of the first kind. However, this language is not necessarily the most appropriate way to describe the relation of first to second (to third) in Plato's world, due to its roots in a particular conception of substance and corporality. Instead, let us turn to another analogy to consider the nature of the second kind in a different sense: as a *reflection* of the first, just as an image is reflected in a mirror.

Considering the second kind as reflected images as opposed to copies provides us with another vantage point to consider the nature of the kind itself, the nature of the first which it reflects, and the third that allows for that relation. When considered as a copy of a model, the corporality of the second kind is implicit; things exist as discreet substances, somehow independently from the first on which they are modeled. This conception assumes an Aristotelian conception of substance, quickly leading us into considerations of matter and its role in individuating particulars of the second kind. On the other hand, when considering a reflection in a mirror, we are less prone to assume that the reflected image has an existence independent from that which it is reflecting, or the thing in which it is reflected. There is no longer a relation of logical model or blueprint to the modeled thing; rather, the relation of reflection is more immediate. The image has an immediately recognizable dependence: the reflected image can only appear due to the existence of the first kind, which is being reflected, and the mirror which receives the image. This conception also brings us closer to the dream of the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$ , "even though in the dream one fails to distinguish the three kinds of being, even though one conflates these three

kinds, still the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  is disclosed in the dream in which one dreams of it.”<sup>85</sup> This analogy is not meant to collapse all distinction, but rather, to highlight the different statuses of existence of the kinds and their implicit relations, in a manner coherent with the cosmology of the *Timaeus*.

Each image in the mirror is not a separate and discreet substance, nor a *thing* that can exist outside of the mirror or interact with other ‘things’ in the mirror.<sup>86</sup> Rather, the reflected images occupy a particular place within the mirror, similarly to Plato’s description of the appearance of elements, where “the part of [the receptacle] that gets ignited appears on each occasion as fire” (*Tim.* 51b). Phenomena are not fully distinct, but rather, are bits of the receptacle exhibiting particular qualities. This distinction highlights a fundamental difference between the metaphysics of Plato and that of Aristotle, and helps to illustrate Plato’s general cosmology. For Aristotle, *the most real things are primary substances*: the world is made up of *things*, and it is by way of our experience of these things that we begin to grasp the intelligible. This view is well aligned with the consideration of the second kind as modeled copy. For Plato, however, this world is more a reflection of the (logically) prior first kind: appearances are not things unto themselves; they are not like Aristotelian primary substances. Reflected images *can only be thought in terms of the relation of reflection*; it is by the nature of reflection that the image can exist in light of the first, and, in the presence of the third.

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<sup>85</sup> Sallis, *Chorology*, 123.

<sup>86</sup> This is not to say that the reflected image does not have any ontological distinction from the things being reflected. Rather, it does not have the same separability, which so often results in the separation or “worlds” in interpretations of Plato’s metaphysics.

## 2.8 The Mirror as the Third Kind

We can go on to question the role of the mirror itself as the condition enabling the relation between first and second. As the place that allows for becoming insofar as it exhibits the image and receives the coming to be, the mirror is the condition of corporality. As such, the mirror seems to be the most substantial and separable thing: it is one ‘substance’<sup>87</sup> in which all other ‘things’ appear. An image comes to be insofar as it is situated in a particular bit of that whole, reflected world, however is not a separate, distinct or independent *thing*, as are the primary substances of Aristotelian physics.

Gazing into a mirror takes on the dreamlike state that Plato describes in the apprehension of the third kind in general: once immersed, “an image in the dream is taken as the original.”<sup>88</sup> The mirror can be taken as the only corporeal thing, the whole of which is perceived, whereby “we drift towards obliterating the difference between the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  and sensible things.”<sup>89</sup> With this obliteration, there is no distinction between things reflected and thing reflecting. This conflation is precisely the experience of being in the cave: you are chained so that you can only look forward, and the only thing that you see are the images upon the wall. With no frame of reference, you have no way to know that the images are shadows cast by the more real things, the physical objects. This immersion

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<sup>87</sup> This *one substance* may start sounding Spinozistic, which is not the intention here. However, it does highlight the different significances and statuses attributed to substance between Plato and Aristotle. Instead of forms existing *in* a thing (as they do in Aristotelian primary substances), the forms remain separate and distinct, for Plato, while the phenomenal world is the substance that exhibits images of the first.

<sup>88</sup> Sallis, *Chorology*, 121.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

clouds the other necessary conditions at play, such that we cannot realize that that which appears is a kind within a relation of kinds as opposed to all being that there is.

However, focusing on Plato's analysis of the kinds, we may adjust the framework of consideration such that the mirror is all that appears, and is the only separable substance. Unlike the apparently separate and distinct beings of the second kind in a world of copies, the beings reflected in the mirror do not seem to be discreet, but rather are particular impressions on the mirror itself, fully dependent on the *existence* of the mirror and the thing which they are reflecting. In this sense, the receptacle, as a mirror, is "a kind of place filled with all the things that are."<sup>90</sup> Sallis explains,

What is decisive in the dream is the conflation of this image of the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  with the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  itself, that is, the failure, as always in a dream, to recognize the image as an image and to set the original, the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  itself, apart from it. Instead, the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  is simply conflated with the  $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$  of all things. Here  $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$  means, not just place in some vague, indeterminate sense, but rather something like a region in a sense inseparable from the fire, air, water, or earth that belongs intrinsically to the region.<sup>91</sup>

In the dreamlike way in which we apprehend the receptacle as third kind, we cannot separate it from that which appears in it, just as we cannot separate Aristotelian form and matter in our perception of the second kind. The appearance of the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$ , as that in which all things appear, is conflated with the condition of  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  itself in our perception of it, yet we can logically differentiate the conditions. Bits of the mirror bear the reflection of the first kind, but these *things* cannot be conceived to exist outside the context of the mirror: they are dependent reflections, and, in a sense, *are* the mirror, just

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

as fire *is* an ignited bit of the receptacle.<sup>92</sup> Plato explicitly says that as the elements undergo the processes of *turning into each other*, the receptacle exhibits them in succession, and “the greater part of each kind keeps apart in a region [τόπος] of its own because of the movement of the recipient” (*Tim.* 57c). Thus, the conflation of the χώρα with its image is a conflation of it with a kind of region of sensible things.”<sup>93</sup> To confuse the χώρα itself with the particular region within it is acceptable, so long as we recognize that the conflation is an effect of the way in which we experience the world as opposed to an actual conflation of the conditions. Similarly, Sallis writes that “in the dream there is also an equally decisive conflation of the intelligible with the sensible,”<sup>94</sup> serving to remind us that the conditions are always at work together.

Within the analogy, the mirror itself must be purely reflective; it may leave no trace of itself in the second kind, for that would degrade the relation between first and second kinds. It must be “devoid of any inherent characteristics of its own” (*Tim.* 51b) if it is to receive all things in the likeness of the first kind. The *thing* in a mirror is not *in* the mirror the way an Aristotelian substantial body is *in* the world: the image in a mirror is not separable, though it is recognized as distinct, and, as such, is not nothing. Were the mirror, as the medium of appearance, to be blemished, then the distinction between reflected image and mirror qua mirror becomes obvious, since, the imperfections of the

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<sup>92</sup> While this may be wrong, it is possibly the lesser of two wrongs. The mirror analogy errs on the side of the third being the only real thing in addition to the Forms, which is not necessarily true, but is more true and more illustrative of Plato’s view than a conception in which only things of the second kind are real.

<sup>93</sup> Sallis, *Chorology*, 121. I have left the line from the *Timaeus* as Sallis has cited it, as this translation is more concise than the line given in the translation of the dialogue that I have been otherwise using.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

mirror would be apparent in the image of the reflected thing. Similar to a warped atmosphere, a clouded or warped mirror also introduces a subtle moment of degradation of appearance, leading to a false sense of understanding of both the actual reflected image and its relation to the first kind. The immediacy of the relation of form to image (to receptacle) is disrupted, and we are thrown into the realization that image and medium, place and reflection, are separable. It is now apparent that the mirror is spatial, and that images appear in its world because of the place the mirror affords. Considering the second kind as reflection rather than as a conglomeration of discreet things moving around in a world is more true to Plato's account, given his description of the receptacle. Things of the second kind are those which express the characteristics of the first kind in an apparent way within a given world-space.<sup>95</sup>

This consideration of reflection also serves as a basis on which to challenge the conception of space as an empty void in which atoms and things move around and remain completely distinct, and allows us to move towards a conception of space as the receptive substrate for appearances. This 'third-as-mirror-space' is "the room or place where things are, not intervals or stretches of vacancy where things are not; and if [Plato] admits any void at all, it is only as the very smallest interstices which the shapes of all particles when particles have been formed, do not allow them to fill."<sup>96</sup> The nature of the mirror is not

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<sup>95</sup> This leaves open the question of whether the images are reflected in or impressed upon the place, and the relation between that place to conditions of matter and space. These considerations of material and spatial conditions will be more closely examined in the proceeding chapter.

<sup>96</sup> Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 200.

the nothingness of a void or the particularity of matter. Rather, it is the place to accommodate the nature of the second: the space in which things can appear.<sup>97</sup>

Let us take this opportunity to recount what this analysis entails for each of the kinds in order to discern better the nature of the third kind. Recall that

The intelligible εἶδος undergo[es] no reception [...] this utter selfsameness entails that, even though the intelligible εἶδος is what stamps (fathers, informs) the image, which thus shares its name and its “look”, the intelligible εἶδος *cannot belong* to the image. This is why the image is a phantom in need of some means by which, though set apart from being, it can cling to being and avoid being nothing all.<sup>98</sup>

The first kind is not received into the third kind. Rather, the third kind receives the imprint ordered by the first in such a way that allows for the becoming of the second kind. In bearing the image, the χώρα doubles the εἶδος, not by making another member of the first kind, but by bearing the determinacy of it in image form, thus birthing a kind of being to the second kind. In this act of nurturing and sheltering the image, “the χώρα is anything but a mere mirror in which perpetual being would be reflected and the cosmos thus fabricated [...] one could call it, rather, a ghost scene that [...] endows the fleeting

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<sup>97</sup> In considering the third kind as a mirror, one may raise the question of one’s ability to consider the mirror qua itself, without anything already reflected in it. This addresses the perennial difficulties that we had in considering the receptacle qua itself, without anything (of the second kind) existing or being reflected in it. Can we ever truly imagine a mirror without any reference to that which appears in it? Or is the mirror another *thing* which we can only consider by a bastard reason, a stripping away of all other kinds, qualities, and aspects? We are using this analogy to back into a conception of the third kind, but even within the analogy, we encounter something that is difficult to imagine qua itself, the mere fact of which suggests that this is a useful way to consider the kind, at least within its relation to the other kinds. In looking at the things in front of me, I can imagine that I am looking at a mirror, but I cannot actually see the mirror as something separate from the things that I see as reflected. The only way in which I can approach the nature of the other kind, the mirror, is to assume that is the place in which things appear, which is reflected in the language regarding the receptacle.

<sup>98</sup> Sallis, *Chorology*, 122.



specters with whatever trace of being they might enjoy.”<sup>99</sup> Here, the first kind does not exist in the third kind as itself, as that would interrupt the eternality and perfection of the first kind. Nor is the second kind a mere image without being, which would destroy the necessary and reciprocal relation between first and second kinds. Rather, the second kind is given a ‘phantom’ life, in Sallis’ terminology. The third kind is a non-particular material realm (as the “matter” of ghosts differs from the matter of living bodies) that reciprocates the shaking activity of the elemental qualities and “makes possible the doubling of being in an image.”<sup>100</sup> By considering the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  as a specter realm or a dream, it is not conflated with an image or a substance. Instead, it is the place in which the kinds cannot be distinguished from one another and are experienced in their most related form. Then, “on awakening, the disclosure of the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  given in the dream can be developed by carrying out the distinctions that were not drawn out within the dream.”<sup>101</sup> Thereby, the  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  is seen to be that which facilitates the experience and understanding of the first two kinds.

This shift to the idea of a reflective realm, as opposed to a series of copies, also helps to defuse the risk of forgetting that coming-to-be is a dependent and on-going state of affairs, requiring a subject or receiver, just as motion requires a body to be in motion and a figure to continue perceiving it. Miller writes of this inseparable dependance:

To claim, as Plato does, that physical things are images of paradigms, carries with it the claim that there is something conceptually distinguishable that bears the

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

image. An image thus conceived is an analogue of coming-to-be *F*, while the bearer of the image is an analogue of the third kind. The dependance relation exhibited by these analogies suggests that Plato conceives of coming-to-be as properly inseparable from that in which it occurs.<sup>102</sup>

This overt dependance gives reason to consider the second as a less corporeal (and less independently substantial) kind, and to rely more heavily on the mirror (as opposed to the craft) analogy to better understand the status of Plato's third kind and its ramifications for our the understanding of phenomena in Plato's *Timaeus*.

## 2.9 Failings of the Analogies: Why the Third Kind Cannot be Matter

The close relation between copy and model depends on the lack of character of the third kind, so if it is to be material in some sense, it must remain so at some general level; it cannot be a particular material. To consider the receptacle and material together most rightly would seem to require a consideration of Aristotelian prime matter (absolutely pure potential). George Claghorn suggests that the receptacle and prime matter have several common features, including their unintelligibility, infinitude, and relation to potencies. As such, the receptacle is the conjoint under which things can appear, but adds *nothing* more than an arena of space for appearance, it “never departs from its own character [...] [which] is doubtless the capability of bringing forth things of every variety and description.”<sup>103</sup> Material analogies, such as the gold sculptures provided by *Timaeus*, are useful to begin to imagine a characterless base-material, but

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<sup>102</sup> Miller, *Plato's Third Kind*, 61.

<sup>103</sup> George Claghorn, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Timaeus* (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1954), 11.

these analogies fail by designating or determining the character of the base material.<sup>104</sup> Even the mirror, which allows all images to appear directly, introduces a degree of mediation insofar as it is visual, thus, it is not characterless enough to support the other senses: one cannot smell through a mirror, or paint with perfume. This is not to say that the analogies are useless, but rather, as things (created in this world and limited by human articulation), they are too particular to express the obscure nature of the third kind. *Things* can never be metaphysical conditions. The analogues are limited by the essential character that makes them what they are. We must take into account the implicit limits of the world, and thus the limits of the analogies themselves when using them to apprehend the metaphysical conditions that Plato is describing.

From the insufficiencies highlighted in the investigation into the first two kinds, we have arrived at Plato's conception of a third kind through a bastard reason by analogy. This third kind is the basis for the relation between the first and second kinds as the spatial condition of the world. Through the mirror analogy, it has been demonstrated that Plato's receptacle, as third kind, is the place of all appearances, and, as such, seems to be the condition most like Aristotle's material cause. It is not a particular material, for this would be to bring too high a degree of determination and character to the kind. Rather, it is the condition of appearance that accounts for everything except the formal condition, which is attributed to the first kind. The mirror analogy helps to provide a clearer conception of the obscure third kind, such that we can refine our conception of Plato's

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<sup>104</sup> To be most accurate, one must zoom in so far as to have that base material as the only matter of the world, as previously explored. Even so, we know this proposition of an all-gold world to be false, since a single material cannot account for all kinds of phenomenal things, *i.e.*, we can not make a scent out of gold.

second kind. In considering the mirror as third, we have come to a conception in which the Aristotelian material and efficient causes are collapsed into the same condition: the receptacle, as it is that in which all things appear. The third kind is both the place in which things appear, as well as the *thing* that takes on the qualities seen as the second kind. The latter distinction is aligned with the material cause as place, while the activity resulting from the qualities (dictated by the first kind that appear as the second kind) are precisely what moves the receptacle in such a way that the phenomenal bodies are efficiently shaped. This analysis has also helped us to see the distinction between the Aristotelian conception of a hylomorphic primary substance, and Plato's conception of particulars. Things of the second kind are distinct, but not discrete, particulars, insofar as they appear within the context of the receptacle, which, in a sense, for Plato is the one true 'substance'.

The first kind may remain perfect and eternal in its formal existence insofar as it does not enter into, and appear in, the world. The second kind exists insofar as a particular part of the receptacle takes on the qualities determined by the first kind, such that the second kind appears. The third is that in which the second appears. Were this third to have any degree of determination, beyond its role as place in which things appear, then the immediate relation of first to second kind would be destroyed, and the triadic nature of the Platonic cosmology would crumble. From the investigation into the obscure and mysterious third kind, which acts as the condition of relation between the first and second kinds, the intermingled nature of the kinds and the way in which we know them has become increasingly apparent. The mode in which we know a kind depends on the

nature of the kind itself, and further, the nature that we uncover affects the nature of (and way in which we know) the other kinds. In uncovering the nature of the third kind, as a characterless place in which the second can appear, and thus be related to the first kind, we have refined a more precise conception of phenomena according to Plato's *Timaeus*.

## Chapter Three: The Third Kind as Place for Plato and Aristotle

### 3.1 Introduction

As we align Plato's conception of the second kind with things appearing in a mirror, as opposed to discreet substances that appear in empty space as atoms in a void, we move towards a conception of space and place as continuous with the things that appear within it. Here, I draw upon Aristotle's definition of continuity:

Things are called continuous when the touching limits of each become one and the same and are, as the word implies, contained in each other: continuity is impossible if these extremities are two. This definition makes it plain that continuity belongs to things that naturally in virtue of their mutual contact form a unity. And in whatever way that which holds them together is one, so too will the whole be one.<sup>105</sup>

This notion of continuity corresponds to our discussion of Plato's third kind, which is continuous, or identical, with the second kind that appears in it. This is not to suggest that the conditions are one and the same, but rather, that when in mutual contact, the conditions form a unity such that the world is an organic whole. There is a continuity between phenomena and that which contains them, just as reflections are continuous with the mirror in which they appear. Instead of being a vacuous arena for appearances, the third kind must provide the conditions of location and materiality.<sup>106</sup> Such a conception, highlighted in our alignment of Plato's third kind with the mirror itself in the mirror analogy, raises questions of what it means to call something a 'place', and the degree to which 'place' encompasses materiality.

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<sup>105</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 227a10.

<sup>106</sup> Keep in mind the stipulation explained in Chapter 2, that the third kind cannot be matter itself or any determinate matter: it cannot be a particular element or material. Rather, the third kind must be the condition allowing for all particular materials to exist.

With these questions in mind, I turn to Aristotle, who dedicates much of the *Physics* to questions about place and space. Aristotle engages directly with Plato, claiming that Plato “alone tried to say *what* [place] is.”<sup>107</sup> By examining Aristotle’s definition of place, and its relation to his material and formal conditions of substance, we gain another platform from which to refine our understanding of Plato on these matters. In light of what has already been said about Plato’s kinds, examining Aristotle’s distinctions between form, matter, substance, and place, will allow us to compare their respective conceptions of the conditions of the universe, and examine the effects of these conditions on the state of the phenomenal world.

We may approach a better understanding of Plato through examining the work of Aristotle, just as we use our conceptions of the first and second kinds, coupled with analogy, to consider the third kind. Aristotle’s own dialogue exploring that which came before him, and the effects of his analogies on our conception of the cosmos in general, could be considered to be a sort of bastard reason, insofar as he does not rely exclusively on reason or perception in his account. Rather, we approach a positive notion of an indeterminate thing, here ‘place’, by a combination of reason, perception, and analogy, through a stripping away of possibilities. We can use Aristotle’s statements to reveal details that are implicit in Plato’s cosmological conditions, thereby approaching a positive conception of an indeterminate third kind, by delineating what the other conditions are not.

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<sup>107</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209b15.

A discussion of the senses of the word ‘in’ works to reveal the relations between the kinds by illuminating the third kind as a place *in which* things appear. Aristotle describes place as that which is separable from, or left behind by, a substance. It remains an essential condition of that substance, insofar as it is the extrinsic limit determined by the world (as opposed to an intrinsic, formal determination). As that which is formless and indeterminate, Plato’s third kind as place may also be likened to Aristotle’s material cause as a condition of potentiality.<sup>108</sup> As potency, Plato’s third kind is a necessary yet extrinsic condition of the appearance of phenomena. In turn, this potentiality renders the conception of the second kind as determinate yet continuous. The nature of materiality, appraised in the distinction between that *in which* and that *out of which* a thing becomes, is shown to be a crux of the difference between Platonic phenomena and Aristotelian substance. Having explained this fundamental difference, I will return to the *Timaeus* and give a more precise account of the obscure and marvelous nature of Plato’s third kind.

Since it is like neither the first nor the second kind, neither form nor appearance, we may be tempted to align the third kind with matter. Plato holds that the stabilizing order of Form is imparted on some chaotic *stuff* that gives rise to the perceptible flux of apparent things: the world came into being when the god “took over all that was visible [...] and brought it from a state of disorder to one of order” (*Tim.* 30a). However, this

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<sup>108</sup> It is useful to examine Aristotle’s philosophy of substance to illuminate how it differs from Plato’s kinds of Being. Any discussion of Platonic *matter* is contentious and difficult, so I will avoid a direct “mapping” of kinds between the cosmoses of Plato and Aristotle. Rather, the discussion of Aristotle’s systematic approach will be used to highlight differences between the two, in an attempt to refine our understanding of Plato, rather than merely to make sense of it in Aristotelian terms. Aristotelian terms, such as *matter* and *potential*, are useful to expose what is happening in Plato’s philosophy, though I do not attempt to find their analogues in Plato, nor do I suggest that the respective metaphysical systems work in the same way.



account suggests a separation that Aristotle denies; Aristotle asserts that matter cannot exist on its own, but instead, must always be actualized by some form. No matter is free or separable from the substance in which it exists.<sup>109</sup> Even a lump of gold is still a lump, and is molecularly arranged in such a way that we call it gold. A simple alignment of the third kind with matter may be a useful first step towards making sense of the general relation between place and form, appearance, and substance. However, it leaves unexplained the issue of the inherent determination of particular material and the nature of the third kind.

Such a simple alignment can also be interpreted as a unilateral relation of forms to appearances: things appear as formed because the physical matter of the world can only exist as *something*, and is recognized as formed in the image of *something*. While Aristotle holds that the potency of matter does need and desire to be actualized by form, such an account leaves us with a disinterested relation on the part of the first kind. However, the relation between the kinds of being of Plato's *Timaeus* has been shown to be more reciprocal: all three kinds are required for the cosmos to exist in the way in which we experience it. Plato describes this reciprocity with reference to the winnowing activity of the demiurge, which suggests a triadic structure of relations between the kinds. In a truly reciprocal relation, each kind requires the others such that we experience and

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<sup>109</sup> See Aristotle, *Physics* 1, *Metaphysics* 8. For Aristotle, prime matter, as pure potentiality, is in contrast to actuality, and never appears in the world. By 'matter' he means, "that which in itself is not called a substance nor a quantity nor anything else by which being is categorized. For it is something of which each of these things is predicated, whose being is different from each of its predicates (for the others are predicated of substance, and substance is predicated of matter). Therefore this last is in itself neither substance nor quantity nor anything else. Nor is it the denial of any of these; for even denials belong to things accidentally" (1029a20–26).

account for the cosmos as we do. Without such reciprocity, there there would be no reason for the union of the two kinds: violence, rather than harmony, would shape the world.

Thus, we are investigating the condition that allows for a relation between Plato's kinds, and works in both directions along the divided line. The third kind, as place, allows things to appear in the image of a form, and forms to be copied by appearances. It relates the first two kinds: "the best bond is one that really and truly makes a unity of itself together with the things bonded by it" (*Tim.* 31c). This triadic reciprocity, resulting in a unity of kinds, suggests that the third kind fulfills the needs of the second kind, insofar as it provides the second kind with a place to appear, and also fulfills the needs of the first kind, insofar as the first needs the other kinds if it is to appear and become intelligible to us. The first kind does not *need* the third kind in order to Be; however, the third is necessary insofar as we experience the first kind by way of the second kind which is made in its image. The third kind allows the first kind to be reflected *and* the phenomenal world to appear; both the first and second kinds need the third kind to *Be* if they are to be related and understood.

### 3.2 Aristotle's Analysis of Place

To examine the notion of place, and consider it in conjunction with Plato's third kind, let us turn to Aristotle's *Physics*. *Physics* IV begins with the statement that

The Physicist must have a knowledge of Place too, as well as of the infinite - namely, whether there is such a thing or not, and the manner of its existence and what it is - both because all suppose that things which exist are *somewhere* [...]

and because ‘motion in its most general and primary sense is change of place, which we call ‘locomotion.’<sup>110</sup>

Immediately, we recall Plato’s assumption that “everything that exists must of necessity be somewhere” (*Tim.* 52b). This statement is also aligned with Plato’s description of the second kind as that which is not stable and always in flux. For Aristotle, things of Plato’s second kind, which are most like his own primary substances, are in nature, and “nature has been defined as a ‘principle of motion and change’.”<sup>111</sup> Since “movement or change in general is precisely the passage from potential being to actual being,”<sup>112</sup> then we must curb our modern assumption that movement entails only locomotion. Rather, Aristotle holds that “there are as many types of motion or change as there are meanings of the word ‘is’,”<sup>113</sup> including change in substance, quality, quantity, and place. Locomotion is change of place, and thus the most primary and apparent sense of change. To speak of place, therefore, requires considering the locomotive movement of bodies in the world.

Aristotle begins his investigation into the nature of place by questioning whether place is more rightly considered as: 1) the limit which *primarily* contains each body, and, as such, is the form by which the magnitude or matter is defined, or, 2) the *extension* of the magnitude, and, as such, would be the matter which is contained by the form.

Aristotle holds that Plato equates place with the extension of the magnitude, leading him to say that “Plato in the *Timaeus* says that matter and space are the same; for the

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<sup>110</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 208a30.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* 200b12.

<sup>112</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 294.

<sup>113</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 201a5.

'participant' and space are identical."<sup>114</sup> This text situates Aristotle's discussion of place in the context of a direct commentary on Plato's consideration of place and his third kind.

Aristotle's question of whether place is more akin to the limit or extension of the magnitude of a thing, is a question of whether place is more like the form or the matter of a substance. If place is the primary limit containing each body, then "place would be the form or shape of each body by which the magnitude or the matter of the magnitude is defined: for this is the limit of each body."<sup>115</sup> This possibility equates place with form, since limitation is determination, and form is that which determinately shapes a thing. However, this would be to forget that a thing is limited (determined) intrinsically by the form, as well as extrinsically by the world in which it exists.<sup>116</sup> Aristotle reminds us that "both the shape and the place, it is true, are boundaries. But not of the same thing: the form is the boundary of the thing, the place is the boundary of the body which contains it."<sup>117</sup> In considering a simple two dimensional shape, this limitation from two directions is evident, since we can easily imagine approaching the line (limit) from the inside of the shape as well as from the outside: the resulting limit is the same limit, regardless of the direction from which one approaches it. To call the place and form of a body equivalent limits, would be to conflate the intrinsic, formal limit with the extrinsic, planar surface

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<sup>114</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209b. He does add the caveat that "It is true, indeed, that the account he gives there of the 'participant' is different from what he says in his so-called 'unwritten teaching.' Nevertheless, he did identify place and space" (*Phys.* 209b). It is important to take these comments on place and Aristotle's reading of Plato's kinds and re-examine them in light of Plato's later account of participation as outlined in the unwritten teachings. However, this lies outside of the scope of this project.

<sup>115</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209b4.

<sup>116</sup> For Aristotle, form is *in* substance, so this determination is intrinsic or essential. For Plato, however, the form is not *in* 'substance' since substance has a different status and nature than it does for Aristotle.

<sup>117</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 211b10.

limit. This would result in a conflation of Plato's first and third kinds or causes ascribed to a thing, since the first cause is formal as opposed to spatial.

Such a conflation would also result in making these two distinct kinds merely opposing interpretations (intrinsic and extrinsic) of the same limit, thus reducing the distinction and collapsing the first and third into a single kind. For Aristotle, place cannot be synonymous with form, since form is essential to the determination of the thing itself. Aristotle can happily say that a thing moves between places and retains its form, thus remaining the same substance. However, for a thing to move between forms would destroy the substance, and essentially change what the thing is. Since things change places, yet retain the same form, form and place can be neither identical nor opposed.

Place is the limit of the thing in every sense other than formal, and, as such, it is neither a primary substance for Aristotle (or a thing of Plato's second kind), nor a non-body (nothing), nor a form (intrinsic limit, something of the first kind). Rather, place must be another kind. Place is distinct from substances and distinguishes limits in a manner unique unto itself: it is what is outside the substance, but *in* the world. Place is "the first immobile limit of what contains a thing,"<sup>118</sup> or, the motionless limit imposed on a body from the outside world, in contrast to the intrinsic limit of form. Place is distinct in its non-opposition to form, thus, we can begin to align Aristotle's place with Plato's third kind, insofar as it is neither first nor second kind, but somehow other.

After discrediting the alignment of place with form, the next possibility that Aristotle entertains is that place is more closely related to matter:

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<sup>118</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 212a20.

If we regard the place as the *extension* of the magnitude, it is the matter. For this is different from the magnitude: it is what is contained and defined by the form, as by a bounding plane. Matter or the indeterminate is of this nature; when the boundary and attributes of a sphere are taken away, nothing but matter is left. This is why Plato in the *Timaeus* says that matter [hyle] and space [chora] are the same; for the participant and space are identical.<sup>119</sup>

For Aristotle, matter is that which is limited *by* form, thus, it is what remains when the formal boundary is stripped away. If one melts a gold sculpture, it remains gold. Here, substance is a hylomorphic complex of form and matter, so Aristotle acknowledges the difficulty in recognizing them apart, insofar as they are inseparable in their actual existence as substance. Reale reminds us that “only the composite of matter and form can change because only matter implies potentiality; the hylomorphic structure of sensible reality necessarily implies matter, therefore potentiality is the root of every change and movement,”<sup>120</sup> which is to say that matter, as potentiality, is an intrinsic cause of change. However, Aristotle writes that “it is the fulfillment of what is potential when it is already fully real and operates not as *itself* but as *movable*, that is motion. What I mean by ‘as’ is this: Bronze is potentially a statue. But it is not the fulfillment of bronze as bronze which is motion. For ‘to be bronze’ and ‘to be a certain potentiality’ are not the same.”<sup>121</sup> As such, matter itself cannot be equivalent to the external condition of place in which something exists, for we would arrive at the same impasse as when we tried to equate place and form: place would be in the substance, with no distinction between the two. Thus, place can be neither form nor matter. Rather, place is precisely that which *is*

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<sup>119</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209b.

<sup>120</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 295.

<sup>121</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 201a30.

separable from substance, since substance (as composite of form and matter) changes places while remaining substantially the same. Were place equivalent, or opposed, to either form or matter, a body could not change places and remain the same substance, which is patently false, for Aristotle at least, since this is precisely what happens during locomotion. Aristotle's comment on Plato's identity of matter and space suggests that he sees Plato to be collapsing two conditions, that are quite separate in his philosophy, into one. Aristotle's comment is not so much an exposure of Plato's mistakes but rather, is a comment on the kinds and their relation to each other. For both philosophers, the conception of place is inextricably related to the way in which bodies are defined.

For Plato, the equation of the extension of the magnitude, matter, and, place, that Aristotle attributes to him, is not blasphemous. Plato's third kind is like a single Aristotelian substance in which different qualities appear, instead of there being discreet substances moving between places. Returning to the consideration of the third kind as that *in which* and *out of which* things are made, we see this accusation of an apparent collapse to be a non-issue for Plato, since he holds there to be just one 'matter of the world.' The mirror analogy showed that Plato's third kind is a condition of the appearance of phenomena in which Plato sees the relation between first and second kind to be reflective, instead of being a hylomorphic complex of form and matter *in* the substance. In this way, the third kind is akin to the condition of matter as opposed to a particular matter. Furthermore, Plato does not have real locomotion in Aristotle's sense.

Aristotle acknowledges that place "has three dimensions, length, breadth, depth, the dimensions by which all body also is bounded. But the place cannot *be* body; for if it

were there would be two bodies in the same place.”<sup>122</sup> In the case of Plato’s world, all apparent things are parts of the greater whole, just as images are reflected by, and thus existent in, the mirror. However, in this account, the resulting ramifications for the second kind cause the account to fall out of line with Aristotle’s foundational understanding of primary substances. For Aristotle, a conception of apparent things as parts of a greater whole, carries issues with regards to change, particularly locomotion. If the world space is a single substance, any locomotion would entail a substantive change, or a qualitative change *in* a single substance, as opposed to the locomotive change of a body with regards to place. For Aristotle, the consideration of a world composed of a single substance removes any ontological distinction between space and appearance. Furthermore, any movement would change the status of the substance, of both the apparent body and the place it occupies in the world. A stone falling through water would not be a body moving through a place, but rather, each particular place that the apparent stone passes through would be more rightly described as that particular bit of place taking on the stone’s particular qualities. This latter conception illustrates how Plato’s third kind, as a mirror, takes on reflected qualities as an image moves through it, and highlights a crucial difference between the nature of substance in Plato’s and Aristotle’s thought.

For Aristotle, place is ontologically distinct from substance: it has size and dimensions, but is not a body. As such, it cannot be (or be composed of) elements, and is that which is outside the limits that allow us to think of bodies. The place of a body is the surface of the *stuff in which* the body appears: “this surface, though not itself a physical

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<sup>122</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209a.



body, just pertains to some physical body, of which it is the surface, existing in the body not as material part but as an essential attribute.”<sup>123</sup> All physical bodies have a place, since there is always a surface between the substance of the body and the substance of the outside world. This limit is part of neither substance. Rather, it is the plane at which they meet. Thus, place is distinct from the other kinds, but is a condition by which those other kinds can be and be known, for both Plato and Aristotle.

Aristotle’s initial observation was that it is not difficult to see that place can be neither form nor matter since “the form and matter are not separate from the thing, whereas place can be separated.”<sup>124</sup> Rather, place is that which is left behind by a substance. Let us consider the physical example of a stone falling through water to illustrate the relation of these categories in Aristotle’s world, such that we can reflect back onto the relation between kinds as illustrated in Plato’s world. The stone itself is a phenomenal body: it appears in the world, regardless of whether it is considered as a composite of form and matter, or, as a reflection of a formal stone in a receptacle. As the stone is dropped in a vessel, it moves through the contained water: the substantial body and outer surface of the stone itself remain the same, however, its place, and the surface of water around it, will change as it sinks and displaces the water around it. With each moment, the position, or particular place, of the stone changes within the vessel: it moves from one place to another, leaving that place behind (the position within the particular surface of water) during locomotive change. Substantially, neither the stone nor the water

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<sup>123</sup> Aristotle, *Physics Books I-IV*, trans. P.H. Wicksteed and F.M. Cornford, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 270.

<sup>124</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209b23.

change. Water, as the place in which the stone moves is “what is motionless: so it is rather the whole [body of water] that is place, because as a whole it is motionless.”<sup>125</sup> Neither the stone qua stone, nor the place qua whole which is left behind and essentially outside the body, change. Rather, the body changes places. Cornford asks of this image:

If at any moment [the stone’s] motion is arrested what will its place be? Aristotle would answer ‘The aqueous surface which at that moment constitutes its immediate envelope.’ This is vital to his conception of place-proper. The place-proper of the stone, at any moment, is not the whole body of water but the aqueous surface immediately enveloping it at that moment... It is therefore (like any other surface, or length, or extension) a reality and even a quantitative reality, for things really are long, and just *so* long, and really have surfaces of definite dimensionality and (in the case of a spherical surface, for example) capacity. But an *actual* surface cannot exist apart from some physical body whose surface it is, in this case the whole undifferentiated mass of water in the flask.<sup>126</sup>

We now have a distinction between ‘place-proper’ and ‘place-common,’ in which the former corresponds to the immediate enveloping surface of a body, and the latter corresponds to the more general, motionless place through which a body moves. Miller asserts that Plato has a similar distinction, according to which he uses the term *χώρα* (chora, receptacle) as both synonymous with *topos* (τόπος), and “as something like a collective or mass term [...] [it] refers equally to the place occupied by each body in the world and to all of these places collectively.”<sup>127</sup> Here, the term *χώρα* works similarly to Cornford’s reading of Aristotle’s water above: as generally referring to the particular parts

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<sup>125</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 212a15.

<sup>126</sup> Cornford, *Physics*, 268.

<sup>127</sup> Miller, *Plato’s Third Kind*, 132. See Liddell and Scott. s.v. *χώρα*: “1. space, or room in which a thing is, defined as partially occupied space. 2. generally, place or spot. 3. the position, proper place of a thing. (p 2015). s.v. *τόπος*: 1. place, region. 2. place, position. 3. place, part of the body” (p 1806). These are similar, though the former seems to be the proper place of a thing, while the latter is more so a part of a larger whole. Thus it would seem that *χώρα* is the more general, while *τόπος* is a proper place within that more general *χώρα*.

of liquid that are in that glass, that puddle, that ocean, but also, as the sum total of that element or substance. Place refers to both those particularized places of apparent substances, that glass or puddle, and, to the general and universal place, as any “image should come to be *in* something else” (*Tim.* 52c): place. Plato does not distinguish between these senses; they are both embedded in his usage of the term  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$ .

In *Physics I*, Aristotle states “that there is place seems to be evident from replacement [...] but this thing seems to be something different from all the bodies that come into it and exchange places.”<sup>128</sup> Sensibly, we notice change. Through change, we are able to discern the stability of bodies and substances as the substrate of that change: bodies are the substrate of qualitative change. Similarly, place is the substrate in which locomotive change occurs: we recognize the movement of a body because there is a stable *thing* through which it moves. Yet, we only perceive bodies. Just as substance is known through our apprehension of bodies, place is apprehended indirectly as that which remains outside of the change that we perceive. Thus, motion requires a third condition, *something* different from the composite body and its form and matter. This other condition, allowing us to describe position and change, is always present, self-same, and imperceptible in a different way from the body that we perceive directly. This recognition suggests a separate condition that persists throughout the change of a substantial body.

Returning to Aristotle’s falling stone, we see that the enveloping aqueous surface is the particular place of the stone’s body, and is most akin to  $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$ , or, the first sense of  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  outlined by Miller. However, there is also a more general place in which this

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<sup>128</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 208b1.

locomotive change in place may occur: the ‘place-common’ or place that contains other places, similar to the second sense of  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$  outlined by Miller. As the limit imposed from the outside world, place is the constant condition that receives things in the world, and by which we judge the spatial relation between a particular thing and the world. As that which allows us to judge locomotive change, we say that things come into place as water replaces air in a vessel. This replacement suggests that locomotion, as change in positional place, is contained within more general immobile place.<sup>129</sup>

Replacement does not suggest that place is destroyed, but rather, a different element or body is now occupying that place. In this non-destruction, place must be *something* regardless of the difficulties in describing its essential nature. Place is difficult to describe in the established framework, because it cannot be form, nor matter, nor a combination of the two (substance); thus, it must be something essentially different from everything that we have thus far described. Neither can it be like a kind or attribute thus far described, nor can it be a nothingness, or absolute void. Place must be a *thing*, an irreducible attribute of a thing in the world, and an irreducible condition of things in the world in general. It is elusive and obscure like Plato’s third kind.

For Aristotle, the existence of place is evident by mutual replacement. For example, any vessel that can be said to contain water, was previously filled with air, so when “another body occupies this same place, the place is thought to be different from all the bodies which come to be in it and replace one another [...] [C]learly the place or

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<sup>129</sup> Of course, there are also other types of change, not merely locomotion, but regardless of the sort of change, “there is no such thing as motion *over and above* the things. It is always with respect to substance or to quantity or to quality or to place that what changes changes” (*Phys* 200b30). In this way, substance can also act as the place in which other change, such as quantitative or qualitative change, may occur.

space into which and out of which [bodies] passed was something different from both.”<sup>130</sup> Place is *something* left behind by a body or substantial thing; it is separable, and, as such, must be of a different kind. This mutual replacement demonstrates that two different bodies can occupy one place at different times, yet remain the same bodies. Place is not *part* of a substantial body (as neither form nor matter), but rather, is separable from it. For Aristotle, form and matter resemble each other insofar as they are determinate and *in* substance; place is utterly different, just as the third kind, as γένος, is utterly different from the first two kinds, as εἶδη. The immobility of place serves as the fixed state or condition for the mobility of bodies. However, just as two bodies are distinct, so are two places. The limitation or determination of a place is more dependent on external conditions than is the determination of a bodily limit: the latter remains with the body no matter where it moves, while the determination of a place is wholly dependent on a limit imposed from something outside of it.

Returning to Aristotle’s example of a falling stone, we see that the limit of the stone is determined by its own form. On the other hand, the water, as the place in which the stone moves, is limited by the shape of the bottle. The place of the water can only be described by the limits of the bodies of its container and the things moving throughout it. We cannot perceive this place directly, nor can we describe and recognize it in a positive and direct way; rather, we can only apprehend it by way of examining change and what is left behind by the motion of another, perceivable substance. As that which is left behind, place is the condition of the phenomenal world that we cannot *see*. As such, it is “thought

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<sup>130</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 208b6.

to be something important and hard to grasp, [since] the matter and the shape present themselves along with it.”<sup>131</sup> Just as the receptacle never presents itself without the appearance of the second kind, so too must we approach place in a dreamlike state. As that which contains, Aristotle reminds us that “the place of a thing is neither a part nor a state of it, but is separable from it. For place is supposed to be something like a vessel - the vessel being a transportable place.”<sup>132</sup> Aristotle’s recognition of a transportable place also recalls the layered sense of place:

Just, in fact, as the vessel is transportable place, so place is a non-portable vessel. So when what is within a thing which is moved, is moved and changes its place, as a boat in a river, what contains plays the part of a vessel rather than that of place. Place on the other hand is rather what is motionless: so it is rather the whole river that is place, because as a whole it is motionless. <sup>133</sup>

With this recognition of the dual sense of place, as both the particular and universal fixed state that allows bodies to move and us to perceive that change, Aristotle has removed the possibility of regression ad infinitum. We are not tempted to seek the place of a place, since place, as a condition, describes both the immediate boundaries surrounding a particular body as well as the more general condition of a motionless spatial context. In this way, Aristotle’s place comes into closer alignment with Plato’s third kind.

As we saw when investigating the receptacle, described earlier as ‘place,’ a third kind exerts an influence on that which it receives. The receptacle is neither a static vessel, nor a void. Rather, something about the nature of the imbalanced powers of the elements,

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<sup>131</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 212a5.

<sup>132</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209b25.

<sup>133</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 212a15.

the nature of place, and the relation between the two, orders their motion. Reale writes that “a ‘natural place’ exists to which each of the elements tends, when they are not impeded,”<sup>134</sup> suggesting that the directions in which these elements move (up, down, etc.) are not merely relative to us; rather, they are objective and natural determinations:

It is not every chance direction which is ‘up’, but where fire and what is light are carried; similarly, too, ‘down’ is not any chance direction but where what has weight and what is made of earth is carried - the implication being that these places do not differ merely in relative position, but also as possessing distinct potencies.<sup>135</sup>

Since the direction that an element moves is dependent on its nature, then locomotive change in place is not random change in relative position. Instead, place is contrasted with position: position is reducible to a number, and describes a point in space, whereas place is the enveloping limit required such that a thing can appear. Were place merely position, it would be merely relative to other places, and could not be an irreducible condition. This possibility is excluded by the aforementioned senses of place as proper and common: in describing a place as position in a particular moment, place as an overarching condition of a motionless container envelopes all particular positions. Furthermore, since the nature of substantial bodies dictates their locomotion, both the thing and the places between which it is moving, must have some determinate nature such that direction is not merely relative. Aristotle dispels mere relativity with the suggestion that fire moves upwards because of the nature of fire itself, as well as a difference between some place which is low and some place which is high. Place, as a

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<sup>134</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 296.

<sup>135</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 208b 21.

determinate, yet non-substantial *thing*, has a potency for receiving bodies, and receiving the collective of bodies that is the apparent world; position is merely a particular area within that more universal place. In this way, we could consider position as a point and place as the matrix in which that point can exist. One can have place without position, but not position without place.

### 3.3 Senses of *In*

The analogies employed thus far have involved considering things in place. To say that matter, participant, and space are identical, as Aristotle holds Plato to claim, and to relate this identification to the obscure, characterless being of the receptacle, requires one to consider the ways in which one thing can be *in* another. Aristotle's next step is to account for the senses in which we can say that one thing can be said to be 'in' another, such that we can discern which sense of *in* is most closely related to, and properly said to be, the inness of place as the third kind.<sup>136</sup> The senses of the preposition used to indicate place speak to the categories discussed in the *Physics*, namely that *things* can be known based on (1) substance (what they are as instances of form and matter), (2) quality (the aspects that are said to be *in them*), and (3) quantity (the quantifiable aspects that are in a body but are not substances themselves, such as line, shape, and most notably, place).

The senses of *in* refer to the categories and their relation to bodies and the world. In *Physics* 4.3, Aristotle lists (8) senses of *in*. The first two senses (1 and 2) describe the

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<sup>136</sup> This is the notion of place as described in the *Physics* as opposed to place as outlined in the *Categories*. At this point, I will only be referring to place as inness as it relates to the third kind. I will not be engaging in place as state laid out in the *Categories*.



relation of parts to whole: the parts of a thing are in the whole of that thing, like fingers are in a hand, but also, the whole is in the parts insofar as there is no separable whole other than the sum of the parts. Senses (3 and 4) are the relations between particulars and universals: the members of a genus are in that genus, but the genus is also in the individual that exhibits its character, just as man is in animal and animal is in man. Sense (5) entails qualities in substances, just as hotness and coldness are in the body that exhibits these qualities. Senses (6 and 7) regard motives, the existence of a thing rests in its good. That is to say, the existence of a thing rests in its final cause; its purpose or good is its existence. Finally, sense (8) is a direct description of place, and is considered to be the strictest sense of all: it is the sense in which one can say that *something* is in a vessel. While this usage may seem to be the most obvious, it is impossible to ignore the language of “sense in which” used to describe how any of these particular uses fall under the more general use of *in*. The language itself illuminates implicit assumptions that we have about the relation of place. From Aristotle’s list, we see that qualities and quantities are *in* substances, and substances are *in* places, but the status of *in* differs in each case, since quality, substance, and place are very different specifications. Quality and quantity are predicates present in substance, while place is a condition of a substance’s appearance.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> In the strictest sense, each body has a particular place within some container. However, as has been demonstrated, these vessels themselves can be said to move, so place is also the most general condition of immobility as that against which mobility is judged. In this way, a body can move between particular places within a common place, for example, a body can move between places within a river, however the body is always in the river, and in that way the river qua river, and qua place common, does not change. The water of the river may always be moving, as Heraclitus famously points out, however, as a common place, that river does not change. Similarly, a body acts as a place of non-locomotive change: it is the substrate that remains essentially the same, insofar as neither the form nor the matter change, throughout other qualitative changes. For example, my body does not change in its human-ness as I blush or grow colder. In this way, the bodily substance is the motionless vessel in which other sorts of change can occur. This is another layer of the sense of place that aids in accounting for change other than locomotion.

In differentiating place from both form and matter, we have seen that for Aristotle, place cannot be a substance because there can be no interpenetrating of primary substances. Only one part of the *in* relation can be substantial, since substances are the most fundamental of the categories “in virtue of the fact that they are the entities which underlie everything else, and that everything is either predicated of them or present in them.”<sup>138</sup> So, quality can be in a substance, substance can be in a place, but quality and place cannot be substances themselves since a substance cannot be in another substance.<sup>139</sup> Similarly, we can make an argument for the impenetrability of place by place, and the non-void nature of place, based on this conception of substantial bodies as the fundamental entities. Cornford notes that,

Conceptually a continuous mass, can be subdivided indefinitely, but since surfaces cannot constitute a mass any more than points can constitute a line, there must always be some continuous mass between two ‘places’. Thus a ‘place’ is never ‘in another place’ in the sense in which a content is in its continent.<sup>140</sup>

A place cannot be in another place (in the same sense) due to the continuous nature of its surfaces: place is not an empty space made up of discreet points with nothing between them. Aristotle states that “things are called continuous when the touching limits of each

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<sup>138</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 2b15.

<sup>139</sup> A primary substance cannot be *in* another primary substance because “it is a common characteristic of all substance that it is never present in a subject” (*Cat.* 3a5). We should keep in mind that senses (3 and 4) refer to quality: my dog Charlie is *in* the substance Dog insofar as he exhibits dog, the form, as the secondary substance, so Charlie is *in* Dog and Dog is *in* Charlie insofar as it is a quality of him, and the substances have different statuses (of primary and secondary). One could not say that two substances of the same priority, primary, could be in the same place. In the Aristotelian model, they could not be in the same space. Because Plato, on the other hand, holds substance to be neither a complex of form and matter, nor the most fundamental of categories, this issue of substances appearing in other substances differs in his cosmology. Quality will remain predicable of the second kind, but since the status of the second kind, and thus of ‘substance,’ is different for Plato than it is for Aristotle, we will have to account for the third kind as a fundamental principle of place as it differs from the first and second kinds.

<sup>140</sup> Cornford, *Physics*, 269.

become one and the same, and are, as the word implies, contained in each other.”<sup>141</sup> In this way, a body is continuous because all of its parts make up a whole, and space is continuous, just as “lines are intermediate between points.”<sup>142</sup> Space is “a continuous quality for the parts of a solid occupy a certain space, and these have a common boundary; it follows that the parts of a space also, which are occupied by the parts of the solid, have the same common boundary as the parts of the solid.”<sup>143</sup> Returning to the vessel of water, we can say that the vessel, as place, is continuous, and the place-proper of a body in that water is discreet only insofar as it refers to the particular enveloping surface place around a particular body. However, these particular places do not have absolute limits, rather, the limits touch and become one and the same, making the place as a whole continuous. This continuity of the general place (here, the water) ensures that the stone, and the water that it moves through, can be subdivided indefinitely. The reciprocal relation of body to place is completed: a body is in a place constituted by the surface of its container, and that surface must pertain to some body to be a place. Place is not constituted by its own dimensions; since it is not a substance it does not have its own form and matter. Rather, the dimensions of a place are determined by the dimensions of the extended thing that occupies it. A thing cannot be its own place, for that would be to disregard the necessity of an external and enveloping surface.

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<sup>141</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 226b10.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* 227a30.

<sup>143</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 5a10.

Recall that for Aristotle, substance is the primary category on which all other categories depend and to which they refer. The individual body (primary substance) is the fundamental entity of the world, and, as such, is the most pertinent unit by which to judge and understand the world and its philosophical implications, since “they underlie and are the subjects of everything else.”<sup>144</sup> Logically, primary substance can only be applied to any *in* relation once since “it is a common characteristic of all substance that it is never present in a subject.”<sup>145</sup> To have substance as both the thing and its place would be to destroy the necessary difference needed to recognize that substance and identify it as primary. For Aristotle, if a particular substance, here the stone, were *in* another substance, water, in a way other than place, it would be to remove the essential distinction between substances, thereby making the stone a part of the water, and destroying the priority of, and ability to distinguish between, substances. In such a relation there can be no ‘place’ as such, since place would be mere a relative location within the greater substance.

This conflation between substance and the place in which it appears, is precisely what is called into question when considering Plato’s receptacle, if it is considered as a single Aristotelian substance allowing for appearances: what is the relation between place and substance when there is but one of each? For Aristotle, the weaker (1-7) senses of *in* have ambiguities with regards to priority and direction of understanding, while the strict sense of *in* as ‘in place,’ is clear: a substance can be in a place, but a place cannot be in a substance in the same way. This strong sense of *in* provides insight into the tripartite

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* 3a.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* 3a5.

relation between Platonic kinds of being: how first is in second and third, how second is in third, and how third cannot be in either first or second. Rather, the third kind is the place in which the others are received in the manner that their kind allows.

The fundamental difference between quality/quantity and substance is what makes Aristotle wary of aligning place with either form or matter. To say that place is one of these two would be to say that place is *in* substance, and that place is an inseparable part of body, or is in some way a hylomorphic substance itself. Cornford reminds us that when speaking of place, Aristotle holds tight to “the principle that would now be expressed as ‘the relativity of position.’ To speak of the ‘absolute’ position - of either a point or the universe - would have been unmeaning to him because ‘position’ only exists in relation to some intrinsic frame of reference’.”<sup>146</sup> Instead, for Aristotle, place is a quantity unto itself, describing the lines and surfaces of the space *outside of* the substantial body, “the boundary of the containing body at which it is in contact with the contained body.”<sup>147</sup> Thus, place is relative to the substantial body; it is related as container, yet is always extricable from it, as opposed to the inseparable causes of the substance itself.<sup>148</sup>

As suggested by Cornford above, there are two ways in which to describe something’s place: the proper place of a thing (the bottle the wine is in), and the common place that contains that thing and other bodies (the cabinet in which the wine and other liquors are stored). However, just as the same name may refer to both the individual

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<sup>146</sup> Cornford, *Physics*, 267.

<sup>147</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 212a5.

<sup>148</sup> See Aristotle, *Categories* 6 (Quantity) and 8 (Quality).

(primary substance) and its form (secondary substance), so too do these two places describe some kind of physical limit within which the thing is contained, though in a different scope: proper and common. As limit, the place differs from form as the condition pertaining to how the body is *in the world* as opposed to what is *in the body*. A thing's place is not constituted by the place's dimensions, but rather, place is that which is necessary, but extrinsic, to a thing, and which allows us to consider what it means for a body to be *in* something.

### 3.4 A Comparison of Aristotle's Place and Plato's Third Kind

We may consider Aristotle's place in a similar manner to our consideration of Plato's receptacle: as the condition in which bodies appear. Place itself cannot be substance, for if this were the case, then we could not have bodies in places, for that would be to say that a substance exists within another substance. However, place also cannot be a nothingness, for in this case as well, we have no proper framework in which to speak of things being in a place; one cannot say that a substance appears in a nothing or void, and "not even movement in respect of place involves a void; for bodies may simultaneously make room for one another, though there is no interval separate and apart from the bodies that are in movement."<sup>149</sup> Both Aristotle and Plato argued against the existence of the void. Place is not on the continuum of substance to nothingness: it must be something outside of this opposition. For Aristotle, place is that in which locomotive

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<sup>149</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 214a30.

change may occur, and as such, is distinct from substance, form, matter, and nothingness. In this way, place seems to be similar to Plato's third kind as we have described it.

Due to the strict sense of *in* as the way a thing is in a place, it has become clear that Aristotle does not regard place as synonymous with matter. Yet, he states that Plato considers space and matter to be the same, illustrating a fundamental difference between the two; namely, that the notion of matter, and its pertinence to phenomena, differs between the two philosophies. For Plato, matter is not *in* substance in the same way as it is for Aristotle. If matter is akin to the third kind for Plato, then it is a *condition* of the appearance of the second kind, as opposed to an essential component of Aristotelian primary substances themselves.

Miller writes about the relationships between Aristotelian and Platonic conditions:

Aristotle seems to charge that Plato confused matter and space in his account of the Receptacle. Place might be taken as the "extension of magnitude" if place is viewed not as a limit of the container, as Aristotle himself thinks (209b1-6), but as what falls within the limits of a container. Aristotle distinguishes between ... "the magnitude and the matter of the magnitude" (b4). He calls [the latter] *υποδοχή*.<sup>150</sup>

Aristotle's claim, that for Plato, the participant and space are identical, is unsurprising if we recall the continuity highlighted between Plato's receptacle and Aristotle's conception of mind in the previous chapter. Just as the mind is continuous with the thoughts that occupy it, so too are the things of Plato's second kind continuous with that in which they appear. However, for this conception of the relation between mind and thoughts to be congruent with what we have already said about the third as place, we must make more

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<sup>150</sup> Miller, *Plato's Third Kind*, 29.

explicit the relation between place, space, and matter, for it does not, from the previous discussion, seem obvious that Plato holds that they are synonymous.

The conception of matter as condition, as opposed to a principle of a hylomorphic composite, speaks to the difference in the status of substance between the Plato and Aristotle, and allows us to consider place differently as well. For Plato, the alignment of place and matter bestows upon them a similar status as conditions of appearances (as opposed to being separate categories of being). Given such an alignment, it is more acceptable to say that for Plato, images appear *in* matter as they appear *in* place than it would be for Aristotle, since both matter and place are conditions that allow things to appear and be modeled on a formal paradigm. This ontological difference between Plato's phenomena and Aristotle's substantial bodies, also hearkens to the semantic distinction already made between the *in which* and *out of which* status of matter and the third kind. For Plato, there is no difference, as both are conditions of the appearance of the second kind, while for Aristotle, the *in which* refers to the strict sense of place, and the *out of which* refers to the material principle of the hylomorphic substance.

The Aristotelian terms, *matter*, *place*, and *space* cannot be accurately applied to Plato's Receptacle without some modification or caveat. Miller cites Jacob Bassfreund as the most thorough advocate of the position that the Receptacle is extension, which is not to be confused with Aristotle's matter. Rather,  $\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha$

Is the *principle* of stability; it is not *immanent material* but *the external spatial condition for the possibility that things come to be*. In this interpretation, the



Receptacle is neither matter nor space as Aristotle would understand the terms, but is the bare subject for that which appears, that is, what comes to be.<sup>151</sup>

Furthermore, the Receptacle encompasses a sort of thinghood itself, insofar as it is not limited, yet is not nothing, and is the thing *in which* members of the second kind can appear: the mirror itself. It remains distinct from the second kind, yet we seem to be able to call place a thing, insofar as *chora* is a “quasi-entity” or “a radically different non-something.”<sup>152</sup> Aristotle also acknowledges this tension, and follows his statement concerning Plato on the identity of matter and space with the statement that: “in view of these facts we should naturally find difficulty in determining what place is, if indeed it is one of these two things, matter or form.”<sup>153</sup> Since the kinds are so inextricably related, anything that we say about the third kind will have direct ramifications for our conception of the second kind, and vice versa. Thus, we must refine our conceptions of substance, space, and matter, in both Platonic and Aristotelian terms, in order to make place, and hence the third kind, more explicit. Only then can we judge the value and truth of Aristotle’s statement about Plato (that space and matter, space and participant, are identical) and use it to make further sense of the nature of Plato’s cosmos.

### **3.5 *In Which* and *Out of Which* of Plato’s Third Kind**

As previously demonstrated by the mirror analogy, that *in which* things appear is a much more pertinent designation for Plato’s third kind than that *out of which*. The latter

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<sup>151</sup> Miller, *Plato’s Third Kind*, 31.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>153</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 209b17.

can generally be used to designate an Aristotelian conception of matter, as the potency of, and thus *in*, a primary substance. Aristotle does concede that the gold of a sculpture is both the material out of which the sculpture is made, but also the subject of change, since “in all its forms, becoming supposes a substrate (which is a potential being) which passes from one opposite to another.”<sup>154</sup> As the condition of potentiality, matter is that which undergoes the change that results in a sculpture with a particular form. For Plato, the *in which* determination is more pertinent to the third kind, since change appears as the receptacle is imprinted with various forms, without changing qua itself. However, as the mirror analogy demonstrated, the *in which* need not be differentiated from the *out of which* a thing appears. As the stable condition that allows for the flux of becoming, Plato’s third kind is not *in* a thing, rather things become *in* it. We can say that the second kind is *in* the third in the strict sense of place (8), but the first kind as form is only *in* the third in a weaker sense of genus (3/4) as opposed to the spatial sense.

In the gold analogy, gold qua gold is the matter *out of which* sculptures are made. It is also the condition *in which* change occurs insofar as an infinite number of shapes can be appear in it. However, its potentiality is limited: gold matter can be the third condition of a world made up of only gold sculptures, but its character is too specific to account for the infinite number of appearances in the world as we experience it. Insofar as it has a particular physical configuration, it cannot be the condition of all sculpt-able things. In the mirror analogy, the mirror itself is the condition *in which* things appear, as opposed to the stuff *out of which* things become, as in the gold analogy. Mirror bits do not get shaped

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<sup>154</sup> Reale, *Plato and Aristotle*, 295.

into appearances, instead, bits of the mirror express images in the likeness of the first kind, but remain unchanged qua mirror. As the *in which* condition, the mirror can be considered as a material cause: it is the necessary condition working in conjunction with the first kind to give rise to the second kind, allowing things to appear. As neither form (first) nor appearance (second), it is like matter insofar as it has not yet been accounted for, though the *in which* designation brings with it a more obvious allusion to place.

Yet, as has been noted, reflected images do not bear the same independent substantiality as do sculpted bodies. Considering the relation between kinds in the sense of Aristotle's primary substances is useful to help uncover implicit assumptions about the terms we were using to describe the kinds as they are presented by Plato. However, Plato's image of the world as reflected in a mirror does not make sense in Aristotle's world of discreet bodily substances, since Plato's cosmos is more akin to a conception of the world as one continuous substance that takes on the qualities determined by the first kind. This reflective mode of appearance bears too much dependency of second on third to give rise to separate things as discreet primary substances. While the gold sculpture analogy is appropriate to describe Aristotle's discreet, primary substances, it leads us astray when used to consider Plato's second kind. However, both the gold and mirror analogies give us some condition of place from which things are inextricable, though the extent of dependance and separability of this place from the material condition differs.

As the condition *in which* things appear, the mirror is the thing most closely related to substance, as that which allows reflection to occur, and can be considered to be the *thing* most akin to Aristotelian matter in the framework that Plato is suggesting here.

If we take this to be the case, then Aristotle's statement that Plato holds that matter and space are the same, does not seem so reductive. Under Aristotle's conception of matter as that which takes on form, and place as that which receives bodies and allows for their locomotive change, place and matter cannot be identical. This would be to conflate the *in which* and the *out of which* conditions. However, in Plato's conception of the mirror as receptacle, both space and matter refer to that *in which* things appear, as opposed to that *out of which* they appear, making the distinction between the two irrelevant. Were space and matter merely that *out of which* things came to be, we would fall into the same regress that was examined in considering place as substance, and in considering the third kind as composed of a specific matter. In both of these cases, we would still have to call on some other condition to consider how the essential determination of either a substance or particular matter could account for the infinite set of phenomena in the world as we experience it. We would also still have to account for the way in which matter exists in space, since there would be no dimension of place in the relation. Once matter is considered to be that *in which* things appear, as opposed to that *out of which* bodies are made, then one sees why Plato would consider space and matter to be identical: both are continuous and constitute the surfaces of both bodies and places.

This distinction, between that *in which* and *out of which* things appear, is crucial for distinguishing the priority of substance and matter for Plato and Aristotle. For Aristotle, "'nature' means the primary material of which any natural object consists, or out of which it is made, which is relatively unshaped and cannot be changed from its own potency [...] when a product is made out of these materials, the first matter is preserved

throughout.”<sup>155</sup> In this way, “matter is called the nature because it is qualified to receive [a formal essence],”<sup>156</sup> and as such is that *out of which* substance comes to be, making substance a composite of form and matter. This composite appears in a place, though the place itself is separable from the substance as an external condition. For Plato, however, there is one *condition* of place and apparent materiality, as opposed to specific materials providing the condition of the appearance of multiple things. Plato’s appearances are neither discreetly separable from their surroundings, nor do they move about in the same independent way. Instead, his world is more like a single Aristotelian substance that is the condition *out of which* and *in which* things become apparent. Just as matter is qualified to receive forms for Aristotle, Plato’s receptacle receives character from elsewhere, namely the first kind, to give rise to the appearance of the second kind. The apparent elements are not discreet bodies, but rather, “the most correct way to speak of it may well be this: the part of [the receptacle] that gets ignited appears on each occasion as fire, the dampened part as water, and parts as earth or air insofar as it receives the imitations of these” (*Tim.* 51b). Thus, for Plato, the distinction of *in which* and *out of which*, which is the basis for the Aristotelian distinction of place and matter, is moot, insofar as the two conditions are merged into a single condition exhibited by the third kind. The receptacle is the place in which things appear insofar as qualities of things are imprinted on it.

Analogues for each of the three kinds can be found in both images of sculptures and mirrors, though the independence and status of primary substances (as second kind)

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<sup>155</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1014b25.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* 1015a15.

differs. For Aristotle, things as complexes of form and matter are *in* the world in the strictest sense of place (8) with both conditions *in* the thing in the looser sense of quality (5). For Plato, on the other hand, things are *in* the world insofar as they are *in* the place of the world, the third kind. Neither form nor matter are *in* bodies, for bodies appear only insofar as the third (as both place and matter) exhibits the image of the first kind. The *material* of the third kind is not *in* second kind bodies as a complex, but rather, things of the second kind appear in the single *material* that is the third kind. Like the mirror, the third kind is the *in which* and *out of which* condition; it is not in the appearance as *part of which*; rather, appearances are *in* the receptacle. Things of the second kind are continuous with, or part of, the place in which they occur, which is not the case for the discreet bodies of Aristotle, for whom matter is the principle *out of which* substances appear.

Since place is that which allows us to recognize locomotive change, let us consider motion in each of these analogies. Considering a sculpture being moved around in the world, it is easy to retain the independent and discreet nature of that body and its extricability from the place that it occupies at time one and time two. Air is pushed out of its way as it is moved, however, neither the sculpture, nor the place, is changed qua itself through this movement: the boundaries of both remain intact and unaffected by each other. On the other hand, the mirror analogy illustrates a different world. Since both place and matter seem to be equivalent here, namely, the mirror, as third kind, is both the place *in which* and that *out of which* things appear, the movement of the image in the mirror does not seem equivalent to the movement of a sculpture through space. We would not say that the reflected image has remained intact, and the place surrounding remains

unchanged, rather, the apparent image moves while the place and matter of both remain unchanged. As the image moves, the matter of the mirror does not get pushed aside as water gets pushed by a dropping stone. Instead, a different part of the mirror becomes affected by the image, and a different part of the receptacle takes on the appearance. There is a qualitative change within the single place, which is perceived as the moving appearance. Thus, the distinction between place-common and place-proper is not as definitive for Plato as it is for Aristotle's discreet substances. Here, the place-proper is the particular bit of the third kind that is exhibiting the particular appearance. As the apparent thing moves, we say that the coordinate location of the thing changes, however, the more pertinent distinction is that a different bit of the third kind is now exhibiting the qualities that appear phenomenal as the second kind. So, the place-proper changes because the qualities appear in a different part of the receptacle, as opposed to the particular matter of the body being moved, as would be the case for Aristotle.

For Plato, the particular place is a quality of the particular appearance: it is the relation of the appearance to the common place of the receptacle that changes. Neither the reflected image, nor that in which it appears (matter or place reflecting the image), can exist or move independently of the other. The apparent body is not a substance of continuous mass moving through space or continuous surfaces: there is no substance (in the discreet sense of Aristotle's hylomorphic individual), but rather, an image reflected by a particular bit of the receptacle in which it appears. The image is continuous with the stuff in which it appears, so there is no distinction of continuity between mass and surface; thereby, the stuff of place and participant can be considered identical.

Plato's third kind is a condition that accounts for both the *in which* and *out of which* with the same stroke; the receptacle as such is doing similar work as does Aristotle's notion of matter. With Plato's conception of the second kind as continuous with the third kind, matter is seen to be inseparable from the bodies which appear in it, thus the relation between kinds differs between Plato and Aristotle. With such a conception and identity of space and matter, Plato can consider the second kind to be more akin to the quality, or that which is apparent, while the third is like the substrate. This is opposed to the views of Aristotle, for whom Plato's second kind, as primary substance, remains the composite of form and matter, and the place is that *in which* (not *out of which*) bodies appear. For Aristotle, the two conditions remain separate; matter fulfills the *out of which*, which is present in the body, and place fulfills the *in which*, which is necessarily outside of the body.<sup>157</sup> For Aristotle, place may be continuous (not a void) and ontologically real, but it is distinct from substance insofar as it is the immobile, external limit between body and world, but does not intrinsically determine the shape of the thing itself. Since, for Plato, the *in which* and *out of which* are constituted by the same condition, place and matter can be deemed to be identical in Aristotle's assessment of him, both of which are exhibited by the third kind.

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<sup>157</sup> This consideration of the respective collapsing and distinction of conditions leads us to an interesting consideration of substance as the place *in which* qualities, and the principles of form and matter, come together. While a thing cannot constitute its own place, it could still possibly be considered to be the place of relation of conditions, insofar as the formal and material causes are present in the thing for Aristotle. It also brings us back to the interesting question of number of members of the third kind, and relations of these members to members of the other kinds. On the possibility of conditions and members, Anthony Vidler suggests that Socrates is seen to be the condition on which rhetoric, or discussion, is based: he is the medium through which arguments pass (121). Similarly, the particular mind that imitates the third can be considered to mediate or be the condition of relation of first and second kinds.



This return to Aristotle provided us with a different set of definitions, with which, as we return to Plato, we may use to refine our understanding of his three kinds. While Aristotle spoke strictly of place and its relation to discreet substances, Plato speaks more abstractly about space and its relation to a conception of substance as continuous. Through the previous considerations of his kinds and cosmology, we saw that the kinds must be necessarily and reciprocally, albeit asymmetrically, related, with the understanding of each being strengthened and affected by the understanding of the other. In the bastard manner by which we reason about Plato's third kind in general, we sharpened our consideration of the third kind by way of its relation to Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle's conception of place, as that which is left behind by substance, shows it to be neither form nor matter. Rather, it is something entirely separable, yet necessary for the being and consideration of substance itself. Place is the extrinsically imposed boundary; it is a limit, yet it is distinct from the formal limit. Place is left behind when intrinsic boundaries are stripped away; it is indeterminate, yet distinct from matter. Formal and material conditions are *in* substance, while place is that which is left behind by both; place is determining like form, indeterminate like matter, yet separate and irreducible to either.

With this in mind, we turn back to the differing conceptions of Plato's second kind, and Aristotle's substance, as examined through the gold and mirror analogies to compare the respective roles and conceptions of place. For Aristotle, place is that which is external yet necessary for the discreet bodies that make up the world: place is that *in which* things appear and subsist, the immobile, external boundary of bodies. Plato, on the

other hand, holds that appearances are continuous with that *in which* they appear, so place becomes the *in which* that is blurred with the *out of which*, giving rise to a conception of place that combines aspects of Aristotle's conditions of place and matter. An examination of Aristotle's definitions allows us to reflect back on Plato's conditions of the cosmos with attention to new details, and, as such, we may more precisely account for the nature of and relations between Plato's three kinds as they exist and are experienced in the cosmos.

## Conclusion

This thesis explored Plato's metaphysics as presented in the *Timaeus*, by way of an examination of the three metaphysical kinds of being discussed in the dialogue. As the irreducible and fundamental conditions of reality, metaphysical conditions are the framework on which the cosmos is generated and sustained. Following the politics of the *Republic*, the *Timaeus* gives an account of the generation of the cosmos that is coherent with, and reflective of, the preceding account of the ideal city and political landscape. The conditions outlined in this account have been shown to be irreducible, resulting in a triadic structure of the cosmos: there are three kinds of being that give rise to the world.

Plato begins his cosmological discussion by distinguishing the two kinds of Being explored in his previous dialogues. He questions, "What is *that which always is* and has no becoming, and what is *that which becomes* but never is?" (*Tim.* 28a). Being, as the first kind which always *is*, "is grasped by understanding, which involves a reasoned account. It is unchanging," (*Tim.* 28a) while Becoming, as the second kind, "is grasped by opinion, which involves unreasoning sense perception. It comes to be and passes away but never really is" (*Tim.* 28a). Since the phenomenal world is composed of sensible bodies, it belongs to the second kind, and "everything that comes to be must of necessity come to be by the agency of some cause" (*Tim.* 28a). This necessary cause refers to both the activity of a maker, as well as to the causal relation between the second and first kinds, as hypothesized by the second voyage outlined in the *Phaedo*. Since "the accounts we give of things have the same character as the subjects they set forth" (*Tim.* 29b), an account of the second kind, which is in a constant state of becoming and flux, cannot be

stable and irrefutable. Rather, we cannot know the second kind; we can only have an opinion of it: “accounts of what is a likeness, are themselves likely [...] what being is to becoming, truth is to convincingness” (*Tim.* 29c).

However, our recognition of identity through that constant change in the world, suggests a relative stability about which we are willing to say we have some understanding. We hypothesize a relation between the second and first kinds, whereby Being is “that after which the thing coming to be is modeled, and which is the source of its coming to be” (*Tim.* 50d). This causal relationship is demonstrated by the second voyage, the possibility of which is only valid if we suppose that the relation between the kinds is close, such that the smallest possible degree of degradation is introduced between the first and second kinds. Otherwise, the second kind would be unknowable insofar as the degree of stability and perfection is unknown. The world, as second kind, “is a work of craft, modeled after that which is changeless and grasped by a rational account” (*Tim.* 29a). The phenomenal world is made in the image of the eternal first, yet is itself in a constant state of becoming. Since our world “shares the other’s name and resembles it” (*Tim.* 52b), we understand relations between phenomena and the forms on which they are modeled, thus rendering the world relatively intelligible in its relation to the first kind.

Accordingly with the nature of its object, Timaeus’ account of the world is a likely story, unfolding from metaphysical conditions into an image of the world as it exists in its totality. Since the world itself is of the second kind, we must acknowledge and account for the way in which we intelligently grasp the kinds and conditions according to their manners of existence. However, these conditions are not apprehended

directly as discreet entities; rather, they are examined insofar as we experience the activity stemming from their relations, which are expressed and embodied in the phenomenal world. This acknowledgement reveals the intrinsic relationship between the nature of the kinds, the ways in which we know them, and, the precision that we should expect to find within this very account. The story of cosmogenesis cannot be expected to be perfect and unshakeable, since the world, as the object on which the account is based, is not. We can, however, make sense of the story and the of world which it describes by recalling the first kind in whose image it is made.

The story provides a place in which to examine the kinds, their ongoing relational activity, and, their relation to us and the way in which we know them. Furthermore, the story allows Plato to retain the organic order of kinds by describing the world that they condition, instead of trying to isolate the principles qua themselves. We may then compare his account of a kind to the accounts of the other kinds, and to our experience of the cosmos, such that we may see how Plato constructs a cosmology that embraces the conditions into a unified account of cosmogenesis. By mapping the boundaries and conditions of the world, the story becomes a place in which to observe the activity of the conditions in relation to each other, and to entertain what other conditions (and realizations about them) emerge from the investigation of those original principles, were this story to be the case. Then, the formal shape of the story can be checked for coherence and cohesion before judging it to be a true account.

From the outset of the account of the kinds, the insufficiency of involving merely two kinds was apparent, since “it isn’t possible to combine two things well all by

themselves, without a third; there has to be some bond between the two that unites them” (*Tim.* 31c). Timaeus says that there must be some other condition through which the first two kinds are related. Hitherto, the kinds had been presented with completely opposing characters, leaving the mode or rationale for their union concealed. The second kind is described as *made in the image of* the first, and is overtly dependent, while the first kind is only grasped through experience of the second: it is apprehended by intellection, which is practically facilitated by the second kind. This account of the first two kinds left Plato searching for a plane of commonality, or platform for relation between them. The allusion to the demiurge suggests that there must be some condition to account for the generation and materiality of the second kind. Otherwise, there would be no reason for the kinds to be interrelated in the manner exhibited in our experience of the world, and required by the second voyage.

The language used to describe the relation between kinds revolved around the preposition *in*: the second kind is made *in* the image of the first, it appears *in* the world, and the separation of the kinds occurs *in* the mind. Logically, any condition that allows for an *in* relationship must be distinct from the conditions that it is relating: namely, there must be a third condition aside from the first and second kinds such that they can be brought together. Semantically, Plato identifies the first and second kinds as εἶδη, referring to their determination and shapeliness, while he identifies the third kind as γένος, a more general and indeterminate kind. This distinction suggests that the third kind is more unlike the first two kinds than they are from each other. Alongside Plato’s statement that

there is always a third kind to bind the first two kinds, like a mean between two numbers, the third kind began to embody the relational condition between first and second.

This third kind is the “receptacle of all becoming” (*Tim* 49a), it is a place that receives phenomenal bodies. The receptacle “is space, which exists always and cannot be destroyed. It provides a fixed state for all things that come to be” (*Tim*. 52b). As a metaphysical condition, this third kind cannot be reduced either to the first or second kind, and an explanation of it cannot hinge on forms or appearances. In describing the first moments of phenomenal determination, namely the classical elements, Plato conceived of an underlying substrate or condition that supports the appearance of the elements in a simple sense, which when compounded, give rise to apparent things.

The receptacle is the place in which the first moment of determination occurs, since ‘place,’ as third kind, is neither form nor appearance, but rather, a condition of their relation.. As the condition allowing things to appear in the image of the first kind, “one must always call it by the same name, since it never abandons its own power. It both receives all things, and nowhere in no way has it even taken on any shape similar to the ones that come into it; for it is laid down by nature as moulding stuff for everything” (*Tim*. 50c). The third kind encompasses the place and materiality of a spatial condition, and the activity of an efficient cause, supplying all that is needed for the second kind to appear in the image of the first.

In speaking of the receptacle with allusion to both place and matter, things get tangled for Plato, who rarely makes mention of matter specifically. It is possible that this allusion to the material condition is an anachronistic reading of Aristotle into Plato, thus

exposing the importance of examining Aristotle on form, matter, and substance in order to reflect back on a philosophy that precedes, yet encourages, the development of such distinctions. For Aristotle, primary substance as a hylomorphic complex of the distinct conditions of form and matter, is akin to Plato's second kind, since both are phenomenal and perceived empirically. For both, form is the most known and least familiar condition, insofar as we apprehend it through the experience of the primary substances, yet it is more intelligible in its perfection than that which appears in its image. While Aristotle's matter is a condition existing in primary substance, yet extricable only in thought, Plato's third kind is the medium *in which* things of the second kind appear in the image of the first. To analyze this distinction, we compared a conception of the kinds as illustrated by sculptures, in which the second kind is a discreet and created material thing, to the mirror analogy, in which the second kind appears as reflection. In the latter, the related, yet distinct, first kind remains intact as model, while the second kind is akin to a reflected image, and the third kind is represented by the mirror itself.

Unlike discreet objects, the materiality of Plato's second kind does not differ from that of the third, so one kind is not *in* another as it is for Aristotle. Rather, images appear insofar as the third kind, as condition of appearance, takes on the qualities determined by the first kind such that the appearances are continuous with the medium, as images reflected in a mirror. For example, the appearance of phenomenal fire is not discreet, but rather "the part of [the receptacle] that gets ignited appears on each occasion as fire" (*Tim.* 51b). In this way, Plato's third kind is not like an Aristotelian material cause insofar as it is not the *out of which* that is in Aristotle's primary substance, but rather, it is



a condition *in which* the second kind appears, and, as such, is more akin to Aristotelian place, i.e. that which is necessary for, yet separable from, substance.

This consideration of the world, appearing as reflected in a mirror, provided us with new insight into the nature of all three kinds. Just as the first and second kinds have associated modes of apprehension indicative of their natures, so too does the third. The third kind is not like the first; it is indeterminate and, as such, cannot be grasped by pure reason. However, as a condition for appearance, it also cannot appear qua itself, thus, it is not like the second kind and cannot be grasped by perception. Instead,

It is itself apprehended by a kind of bastard reasoning that does not involve sense perception, and it is hardly even an object of conviction. We look at it as if in a dream when we say that everything that exists must of necessity be somewhere, in some place, occupying some space, and that that which doesn't exist somewhere, whether on earth or in heaven, doesn't exist at all. (*Tim.* 52b)

We hypothesize the existence of the third kind based on what we hold to be true about the first two kinds. This is a bastardization of reason insofar as the method is of mixed lineage: we use perception to judge what appears, and reason to deduce what must be the case such that something can appear. We *back into* an understanding of the third kind by using analogies to outline what it is, as well as what it is not. This method of 'backing into' or 'stripping away' is suggestive of the nature of the kind as that which allows for the relation between the first and second kinds, yet is like neither. In the mirror analogy, the third is that which is neither the apparent image, nor the separate and ideal model: it is the mirror itself. It does not change as it receives images, and images do not enter it as separate substances; the second kind appears insofar as the third takes on the qualities determined by the first kind. The mirror remains constant and separable in thought, and as

an ontologically distinct principle, yet, in a sense, it is substantially continuous with the reflections. This insight demands that we re-consider Plato's second kind of things appearing in the image of the first, which are not discreet from either each other, or from the third kind.

This discussion of substance brought us to Aristotle, who describes substance as "that which is individual."<sup>158</sup> A primary substance is designated matter, as a condition of potentiality, imparted with the actuality of a secondary substance or genus (form). An individual is a hylomorphic complex *in which* form and matter come together to give rise to a substance that is "numerically one and the same, [yet] capable of admitting contrary qualities."<sup>159</sup> This position differs from Plato's conception of the second kind, according to which a phenomenon is more rightly a particular bit of the third kind admitting the qualities of an intelligible model, as opposed to that which is discreetly individual. Despite their differing conceptions of the sensible world, Aristotle points out that Plato was the only philosopher before him to consider what place is. In a way similar to how Plato accounts for the third kind, Aristotle describes and apprehends place as that which is left behind by substance. In this separability, place can be neither form nor matter but is, rather, a condition for their union. Aristotle's primary substance considered as 'form individualized by matter,' enlists form as the condition of the actuality of a phenomenal body, thus aligning it more closely with Plato's first kind and its relation to the second kind. This leaves the necessary potency of a material cause as a defining feature between

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<sup>158</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 3b10.

<sup>159</sup> Aristotle, *Categories*, 4a10.

the two thinkers. For Aristotle, matter is one sense of the nature of a thing, and “to each form there corresponds a special matter.”<sup>160</sup> For Plato, however, the material cause is potential, insofar as it must exist such that it can admit the qualities of the first kind; though matter itself is not designated.

Plato’s third kind is *like* Aristotle’s material cause, insofar as it is that *in which* appearances occur, though it does not encompass the *out of which* of Aristotle’s matter, for that would be to conflate the statuses of the second kind between the two philosophies, which remain distinct. Once considered as the general condition *in which* things appear, as opposed to the designated matter, the correspondence between space and matter increases: both are continuous and constitutive of the surfaces of both bodies and places. Both are necessary conditions of the second kind and its relation to the first kind, thereby can be neither voids nor devoid of powers of extension as a receiving entity.

In order to grasp more firmly this essential and mysterious non-being, I turned to Aristotle’s assertion that mind is the condition that allows for the becoming of thoughts; mind is the place in which we think, and thus, relate the first to the second kind. Like the Platonic mirror, thoughts do not enter mind as discreet substances, but rather, are continuous with the mind itself. For Aristotle, mind *is* its thoughts. Mind in action is the thought that it is thinking. In this way, mind is like Plato’s third kind, as that which allows things to appear in the image of the first, though here, *things* are thoughts as opposed to appearances. With such an affinity, we can begin to piece together the relation of first kind as intelligible thing to second kind as particular thoughts about it, which appear in

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<sup>160</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 194b10.

the image of the first. Particular thoughts are *made in the image* of the intelligible framework, and thereby become accessible to the individual, just as the mirror world is a reflected image of the first kind. Just as mind allows for particular thoughts, and myth allows for the examination of the active relation of conditions, the third kind allows for particular appearances: in every case, there is some third condition allowing for the relation between first to second in the manner of a receptive place.

Further work could be done on the relation between Aristotle's conception of Mind and Plato's receptacle. In considering the third kind as place, we are given the opportunity to consider the way in which Mind is related to the kinds, such that the medieval questions of the individuality of minds and our access to intelligible things can be approached from a new ground. This allows us to consider the role that an individual, may have in the pursuit of knowledge: a good, reasonable person may act as the place of rhetoric insofar as his dialogical activity is the indeterminate place in which ideas may appear in the image of truth. Furthermore, this consideration can be carried from the individual into an account itself, where a story or account is a characterless receptacle in which specific accounts are given and examined in relation to the truth of the universe. The role and nature of place can be explored in the intellectual, spatial, and rhetorical senses, such that we can examine the relations of any particulars to their Ideal models.

This third kind is "so difficult to catch that not even the net of kinds, of kinds of kinds, can effectively snare it [...] through some twist of λόγος, [it has] something like a meaning, it would have to be a kind of meaning beyond a meaning, just as the third kind

is a kind of kind beyond a kind.”<sup>161</sup> As that which is utterly different from all that can be considered, there is a continuity between Plato’s third kind and Aristotle’s place, bringing a layer of similarity between the metaphysics of the two ancient stalwarts. The third kind serves to bridge the gap that Aristotle sees in Plato’s cosmology by taking on the roles of Aristotle’s efficient and material causes. Plato does not ignore the problem of how the two kinds are related; his is not a two-world metaphysics. Rather, the receptacle becomes the condition that binds them, accounting for materiality as continuous with the second kind, and efficiency as arising from the imbalanced forces implicit in the determination of the first kind. The distinct two worlds, often ridiculed in Platonic metaphysics, are fused into a cosmos comprising three kinds, which are reflected in our epistemological consideration of the kinds themselves. They are illustrated in a cosmological myth, existing in a continuous and complete activity of kinds. The mysterious third kind is precisely the non-nothing, non-being entity that completes the account of the first two kinds by providing a measure of continuity between them. Yet, it remains outside of our immediate grasp; it demands to be considered in the margins of our experience, as the silent partner, as the pregnant space that receives the εἶδη and facilitates the generation of the cosmos.

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<sup>161</sup> Sallis, *Chorology*, 110.

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