

## GP L5: Forms and Particulars 1: Philosophical Understanding

### 1. Context of Argument

- **T1:** Socrates' claim that philosophers should rule
- **T2:** Philosophers as lovers of wisdom in its entirety; & Glaucon's confusion.
- 2 arguments to distinguish philosophers from lovers of sights & sounds

### 2. Main stages of argument aimed at lover of sights & sounds

- Discussion of knowledge, ignorance & their objects
- Discussion of capacities/faculties
- The objects of the lovers of sights & sounds: the many beautifuls vs the beautiful itself/beauty.
- Leads to distinction between philosopher & lover of sights & sounds.

### 3. 'Being', beauty & the many beautifuls

- What is meant by 'being' (such that can admit of degrees): existential? veridical? predicative?
- Objects that are & are not = the many beautifuls etc. **T3:** lovers of sights & sounds do not recognise beauty as distinct from beautiful things; think colour etc. is (not just like), but is beauty. (Cf. *Phaedo* on what's responsible.)
- Why is this a mistake? **T4c** familiar point about compresence of opposites
- Objects which are and are not are & are not F (e.g. beautiful). F in one context, not in another. So, to be fully F means F in all contexts? independent of context?

#### 4. Distinguishing capacities/faculties; knowledge & belief

- Socrates' twofold criteria for individuating capacities: same capacity iff same object & same effect.
- Socrates' conflation of two criteria: takes distinct capacities to imply both distinct objects & distinct effects. A 'two world' view?

#### 5. Why the philosopher isn't a fussy learner?

- What's the difference between loving something in its entirety and loving this particular case, but not that?
- Loving something in itself vs loving particular contextualised version of it.

#### 6. The lover of sights & sounds' mistake & the philosopher's knowledge

- Contrast taking the beauty of a sunset to lie in its colours & taking the colours of the sunset as manifestations of beauty (& cf. *Phaedo* on what's responsible)
- Fallibility of belief vs Infallibility of knowledge: basis for reliable judgements

#### TEXTS

##### Proposal that Philosophers Should Rule

[T1] (Soc.) I now come, I said, to what we may liken to the greatest wave. But let it be said, even if it's going to be absolutely drowned out by laughter and submerged by contempt. Consider what I am about to say. Say it, he said. Unless, I said, philosophers come to rule as kings in cities or

those now called kings and potentates really and adequately take up philosophy; until political power and philosophy coincide and the several natures of those who now pursue one or other separately are constrained by force from doing so, there will be no end to the evils in our cities, Glaucon, nor, I think, among human kind; and this constitution which we have been outlining in argument will never get the birth that's possible for it before then, nor see the light of day. This is what I've been shrinking from saying for some time, recognising how very paradoxical it will sound. For it's difficult to see that no other constitution will produce happiness, whether for private individuals or for the body politic. (R 473c6-e5)

### Philosophers as Lovers of All Wisdom

[T2] (Soc.) Do we say that whoever we call desirous of something desires everything of that kind, or do we say that they desire something of that kind, but not another? Everything, he said. (Soc.) And won't we say that the philosopher desires wisdom - not one part of wisdom and not another, but rather all of it? That's correct. Then a person who is fussy about their studies - especially one who is very young and cannot yet give an account of what is valuable and what is not - we won't say that such a person is a lover of learning or of wisdom [= or a philosopher], just as we wouldn't call someone who's fussy about food hungry nor desirous of food nor a food lover; we'd call them a bad eater instead. (Glaucon) And we'd be right to do so. (Soc.) But a person who is readily willing to taste all learning and approaches learning with pleasure and has an insatiable appetite for it, this person we will with justice call a philosopher. Don't you agree? And Glaucon said, Then many strange people will be so by your account. For all sight lovers will be so, in delighting in learning; and those who love sound are a very odd bunch to count among philosophers, people

who would never willingly turn up for a proper discussion or any pursuit like that, but who rush to attend every Dionysiac festival as though their ears were in the pay of every chorus, and who never miss one be it in the city or the country. Shall we call people like these philosophers, and those who undertake to learn things of this sort or trivial crafts? Not at all, I said, but we shall say that they are like philosophers. Then who do you say are the true philosophers? he said. Those who love the sight of the truth, I said. [R 475b4-e4]

### Philosophers Distinguished From Lovers of Sights and Sounds: (A) for Glaucon

[T3] (Glaucon) But what do you mean by that [the above]? (Soc.) Well, I said, it wouldn't be at all easy to explain it to anyone else. But you, I suppose, will agree with me on the following. (G) On what? (S) Since beauty is opposed to ugliness, they are two. (G) Of course. (S) And since they are two, each is one, isn't it? (G) That too. (S) And the same argument applies to just and unjust, good and bad, and to all the forms: that each itself is one, but since they manifest everywhere because of their association with actions and bodies and with each other, each appears to be many. You're right, he said. Then, I said, I make a distinction in this way: on one distinct side are those whom you just now called lovers of sights, of crafts, practical people; distinct from them again are those

whom our argument concerns, the only people one can correctly call philosophers. And what do you mean? he said. And I said, Lovers of sights and sounds delight in beautiful sounds, colours and shapes, and in everything made out of them, but their reason is incapable of seeing and delighting in the nature of the beautiful itself. That's so, he said. Wouldn't there be few people who could arrive at the beautiful itself and recognise it just by itself? Indeed. Then the person who thinks there are beautiful things, but doesn't think there is beauty itself and wouldn't be able to follow if someone were to lead him to knowledge of it, is such a person living in a dream or a waking life? Look at it this way: isn't this dreaming, whether one's asleep or awake, to think that something that is like another is not *like*, but *is* the very thing it resembles? (G) I would certainly say that such a person is dreaming. (S) Then what about someone who thinks the opposite, who thinks the beautiful itself is something, and who is capable of seeing both it and the things that have a share of it, and who neither thinks the things that have share of it are it, nor it the things that have it as a share, is this person living in a dream or waking life? He is very much awake, he said. And wouldn't we be correct in calling this person's thought knowledge, insofar as he knows, and the other person's thought belief [or opinion] insofar as he believes [or opines]? Certainly. [R 475e5-476d7]

Philosopher Distinguished from Lover of Sights and Sounds: (B) for Lover of Sights and Sounds  
(Knowledge & What Is)

[T4a] (Soc.) What if this person makes trouble for us - this person we say believes but doesn't know - and contends that we are not speaking truly. Is there any way in which we can console him and gently persuade him, concealing from him that he is not quite sound. We must, he said. Then

consider what we'll say to him. Or don't you think we'll question him like this: saying that no-one will begrudge him knowing something if he does, indeed we'd be pleased to see him knowing something, but let him tell us this: does one who knows know something or nothing? Do you answer on his behalf. I answer, he said, that he knows something. (S) Something that is or that is not? (G) That is. How could something that is not be known? (S) Then have we a sufficient grasp on this, even if we were to examine it in many ways, that what entirely is is entirely knowable and that what is not in any way at all is in every way unknowable? (G) Most sufficient. (S) Well then, if something were such as both to be and not to be, wouldn't it lie in between what purely is and what in no way is? (G) Between, indeed. (S) Then wouldn't knowledge be related to what is and ignorance, of necessity, to what is not, but to relate to this thing in between, we would have to seek something in between knowledge and ignorance, should there be such a thing? (G) Certainly.

[R 476d8-477b2]

(Knowledge & Belief Distinguished)

[T4b] (S) Then do we say that belief is something? (G) Of course. (S) And is it a different capacity from knowledge or the same? (G) Different. (S) Then belief is set over one thing and knowledge over another, according to the respective capacity of each. (G) Yes. (S) Then isn't knowledge naturally related to what is, to know it as it is? - But I think we'd rather better make some further distinctions first. (G) How so? (S) We will say that capacities are a certain kind of thing, in virtue of which we are capable of what we are capable of and so is anything else that is capable. For example, I number sight and hearing among the capacities, if this enables you to understand the kind of thing I mean. (G) I understand, he said. (S) Then hear what I think about

these things. A capacity has no colour, nor shape, nor any other observable feature of the sort many things have, to which I might look in distinguishing one from another. In the case of a capacity I look to this alone: to that to which it is related and to what it produces; and I call each a capacity on this basis: a capacity which is set over the same thing and produces the same thing I call the same capacity, and a capacity which is set over something different and produces something different I call a different capacity. What about you? What do you do? (G) The same, he said.

(S) Then let's go back again, friend, I said. Would you call knowledge a capacity, or what kind would you put it in? (G) Into that kind, he said, as one of the most powerful of all capacities. (S) Well then, would you take belief for a capacity or as something of a different kind? (G) Not at all, for that in virtue of which we are capable of believing is nothing other than belief. (S) But a little while ago, you agreed that knowledge and belief are not the same. (G) How could anyone with sense take what is fallible to be the same as what is infallible? (S) Good, I said, then it is clear that we are agreed that knowledge and belief are different. (G) They are. (S) Then is each naturally capable of something different in relation to something different? (G) Necessarily. (S) And isn't knowledge somehow related to what is, to know it as it is? (G) Yes. (S) And belief, we say, believes? (G) Yes. (S) Does it believe just exactly what knowledge knows, and will the very same thing be both knowable and believable? Or is that impossible? (G) Impossible, he said, on the basis of what's been agreed. If different capacities naturally relate to different things, and both knowledge and belief are capacities, but each a different one, as we say, then on the basis of this, the same thing cannot be agreed to be knowable and believable. (S) Then if what is is knowable, what is believable must be something other than what is, mustn't it? (G) Yes, something other. (S)

Then does one believe what is not? Or is it impossible even to believe what is not? Consider.

Doesn't a person who believes bring their belief to bear on something, or is it possible to believe

but believe nothing? (G) Impossible. (S) Then someone who believes believes some one thing?

(G) Yes. (S) But one couldn't correctly call what is not some one thing, but rather nothing [not

even one thing]? (G) Certainly. (S) Then didn't we of necessity ascribe ignorance to what is not

and knowledge to what is? (G) That's right. (S) Then one believes neither what is nor what is not?

(G) No. (S) Then belief is neither ignorance nor knowledge? (G) It seems not. (S) Then does it fall

outside of these, either exceeding knowledge in clarity or ignorance in lack of clarity? (G) No,

neither. (S) Then do you think that belief is darker than knowledge but clearer than ignorance? (G)

Very much so, he said. (S) Then it falls within both extremes? (G) Yes. (S) Then belief would be

between these two. (G) Exactly. (S) Didn't we say before that if something appeared such as both

to be and not to be, it would lie in between what purely is and what absolutely is not, and neither

knowledge nor ignorance would be related to it, but something that in turn appeared to be between

knowledge and ignorance? (G) That's right. (S) And it has now emerged that what we call belief is

between these two? (G) It has. [R 477b3-478d12]

(The Objects of Belief)

[T4c] (S) Then this, it seems, is what it remains for us to discover, something that has a share of

both - being and not-being - and wouldn't correctly be called purely either, so that, if this should

emerge, it would be correctly said to be believable, assigning the extremes to the extremes and the

intermediates to the intermediates. Isn't that so? (G) It is. (S) Given, then, that these things have

been established, let me speak to our good friend, the chap who doesn't think the beautiful itself is

nor that there is any form of the beautiful itself that is always the same in the same respects, but who does think there are many beautiful things; that lover of sights who won't allow anyone to say that the beautiful is one or the just or any of the others; and let me ask him this: of these many beautiful things, friend, is there one which will not appear ugly? or of the many just, one which will not appear unjust? or of the many things that are holy, one that will not appear unholy? (G) No, he said, rather they must appear in some way both beautiful and ugly, and the same goes for the others you asked about. (S) What about the many doubles? Do they appear less halves than doubles? (G) No. (S) And the many large and small things, or light and heavy things, is any one of these any more whichever of these we say it is than the opposite? (G) No, each will always be both. (S) Then *is* each of the many any more whatever someone says it is than it *is not*? (G) No, he said, they're like those things with double meanings one hears at dinner parties, or like the children's riddle - the one about the eunuch and what he threw at the bat, which creates a riddle out of what he threw and what he threw it at. For these too are twofold and cannot be securely held either to be or not to be both or neither. (S) Then do you know what to do with them, I said? Or what better place would you put them in than in between being and not being? For they don't seem to be somehow darker in not being when considered in relation to what is not, nor clearer in being considered in relation to what is. (G) Very true, he said. (S) We have discovered then, it seems, that the many conventions of the many regarding beauty and the rest somehow roll around between what is not and what purely is. (G) We have. (S) And we agreed earlier that, if something of this sort emerged, we would have to call it believable but not knowable, what wanders in the middle being grasped by the middle capacity. (G) That's what we agreed. [R 478e1-479d10]

(Philosophers as Lovers of Wisdom; Lovers of Sights & Sounds as Lovers of Belief)

[T4d] (S) Then the people who observe many beautifuls, but do not see the beautiful itself, and wouldn't be able to follow anyone else who led them to it; and who see many just things, but not the just itself, and likewise for them all; shall we say that these people believe all these things, but do not know any of the things they believe. (G) Necessarily, he said. (S) Now what then of those who observe each of the things themselves, those that are always the same in the same respects? Won't we say they know and do not believe? (G) That's necessary too. (S) Then shall we say that these people delight in and love the things knowledge relates to and the others delight in and love the things belief is related to? Remember we said that the latter loved and saw beautiful sounds and colours and things like that, but wouldn't accept that the beautiful itself was something. (G) I remember. (S) Then we wouldn't go wrong if we called them lovers of belief [philobelievers] rather than philosophers [lovers of wisdom]? Do you think they'd make trouble for us if we spoke this way? (G) Not if they take my advice; for it's not right to complain about the truth. (S) And one must call those who are eager for each thing itself philosophers not philobelievers? (G) Certainly. [R 479e1-480a13]