

## THE UNIQUE WORLDS OF THE *TIMAEUS*

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**T**IMAEUS TAKES CARE to establish in the beginning of his account of creation that there is only one visible cosmos rather than many or an unlimited number. Briefly, his argument is that since the Demiurge's Intelligible Model is unique, and since the Demiurge made the visible world like the Model in this respect, the visible cosmos is also one-of-a-kind.

This account of the matter raises two troublesome questions. First, why is the Intelligible Model unique? Second, why should uniqueness of the Model require uniqueness of its created image?—after all, every Form taken by any craftsman as a Model will be unique, but that is in general no reason for creating only one worldly image of the Model. On the contrary, a Platonic Form will ordinarily be a one over a many. Both questions appear to have significant implications for the theory of Forms itself. Timaeus' argument for uniqueness of the Model seems very like Socrates' argument in *Republic X* for the uniqueness of What-is-Couch, and that argument may bear significantly on the great self-predication debate (i.e., the controversy as to whether each Form taken as a Model or *paradeigma* is itself a paradigm case of the property for which it is the Form). And Timaeus' argument for uniqueness of the cosmos may reflect a failure to distinguish between different sorts of property possessed by a Form. His divine craftsman seems to want to copy certain properties of his Model, including its uniqueness, just because they are there. In so doing he neglects the distinction between properties the Model has because it is a Form and those it has because it is one particular Form rather than another—a distinction essential to sane craftsmanship and important for Platonic metaphysics.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the first question, analysis of Timaeus' argument for uniqueness of the Demiurge's Model will show that the argument is valid, that it differs crucially from Socrates' uniqueness argument of *Republic X*, and that it has no bearing on the issues of self-predication. Uniqueness of

<sup>1</sup>The second issue is pressed vigorously by David Keyt ("The Mad Craftsman of the *Timaeus*," *Philosophical Review* 80 [1971] 230–235). Keyt distinguishes between the "ideal" and "proper" attributes of a Form, the former being those a Form has because it is a Form, the latter those it has due to its being the specific Form it is. A sane Platonic craftsman (Keyt argues) would copy only proper attributes of his model (in this case, its property of being an animal), ignoring its ideal attributes, as a sane sculptor will try to copy the shape but not, for example, the age of his model. But the Demiurge (again according to Keyt) treats all the properties of his model alike: he copies both its proper attribute of being an animal and its ideal attributes of uniqueness, completeness, and eternity.

the created world will prove more complicated, however, involving both the Demiurge's reasons for creating the cosmos and Plato's general notion of craftsmanship as image-making. Here conclusions about Timaeus' argument must be somewhat more tentative, though the discussion will be helpful in understanding important Platonic conceptions at work in this and other dialogues.

Timaeus deals concisely with the uniqueness of the Demiurge's Model:

... that which contains all the Intelligible Animals cannot be one of a pair; for then there would have to be yet another Animal encompassing those two, and they would be parts of it; and this [sc. sensible world] would more correctly be said to be a likeness of that encompassing [Animal] than of these two (31a4-8).

The argument is traditionally read as a logical twin of the uniqueness proof at *Republic* 597c7-9:

If he [sc. the god] made only two Couches-in-Nature then another would appear whose *eidos* both of them would have, and it would be What-is-Couch, and not those two.

The parallels are striking: both passages are *reductio ad absurdum* arguments hypothesizing two Forms of the same sort and on the same level (two Forms of F, for some "F," neither of which participates in the other or is included in the other), then (*palin* occurs at this point in both arguments, highlighting verbally their parallel structure) moving to a third Form which must be regarded as *the* Form (the Form of F whose *eidos* the original two have, or of which they are parts).<sup>2</sup>

The claim that the two arguments work in exactly the same way calls for some comment on terminology, since one speaks of "encompassing" and "being a part of" while the other speaks of "having (and being) an

<sup>2</sup>The standard linkage of the two arguments goes back at least as far as Proclus (*In Timaeum* 134F [= I.443.1-5 Diehl]). Among modern commentators see B. Jowett and L. Campbell, *Plato's Republic* 3 (Oxford 1894) 444; J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato* 2 (Cambridge 1902) 391; Paul Shorey, *The Unity of Plato's Thought* (Chicago 1903) 36, n. 244; F. Goblot, "Le troisième Homme chez Platon," *Revue d'Histoire de la Philosophie* 3 (1929); Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore 1944) 296; E. Chambry, in the Budé *Republic* 3.2 (Paris 1957) 86 n.; G. C. Nerlich, "Regress Arguments in Plato," *Mind* 88 (1960) 88-90.

So far as I can tell, Cherniss was right (or nearly so, see n. 6 below) in saying that A. E. Taylor alone had denied outright the parallel to *Republic* 597c. Cherniss is certainly right, however, in saying that Taylor's reason for doing so is "nothing to the point." Taylor argued (*A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* [Oxford 1928] 86) that *Timaeus* 31a was not a regress argument, on grounds that the *tode* of 31a8 refers to the sensible world. So it does, but that has no force against the standard interpretation, on which "this (*tode*) sensible world" turns out to be a likeness of the all-encompassing Model, whose uniqueness is then proved by the regress argument.

Richard Parry's recent discussion ("The Unique World of the *Timaeus*," *JHP* 17 [1979] 1-10) correctly brings out one important difference from *Republic* 597. Parry's approach is discussed below.

*eidōs*." But Plato does, perhaps, speak elsewhere of one Form encompassing other Forms that participate in it.<sup>3</sup> So supposing for a moment that this difference in terminology is in fact only that, the common reasoning of the two arguments is the following:

- (1) For any group of F's, there is some distinct Form F whose *eidōs* they all have, or of which they are all parts (by a One-over-many principle).
- (2) There are two Forms, both of which are F's (Beds, Intelligible Animals).
- (3) Therefore, there is a distinct Form of F whose *eidōs* both the original two F's have, or of which they are parts.<sup>4</sup>

At this point the familiar issues of self-predication are joined. On one reading the author of both arguments is liable to a regress argument similar to one or the other of the infinite regresses of the *Parmenides*: the production of Forms of F will not stop here, since that new Form over the first two will itself be an F and will constitute, along with them, a plurality of F's calling for yet another Form of F over them, etc. On another reading the distinction between having and being a Form (encompassing and being a part of a Form) suggests how the regresses of the *Parmenides* would be blocked by a friend of the Forms.<sup>5</sup>

But in fact the *Timaeus* argument is not a regress of the same sort as *Republic* 597c, and will not help us interpret the regresses of the *Parmenides*. For despite their similarities, the two arguments differ crucially in that *Timaeus* does not use any One-over-many principle drawn from Platonic metaphysics (the principle which is the backbone of the *Republic* argument), and Socrates does not appeal in any way in the *Republic* argument to *Timaeus*' concept of the "all-encompassing."

*Timaeus*' argument is simply that the Model cannot be one of a pair (or one among any larger number) because it must be all-inclusive—i.e.,

<sup>3</sup>Cherniss (above, n.2) cites *Sophist* 250b, 253d, and *Politicus* 285a-b. It is debatable whether in these dialogues a Form is ever a part of any Form in which it participates. But let us set aside this doubt for the sake of the argument.

<sup>4</sup>Although this simple version of the argument will suffice for our purposes, many issues could be raised about its precise reconstruction. Much of the extensive literature on the *Parmenides* regresses would apply here also. For discussion of some points related particularly to *Republic* 597c, see G. C. Nerlich (above, n.2), D. R. Duff-Forbes, "The Regress Argument in the *Republic*," *Mind* 77 (1968) 406-410, and I. M. Crombie, "Duff-Forbes on *Republic* 10," *Mind* 80 (1971) 286 ff.

<sup>5</sup>Virtually all the modern commentators mentioned in note 2 link *Republic* 597c and *Timaeus* 31a to the regress arguments of the *Parmenides*. Nerlich argues that both arguments show Plato liable to an infinite regress, linking the former to the "Third Man" argument, the latter to the "regress of similarities" (the second *Parmenides* regress). Goblott and Cherniss argue that both arguments indicate effectively how Plato would have rebutted both *Parmenides* regresses.

must include within itself *all* other (for the “other” see 30c6, d1) Intelligible Animals. The argument is a deft *reductio ad absurdum* of the assumption that an all-inclusive Model could be one of a pair. If it were one of a pair of all-inclusive Intelligible Animals, then there would be one Intelligible Animal besides itself that it did not contain, namely, its twin. Neither of these two supposedly all-inclusive Models could be complete, since each would fail to encompass the other. The truly all-inclusive Animal would have to be one that encompassed both of them, and which itself had no twin. The argument does not at any point appeal to a Platonic One-over-many principle.<sup>6</sup>

The larger context of the passage, starting with Timaeus’ immediately preceding remarks, confirms this reading of the text of the argument itself:

This being established, we must now tell what is next: in the likeness of what animal the framer of the cosmos framed it. We must not suppose that it was anything belonging by nature to the class of the partial, for nothing that is like the incomplete could ever be good. Let us declare that he made it most of all like unto *that of which the other Animals, severally and in their families, are parts*. For this includes within itself all the Intelligible Animals, just as our own cosmos contains all the other visible animals. For the god, wishing to make it like the most fair of Intelligible things and that which is most perfect in all ways, made it a single visible animal containing within itself all the animals that are by nature akin to it (30c2-21a1).

Timaeus then proceeds directly to the question whether there is only one visible cosmos (31a2-3), and to the argument quoted above for the uniqueness of the creator’s Intelligible Model. His heavy emphasis on the all-inclusiveness of the Model in the passage leading up to the uniqueness argument is clear enough.

The role of that inclusiveness in showing the uniqueness of the Model is also clear, for having secured the requirement of completeness in 30c2-31a1, Timaeus then argues that there could not be more than one model, since any member of a plurality of such Models would be to some extent incomplete: there would be some other Intelligible Animal(s) that were not part(s) of it. Since they are incomplete they cannot be the Model used by the (good) Demiurge; as Timaeus says, his complete Model would have to be one that encompassed both of them as parts, and that had no twin.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Archer-Hind has the basic idea: “the αὐτὸ ζῶον is ἐν as being πᾶν: there cannot be a second αὐτὸ ζῶον, else it would not contain within it all νοητὰ ζῶα” (*The Timaeus of Plato* [Oxford 1888] 94). But because he has not defended his reading, and probably also because in his next note he refers the reader to *Republic* 597c, quoting the Greek of that passage without further comment, his laconic analysis has had little effect.

<sup>7</sup>An alternative interpretation, also neutral with regard to self-predication, would have the two hypothesized models include all the other intelligible animals *between* them (rather than, as here, having *each* of the two hypothesized models be complete). On that

Notice, finally, that just as the argument has nothing to say one way or the other about self-predication, so it provides no occasion for an infinite regress. Timaeus (or goodness) requires that the Model contain all other Intelligible Animals as parts, and the argument does arrive at such a Model. Unlike the two pretenders to completeness, the new Model is complete in the required manner, so that one need seek no further for a truly complete Model to encompass all the preceding ones. To put it another way, the new Model will not join the original two in a plurality of incomplete Models requiring a further Model to encompass the entire group.<sup>8</sup>

Our second question had to do with how many worlds the Demiurge created. Timaeus' answer was that there is only one if the world is modelled on the intelligible Model (31a3-4). And in fact the Demiurge, in order that the world might be like its Model with respect to its uniqueness, made only one visible cosmos. The reasoning is disturbing because while every Form is unique, Plato would hardly contend that each of them is or ought to be uniquely instantiated.<sup>9</sup> The charge mentioned

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reading, one of the pair might include Land and Sea Animals, the other Winged and Divine Animals. Each would, of course, be incomplete, and a complete Model would have to include both of them. On this reading, too, the crucial assumption is the completeness of the Model rather than a One-Many principle. The text of the Timaeus seems to call, however, for the argument presented above. The meaning of *to . . . periechon panta* of 31a4 will have been fixed by 30c5-6, 30c7-8, and by the comparison to the completeness of the visible cosmos of 30c8. The envisioned Model is one containing *all* (other) Intelligible Animals, so the point of the argument will be that there cannot be a second *complete* Model—not that there could not be a second Model such that the two combined contained all Intelligible Animals.

<sup>8</sup>Richard Parry emphasizes the importance of completeness of the Model in proving its uniqueness ("The Unique World of the *Timaeus*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 17 [1979] 1-10), and he correctly portrays Timaeus' argument as a *reductio* turning on the alleged completeness of each of the original twins. It is puzzling, then, that he says the argument produces an "oddity" but "not an absurdity" (2). In fact it produces the contradiction that each of the twins is complete and is not complete. The conjunct to be discarded is the statement that both are complete. I also do not see why Parry speaks of "the incipient infinite regress threatened by this argument" (3). As explained above, the conditions for generating further Forms in a never-ending quest for completeness do not arise. Also, while it is correct to speak of self-predication here in the sense that the same *onoma* "intelligible living creature" applies to the ultimate Model as to the original pair (6) one must add that this does not in itself entail anything about the issues of self-predication as usually conceived (i.e., in terms of property sharing between sensible and intelligible F with respect to their being F).

<sup>9</sup>Since Antiquity commentators have recognized a need to explain why this particular Model should have exactly one image. Proclus discusses the rather idiosyncratic proposals of Porphyry and Iamblichus, and offers several solutions of his own. The answer he attributes to Plato involves (rightly, I think) appeal to the role of the Demiurge as well as the Model. But even putting aside certain obscurities in his position, Proclus' view of the Demiurge as "monadic" and therefore creating only one image of his monadic

above was that the Demiurge duplicates the uniqueness of the Model simply because he (insanely) copies every property of his model that he can, making no distinction between the model's proper and ideal attributes.

But I think the correct explanation is less direct than that, and requires introduction of two basic considerations so far missing from discussions of the question. The first is that in Plato's view the maker of images, and hence the craftsman, does not produce and does not try to produce a second thing of the same sort as his model. It is neither the painter's function nor his ambition to produce another real doctor, general, horse, or countryside: if he were capable of producing "real things" he would not lavish all his care and energy on the production of "phantasms" (or so Socrates claims at *Republic* 599a–b). The basic point of ontology is explicit in *Republic X* in Socrates' contrast between the phantasmic doctors, generals, and so on made by painters—or by poets using *logos*, or by some "wizard" using a mirror—and the "real things" themselves (*phantasmata gar all' ouk onta poiouein*, 599a; cf. 596d–e, 599–601b). So, too, certain pigments, while still in the tube, were not labelled "grapes" or "chariot," though they are now so labelled, having been spread about appropriately on canvas and hung in the museum. The explanation is not, presumably, that the painter has performed a miracle of transubstantiation. The painting is named after genuine grapes not because it resembles real grapes in being grapes (it is not even temporarily grapes, not even sour ones); the painting is labelled "grapes" because it is an image (*eikon*, *phantasma*, *mimema*, *eidolon*) of real grapes, rather than of pears or horses.

Similarly, the Platonic hand-craftsman does not try to produce another intelligible nature or essence of Couch or Shuttle. He does not try to *duplicate* in wood the intelligible, non-sensible, non-spatial F, or try to make something that earns the *onoma* "F" in the way his Model earns the *onoma*. That would indeed be insane, for his product must actually separate worldly threads or support human beings. Insofar as it is suited to perform such work, his artifact "participates in" the Form of Shuttle or Couch and is called after that Form. By contrast the Form cannot do those jobs, since it is invisible, intangible, and not located anywhere.

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Model is without textual support. Indeed this seems to conflict with Plato's text in requiring that the Demiurge create the visible gods "monadically" (on the grounds that *all* the Demiurge's creativity is monadic). Without considerable strain it is hard to see how creation of many visible animals of the divine sort is any more "monadic" than creation of many individual animals of other sorts.

Several contemporary commentators have noted a problem about the created world's uniqueness, but usually without providing the sort of detailed diagnosis suggested by Keyt.

It is entitled to the *onoma* "F" (or, is an F of one of the three "types of F" acknowledged in *Rep. X*) because it is the abstract, intelligible nature of F, rather than of G or H.

Accordingly, Plato calls the wooden shuttle an "image" of Shuttle Itself because, among other things, (a) the two do *not* resemble one another in the regress-prone manner alleged on "self-predicational" interpretations, and (b) the wooden shuttle is nonetheless entitled to be named after the Form because of its relation to the Form (it *participates in* the Form, as an image F or imitation F is called "F" because it is an *image of* some genuine F). So at a minimum it is clear that the Platonic craftsman does not simply duplicate the properties of his model. Indeed, he will not *duplicate*, but only *image*, the Model's "proper attribute" of being F when he creates an image or imitation or phantasmic F.

It appears that many commentators miss this decisive point by thinking in terms not, say, of a chariot and a painting or mirror image of a chariot, but of one chariot copied by another chariot.<sup>10</sup> There the copy, whatever its defects, will perform the same (worldly) function as its model—only, on some interpretations, not quite as well—so that it will be similar to it with respect to being F (being a chariot). Contrariwise the imitation chariot—the phantasm made by the painter or the wizard with a mirror—is not another "real" chariot at all. It is rightly called "chariot" only because it is an image or imitation chariot rather than an imitation shuttle or couch. This sense of "image" or "imitation" thus resembles in one important way our use of "imitation" in "imitation diamond." There will be better and worse imitation diamonds, but even the best imitation diamond is still not a genuine diamond.<sup>11</sup>

But at the same time, a painter may indeed duplicate some *other* properties of the model F (besides its being F) in his attempt to produce a *good image* of that model. A portrait of Cratylus may duplicate his hair color, shape in profile, and so on, although it is not even animate, let alone "another (real) Cratylus." (And again, as *Cratylus* 432a–c points out, if some god were to duplicate exactly all Cratylus' inward and outward attributes he would have created not a perfect image of Cratylus—as he would have on a reading of imaging as copying—nor even an image F *at all*, but another real Cratylus.) Likewise a cut-glass imitation diamond may duplicate the shape, sparkle, etc. of a real diamond. But no matter how good an imitation it may be, the imitation diamond will not resemble a real diamond with respect to being a dia-

<sup>10</sup>This is Keyt's example (*op. cit.* 230). Examples like that of the Standard Pound or the Imperial Standard Yard will also be misleading with regard to the specific point at hand.

<sup>11</sup>This and the points of the previous paragraph are discussed and documented in detail in my *Image and Reality in Plato's Metaphysics* (forthcoming).

mond. If a god were to duplicate all the phenomenal properties of a diamond and also somehow reproduce the internal crystalline structure of a diamond, he would have made, in the relevant sense of "imitation," not an imitation diamond at all, but a real diamond.

Up to a point the Demiurge follows precisely this Platonic procedure: he does not try to bring forth in the receptacle a duplicate of his Model, which would be a second Intelligible Animal, but only a sensible animal which images the Model. The created image earns the *onoma* "animal" by moving itself so as to perform life activities such as ingestion, assimilation (it recycles itself), thinking, and others. By contrast the Model, being an immutable abstract object, is not the sort of thing that could perform such activities. Its claim to the *onoma* "animal" consists in its being one particular intelligible nature rather than another.

In addition, the Demiurge does try to duplicate certain properties of the Model other than its being F, namely, its completeness and uniqueness. This still seems in keeping with the analogy to painting: apparently he will want to portray correctly various details of his Model just as the painter tries to "get the colors and shapes right" in creating his phantasm of some genuine F. As a first step this gives a much more plausible picture of how Plato viewed the general framework of the Demiurge's activity—insofar as that activity is viewed as a matter of image-making—than one on which the creator tries to duplicate indiscriminately the properties of his model.<sup>12</sup>

But it would be mistaken to suppose that this explains and justifies the Demiurge's copying of the model's completeness and uniqueness. What needs to be shown is not just that copying some properties other than F can (at least sometimes) be part of the image-maker's proper task, but that copying these two properties in particular by this workman will make for a better (more faithful, correct, accurate) image of the Model.

<sup>12</sup>It is worth noting, to forestall one obvious potential objection, that making the cosmos unique and complete will not bring on any Third Man regress, even if one supposes that there are Forms of Uniqueness and Completeness. These intelligible, non-spatial natures can perfectly well be instances of themselves without threatening in any way the type distinction between abstract nature of F and sensible participant in F. One does have to formulate a one-over-many principle with care in order to allow for these cases while preserving Plato's "two worlds" and avoiding a regress, but that is not a great problem. The case of eternity is more complicated and needs separate treatment. It can be noted here, briefly and dogmatically, that the Model's eternity is not duplicated by the cosmos; while the cosmos can be complete and unique, it cannot be eternal. All it or any other created thing can hope for is everlastingness (or perhaps everlasting stability in some respect). But this is not eternity, or even eternity-to-a-certain-degree (which is an impossibility) or eternity in a certain respect. That is why in dealing with everlastingness, but not uniqueness and completeness, Timaeus reintroduces the image analogy: time is a moving image of eternity (37d). I have tried to deal more adequately with the eternity of Forms elsewhere.



(Plato's usual term for correctness of an image is *orthotes*.<sup>13</sup>) The question is not trivial since (as Keyt's examples show) copying a given property of the Model does not always produce a more faithful likeness: a sculptor's copying of a model's age by selecting material precisely as old as the model would hardly result in a more faithful likeness. If the statue depicts the model *as* young or old it will not ordinarily do so by being of that age itself. The cases of completeness and uniqueness will be discussed in full below, after introduction of a second basic consideration, the Demiurge's motives in creating our world.

Timaeus in fact describes the creator's activity in two different ways which may seem equivalent, but are not. One is framed in terms of creating an image of the intelligible Model, the other, and more basic, in terms of making the best and most beautiful thing possible out of an original disorderly motion. This dominant concern is securely established in 29d–30b (see especially 30a2, a6–7, b5–6). The underlying principle reappears at 46d (the Demiurge “brought about the best result possible”) and at 68e (he “brought about that which was most beautiful in the things that come to be”). Thus, without referring explicitly to the image analogy, the Demiurge brings order out of disorder simply because order is better than disorder (30a), gives the cosmos intelligence because intelligent things are better than non-intelligent ones (30b), makes the cosmos spherical (in part) because spheres are uniform in shape and uniformity is better than its opposite (33b), and bestows self-sufficiency because it is better to be self-sufficient than dependent (33d; cf. 34a, 75c). This second description reflects the god's ungrudging nature: he makes everything as good and beautiful as possible because he has no jealousy (29d–e). The point is emphasized by yet a third description, on which the Demiurge desired all things to be as like to himself as possible (29e). As others have noted, this places Plato's creator god in stark contrast to the jealous gods of many other Greeks—gods concerned with their own status and honor (*time*), angry with any neglect of their cult

<sup>13</sup>Plato himself draws a valuable parallel between the truth of *logoi* and the “correctness” (*orthotes*) of images. Each in its own way makes claims about its subject, and one important criterion by which we judge *logoi* or images is the truth or accuracy of what they tell us about their subjects. This theme cannot be fully discussed here; the main texts are *Cratylus* 430a10–d7 and *Philebus* 38c–39c (cf. *Republic* 382b and *Laws* 667b–d). *Laws* 667–669 does distinguish beauty from rightness of an image (one may be a competent judge of an image's rightness without being a connoisseur of its beauty, 669a). There the beauty of an image has to do with “a certain charm” (*charis tis*), the counterpart to flavor in meat (667b), rather than with getting the quantities and qualities of the model right. And although Timaeus speaks of the beauty of the created world, the bestowal of completeness and uniqueness is presented in the spirit of getting the image right by reproducing aspects of the model, rather than of adding “a certain charm” to the world.

or maltreatment of their priests, grudging or resentful of any notable human success or happiness.<sup>14</sup>

The description in terms of making things as good as possible is in one way prior to that in terms of image-making, for it is the god's good intentions and lack of jealousy that lead him to pick the best possible model and then to mold the sensible world in the image of that model. So at least there will be two distinct general ways of looking at the Demiurge's creative activity—two distinct conceptions whose interplay, and perhaps conflation, we may now observe in the Demiurge's bestowal of completeness and uniqueness upon the created world.

Viewing the creator's activity as a matter of making the sensible realm as good as possible suggests an alternative explanation (to that of insanity) for why the creator made only one sensible world. One might propose (a) that the image is to be made complete because it is better for it to be complete, and (b) that it will then be unique because its completeness entails its uniqueness, just as in the case of the Model.<sup>15</sup>

Both of these premises can be fairly well supplied textually by 30c–d, (quoted above, 108). Completeness is treated there, as in many other places in Plato, as a good, and incompleteness as an imperfection, with no further explanation required. Completeness is a good enjoyed by the Model, and one that the unjealous Creator will, if possible (and it is possible), bestow upon the created world. Indeed this sort of creator will choose a complete Model because he wants his creation to be good by being like the best and most perfect Model. The concluding lines of the passage link the singularity of the cosmos with its completeness in a way that can suggest the same sort of connection to be argued for the case of the Model (31a4–8). And when Timaeus concludes at 31b that the world is like its Model with respect to its uniqueness, he will have in mind (on

<sup>14</sup>Here I paraphrase E. R. Dodd's felicitous statement of a general situation, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951) 29–31. Plato's philosopher, who is as like to god as is humanly possible, will also be without *phthonos* (on philosophy as *aphthonos*, see *Symposium* 210d).

<sup>15</sup>Part b) of this argument is suggested by Parry, *op. cit.* 5. One needs to add (a) since in the absence of some such argument for completeness the critic may simply lodge a charge of insanity one step earlier ("the Demiurge copies the Model's completeness, even though that is not one of its proper attributes . . ."). To this reformulated charge Parry would reply that completeness *is* a proper rather than an ideal attribute of the Model (it is not one that applies to all Forms as such) and that Keyt's original charge was, to be precise, that the Demiurge went beyond the bounds of reason in duplicating not only the proper but also the ideal attributes of his Model. But, as we shall see, the proper/ideal attribute distinction does not frame the issue properly, because a sane craftsman must use discretion even in dealing with the proper attributes of his model: he will not simply copy any and all of its non-ideal attributes. Therefore placing completeness among the proper attributes of the Model (as Parry rightly does) will not in itself answer the spirit of the original objection.

this reading) that the world is unique because complete (or “*hen as being pan*,” as Archer-Hind had said of the Model; see above, n. 6.)

Putting aside for a moment the question of textual support, it should be noted that completeness must be taken in a strong sense for this argument to work at all. Our world’s completeness will have to be a matter of including all particular sensible animals rather than just particular representatives of animals of each kind. For if completeness required only that every species be represented in the world, there could be multiple complete worlds. But by the letter of the text the stronger reading is justified: the Intelligible Animal contains within itself all other intelligible animals, “just as this world was devised containing us and all the other animals” (30c 8–d1). Timaeus does not say that this world “contains humans and animals of every other sort.” That would have been a natural, but distinct version of completeness. (It is one that does come into play at 39b: as *nous* perceived in What-is-Animal species of a certain nature and number, so it considered that this world ought to have species of a like nature and number.) In a moment (32c) it will be clear again that this world contains all particular sensible animals, because all the relevant building materials will have been used up on it. So the created world, like its model, is complete in a strong sense which will guarantee its uniqueness.

Thus if (strong) completeness is a good, one can justify making the world unique by appeal to the aim of bestowing on it all the goods it can bear, plus a unique-because-complete argument. But it seems that making the world complete is not *just* a matter of bestowing some good on the cosmos (as in the cases of sphericity and self-sufficiency); Timaeus does seem to invoke the project of image-making (see especially 30c2–3, c7, d3) in order to explain the world’s completeness. So even if he really wants the world to be complete because completeness is a good, the fact remains that he explains the world’s completeness, within his account of creation, by appeal to image-making. And here trouble arises. It is true, as a comparison to painting will show, that completeness of the image can in one sense be justified as part of the project of making a good image of the Model. A good (faithful, accurate, correct) portrait of the Toronto Blue Jays will contain images of each player. A team portrait omitting some members would be incomplete and, in that respect, less good a portrait than a complete one. So the good portrait painter will take as his model the complete team and will create a complete portrait. Similarly the good creator god works from a complete model (complete in a way which would simply not apply to most Forms) and creates a complete world, one containing all other sensible animals as the Model contains all other intelligent animals

The problem is that this argument can validly supply only complete-

ness in the weaker sense discussed above, on which each part of the Intelligible Animal (each kind of Animal) is represented in the created world. It does not show that the world includes every image of every kind of Animal. (The complete Blue Jay team portrait must include an image of each Blue Jay, not every image of each Blue Jay.) And yet the argument must show, if it is to entail uniqueness of the world, that the world includes every sensible animal (see 29d3–30a1), not just sensible animals of every kind.<sup>16</sup>

The result is that if one adheres to the aim of bestowing all possible goods on the created world, one can justify making the world complete in a strong sense in which uniqueness is entailed. But that sort of completeness cannot be obtained by appeal to the project of imaging the complete Model. This is true despite the fact that making the world (strongly) complete *will* make it more like its model (they will then share the property of containing all other animals of their own type).

I would suggest that Timaeus fails to distinguish between making an image more like its model and making an image a better (more faithful, accurate, correct) image of its model, and that this error enters his account of creation in the following way. The Demiurge's principal aim throughout is to make the world as good as possible, which entails bestowing upon it all the goods he can. Sometimes Timaeus' story appeals directly to this aim, without reference to image-making. (In some cases one could easily forge a link to image-making, while in others that would not obviously be possible. But Timaeus does not seem concerned about such connections.) However, in certain instances Timaeus does describe the Demiurge as making the world as good as possible by selecting the best possible Model and then making the world the best possible image of that Model. Moreover, he seems to think that this is equivalent to (or entails) making the world as good as possible by selecting the best possible Model and then bestowing on the world as many of the Model's goods as he can. (These seem to be goods that will benefit whatever possesses them, be it Form or sense object.) Thus the Model chosen is the one that exceeds all others in its ("transferable") goods, and so is uniquely qualified to serve as model for the making of the best possible sensible realm.

But again, the appeal to craftsmanship as image-making does not license the copying of all the Model's goods, but only those that would make the image a better image of the Model. Thus although strong completeness is a good possessed by the Model, and one which can be

<sup>16</sup>One might counter this objection by regarding the entire strain of each species of created animal as the worldly image of the corresponding Form. But this runs counter to Plato's normal view of individual F's (rather than the totality of all F's past, present, and future) as the images of F.

bestowed on the image, and one whose bestowal makes the image both a better end product and a thing more like its model, its bestowal is not strictly speaking justifiable in the name of making the world a better image of its Model.

Whether or not Timaeus ever argues for uniqueness of the cosmos indirectly by appeal to the cosmos' completeness, he seems to argue directly for uniqueness, and on the basis of the image analogy, at 31a-b.<sup>17</sup> There he raises quite explicitly the question whether it is really justified to claim that there is a single created heaven rather than many or an infinite number. He answers that it is "one, if it was made in accordance with its model" (31a3-4). Here follows (31a4-8) the argument discussed above for uniqueness of the Model, then the conclusion (31a8-b3) that the creator, in order that the cosmos might resemble its Model in respect to uniqueness, did not make two worlds or an indefinite number, but one, unique cosmos.

Once more it is instructive to distinguish those two general descriptions of the Demiurge's activity. If uniqueness is a good—either, as Cornford maintained, because it makes possible certain other beneficial results, or because it is somehow more directly a good—then the Demiurge has sufficient reason to make the world unique.<sup>18</sup> Either way, Plato secures the crucial point that there is some reason for assuming only one world rather than any other number (i.e., it is good that there be only one).

But here Timaeus adverts to the image analogy rather emphatically (it is one, "if made according to its model," 31a3-4; "... our world would be a likeness not of them [the two imposter Models] but of that which contains them," 31a7-8; "in order that this world may be like the complete Animal with respect to its uniqueness . . .," 31a8-b1). And once again trouble arises in trying to explain the world's uniqueness

<sup>17</sup>In fact it seems to me that 30c2-31a1 is concerned chiefly with the world's completeness, 31a2-b3 with its uniqueness. The "hen" of 30d3 is not meant to signal, whether prospectively or retrospectively, a unique-because-complete argument, but to anticipate the next subject to be taken up.

<sup>18</sup>F. M. Cornford writes: "uniqueness is a perfection, and the world is better for possessing it . . . one reason why it is better is given later: if the world were unique, there would be nobody left outside it, whose 'strong powers' might impair its life and even destroy it." (*Plato's Cosmology* [London 1937] *LLA* edition 43).

A more speculative possibility is that uniqueness enhances the time of both Model and image. Recall Alcibiades' praise of Socrates: the most amazing thing about him is that he is like no-one else of the past or present (*Symp.* 221c-d). A good human being or a fine work of craftsmanship may enjoy a special status if one-of-a-kind, even if its being unique does not of itself add to its excellence as a specimen of its kind. And although *time* is not the highest of Platonic goods, even the Good itself is not above enjoyment of honor (*Rep.* 509a). This would be a less indirect way of seeing uniqueness as a good, and a good that only an unjealous creator would consider bestowing on the world.

as a matter of correctly imaging the unique Model. In terms of the analogy to painting, making a portrait unique would make it more like a unique model, in that image and model would then share the property of being one-of-a-kind (*monogenes*). Nonetheless, this does not make the painting a better (more faithful, accurate, correct) image of its model. Destroying all but one portrait of the one-and-only prime minister might make the portrait, like its model, unique. But that does not make the painting any better a portrait than it was when there were numerous others. Indeed, its being unique does not result in the portrait's depicting its model *as* unique, correctly or otherwise. Neither would destruction of all but one shuttle or couch make the survivor a better image of Shuttle or Couch (it would not thereby be better suited to separate threads on a loom).

Here again it looks as though Timaeus mistakenly believes that the distinct projects of image-making and of producing the best possible sensible realm will coincide; once again he seems to think that copying a good enjoyed by the Model will be part of the job of imaging the Model. But while making the world unique does make it better, and does make it more like the Model, it does not make our world a more accurate image of its Model.

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Two general points should be emphasized in conclusion. First, these two aims of the Demiurge are more closely related than the preceding discussion might suggest. It is not just that they will sometimes overlap; if that were the extent of their relationship one might wonder why Timaeus introduces the theme of image-making at all, rather than simply speaking, as some other theological accounts have done, of a good creator fashioning a good world. To such a question there would be the familiar reply that use of a craftsman figure emphasizes at once the priority of the Model over its created image and the role of reason in bringing about a good world order.

But underlying this response is the less obvious fact that the very directedness of *nous* or right reason toward creation of a thing of a certain kind is in Plato's view a matter of craftsmanship conducted with an eye to the appropriate Form. This is true in the creation of an individual soul, city, shuttle, or cosmos. Insofar as reason intends to create a thing of some specific sort, it will have in mind the *sort* of thing to be created. This intelligible sort or kind will be the Form.<sup>19</sup> So if the best that one

<sup>19</sup>This does not preclude the possibility of mere copying of, say, an already existing chariot or shuttle. But I have in mind Platonic *technē* guided by awareness of the relevant *eidos*. For a statement of the principle involved, see *Gorgias* 503d-e (where the *eidos* may not yet be a separate Platonic Form). Thus the craftsman of the *Cratylus*

can do with the original disorderly motion in the receptacle is to shape it into an intelligent animal, then the good, unjealous creator will aim to produce a cosmic sensible animal. And if so, the creator's creative activity is correctly described as that of fashioning a worldly image with an eye to the Intelligible Animal as Model.

Finally, returning to the merits of Plato's account of creation, it is impossible to say for sure whether he is confused at all. He may have in mind that completeness and uniqueness are bestowed simply because they are goods, and not because that would make the image a better likeness of its model. If so, it must be granted that his appeal to the project of image-making in these cases is at best very awkward. Or he may have conceived of completeness and uniqueness simply as goods but introduced the image analogy anyway to emphasize the reasonableness (hence goodness) of the cosmos's being unique. Here the appeal to imaging would be in another way potentially misleading, since bestowal of uniqueness is not to be justified as part of making an accurate (faithful) image of the model. Plato may have been aware of this danger, but still have used the image analogy for the sake of emphasizing other points. Or he may have been confused, thinking that in these cases making a good image of the model coincided with making the sensible world as good as possible. Or he may never have distinguished those two aims.

I suspect that the third alternative is correct. But I have been more concerned here to demonstrate the importance for this topic of certain larger Platonic views on imaging and on the Demiurge's motives in creation, and to investigate the way in which those views combine in Timaeus' account of creation. These points provide a reasonable diagnosis of an apparent confusion but also, if correct, draw out some basic principles that are of larger importance for understanding Plato's account of creation and his metaphysics.<sup>20</sup>

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will not be a copyist, because he must produce a variety of shuttles for a variety of webs, all of which must have the same *eidōs*. He will look in each case to the same (functionally defined) *eidōs* as he makes shuttles of various design. His finished products will all perform the same *ergon* of separating threads, but they will not all be of identical specifications, as if copied from a single perfect shuttle. Indeed, since different shuttles are required for different sorts of web, there could not be a single perfect shuttle.

<sup>20</sup>My thanks to Richard Parry, William Prior, David Keyt, and especially Michael Rohr for responses to earlier drafts of this paper.