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False Judgment in Plato's Theaetetus

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FALSE JUDGMENT IN PLATO'S THEAETETUS

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ABSTRACT

At *Theaetetus* 187b, Socrates' interlocutor Theaetetus offers a definition of knowledge as true belief. Since Socrates has already argued that Theaetetus' first definition of knowledge as perception is inadequate, the discussion has moved away from perceptual accounts of knowledge to the relationship between beliefs or judgments and knowledge. Even though Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true belief is not immediately refuted, Socrates instead proposes that he and Theaetetus investigate the possibility of false judgments. That is, Socrates proposes that they investigate how it is possible for someone to believe things which are false.

This project, then, is concerned with this stretch of the *Theaetetus*; Plato's investigation into the possibility of false judgments. One of the most important questions that arise when reading this passage is why the discussion into the possibility of false judgments is brought up at all. In this dissertation I shall argue, contrary to some scholars, that the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* has a distinct purpose, namely, to refute Protagoras' suggestion that false beliefs are impossible. Plato is, throughout this passage, genuinely bothered by the problem of falsehood and seeks to find a satisfactory resolution. He seeks to find a resolution so that he may, contrary to Protagoras, show that false judgments are possible.

In the course of defending this claim, I shall investigate the two primary impediments to accounting for falsity. These first two puzzles argue that false beliefs cannot occur if certain assumptions are made. After investigating these two puzzles, I shall outline and interpret Plato's three proposed solutions to these two puzzles. As I shall argue, while Plato's attempt to overcome the difficulties of the two puzzles fails, he is genuinely bothered by the problem of falsehood. Various reasons have been offered by commentators for the failure of Plato's account. While this is the case, I shall argue that what makes false belief unaccountable for Plato at this juncture of his career are certain assumptions about the mind's relationship between its judgments and the objects of its judgments.

INTRODUCTION

The *Theaetetus*' primary concern is to find an adequate definition of knowledge. Throughout the *Theaetetus* we are met with various attempts to define knowledge, yet we are never provided with a satisfactory definition; the dialogue ends in *aporia*. The Second Part¹ of the *Theaetetus* (187b-201c) is preceded by restricting the range of an appropriate definition of knowledge. The previous discussion (151d-184a) has demolished the suggestion that knowledge is sense perception. Theaetetus has been shown that knowledge and perception are not the same thing (186e) and because of this, Socrates suggests that a definition of knowledge may be found not in sense experience but in "that activity of the soul when it is busy by itself about the things which are" (187a4-5).² This activity, we are told, is "judgment" or "the process of reasoning" about sense data. Since the discussion is now restricted to judgments about sense experience, Theaetetus offers another definition of knowledge, namely, that knowledge is true judgment (187b4-7). With this new attempt at defining knowledge on the table, Socrates remarks that there is an experience that has been bothering him for some time, namely, "judging what is false."³

The ensuing discussion (187c9-200d3), then, is concerned with accounting for the possibility of false judgments. In the course of attempting to explain and account for false judgments, Socrates proposes two puzzles (hereafter the Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle and the Being/Non-Being Puzzle) which purportedly show that false judgments are impossible and then rejects three possible explanations of how false judgments may arise: (a) the 'other-judging' model, (b) the wax block model and finally (c) the aviary model. Each of these in turn is rejected as an unsatisfactory explanation of false judgments. So, the *Theaetetus*' discussion of false judgment ends in *aporia*, and we will have to wait

¹ Following the traditional division of the *Theaetetus* into three parts: Part I: Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception. Part II: Knowledge as True Belief. Part III: Knowledge as True Belief plus a Logos.

² All translations are by M.J. Levett with revisions by Myles Burnyeat.

³ Whether or not this is a reference back to 167a, as Cornford suggests, will be considered when I delve into the issue of why there is a discussion of false judgments in the *Theaetetus* (see Chapter 1).

until the *Sophist* to find a satisfactory Platonic resolution to the problem of false judgments.

The main focus of this project is this seeming digression from the main track of defining knowledge. I shall take up the task of first investigating the two puzzles which show that false judgments are impossible, namely, the Knowing/not-knowing puzzle and the Being/non-being puzzle and then investigate the three proposed attempts at accounting for false judgments. There is much scholarly debate over the interpretation of the two puzzles and the proposed resolutions. My goal will be to find some resolution to interpretive problems that arise throughout the discussion of false judgments at 187a-201c. For instance, some of the questions that I will attempt to clarify are:

- Why is there a discussion of false judgment in the *Theaetetus*? That is, in a dialogue primarily devoted to finding an adequate definition of knowledge, why are we confronted with the problem of false judgments?
- What is the range of false judgments? Are we merely concerned with false judgments of identity or all kinds of false judgments?
- What is the relationship between Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true judgment and the discussion of false judgments? Is the ensuing discussion of false judgments an indirect (or direct) argument against Theaetetus' definition?
- Is Plato criticizing someone else's attempt at accounting for false judgments, or is he genuinely bothered by the possibility of false judgments himself?
- Why does the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* fail?

These are some of the central questions: more problems and questions will arise throughout this project. Gaining an understanding and resolution to these questions (and others) will be the central task of my project. By finding a resolution to some of these questions and by analyzing each of the five sections of part two, I hope to add some clarity to the debate. In order to do so, I will take a look at the central problem of this stretch of the *Theaetetus*, namely, how are false judgments possible?

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1: Why is there a Discussion of False Belief?

In the first chapter, I shall deal with the question of why there is discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* at all. The transition from Theaetetus' second definition of knowledge as true belief and Socrates' proposal that they investigate the possibility of false belief seems abrupt. After Theaetetus proposes his second definition, Socrates proposes that they return to a question that has bothered him before, namely, how can there be such a thing as false beliefs.

It is not immediately evident why this question is raised at this juncture. With that said, commentators offer various reasons why Plato deals with the problem of false beliefs at this point of the *Theaetetus*. Since the stated purpose of the dialogue is to define knowledge, the question arises as to why Plato decides to sidetrack the discussion into a satisfactory definition of knowledge with a discussion of false beliefs.

In this chapter, I shall outline three reasons for the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus*. First, is the view of Cornford. He states that the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* returns to a line of thought that had begin with the discussion of Protagoras (167a). A consequence of Protagorean relativism is that false beliefs are impossible. As Cornford argues, it is because Plato has only offered an *ad hominem* argument against Protagorean relativism that prompts Plato to return to the problem of false judgments. For Cornford then, Plato does so not only to criticize Protagoras' account but to see how far he can get without the Forms (111). So, the discussion of false belief is a digression from the main track of defining knowledge. Furthermore, Cornford argues that any discussion of false belief will fail without a reliance on the Forms.

A second view is defended by Gail Fine. According to Fine, the purpose of the false belief passage is to refute indirectly Theaetetus' definition that knowledge is true belief. As she argues, Theaetetus' definition entails an underlying acquaintance model whereby knowing an object is an all or nothing affair; an agent either knows everything about an object or an agent knows nothing at all about that object. To refute indirectly Theaetetus' definition, Plato, in the false belief passage, argues against the acquaintance

model of knowledge which this definition entails. Since Plato holds that the acquaintance model is false, Fine argues that Plato also argues that Theaetetus' definition cannot stand. In this way, then, Fine holds that the discussion of false belief is not a digression from the main track of defining knowledge, but is, in fact, both an extended refutation of Theaetetus' definition and a continuation of the main track of the dialogue, namely, defining knowledge.

The final view that I shall outline and argue against is held by Timothy Chappell. Like Fine, Chappell also sees the false belief passage as an extended indirect argument. According to Chappell, Plato, in this passage, is arguing against certain empiricist views on false belief. Plato is not, as may seem apparent, truly bothered by the possibility of false beliefs, but he is merely refuting someone else's attempt at accounting for it. Chappell, like Cornford, views the *Theaetetus* as an extended *reductio ad absurdum* of accounts of knowledge which leave out the Forms. For Chappell, the false belief passage is no different; Plato's purpose is to show that empiricism cannot hold and cannot accurately account for falsity.

After explaining and outlining each of these views, I shall provide my own answer to the question why we have a discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus*. My view will have some similarities with Cornford's view but without the ontological baggage (i.e., the Forms). As I shall argue, the discussion of false belief is a natural progression and a natural step forward from the discussions which preceded it. Earlier in the *Theaetetus* Plato ascribes to Protagoras a view which argues that all beliefs are subjectively true for each individual. Since beliefs/perceptions are relative to an individual and because of this truth is relative to an individual's beliefs/perception, judging or believing falsely is impossible. As this is the view given to Protagoras, Plato's purpose is to show that, contrary to Protagoreanism, false beliefs can be accounted for. Even though Plato's attempts to account for falsity fails, his attempt to account for their possibility is a genuine enterprise; he is neither refuting someone's account of falsity or refuting Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true belief. So, Plato has a distinct purpose in discussing false beliefs; show that Protagoras is wrong to hold that falsity does not occur. In this way, the discussion of falsity is the natural way forward. In order to

show that Protagorean Relativism is false, Plato will need to account and explain how there can be false beliefs. This, I shall argue, is Plato's project.

There is clear evidence that this is what Plato is up to in the false belief passage. In this first chapter and in subsequent chapters I shall defend the view that Plato is attempting to account for the possibility of false beliefs. As we shall see, Plato's aporetic state is genuine; he is, contrary to Chappell and Cornford, truly bothered by the problem of false beliefs.

Chapter 2: First Puzzle: Knowing/Not-Knowing

After Theaetetus proposes his second definition of knowledge as true judgment, Socrates interjects and wonders whether it would be a good time to return to a problem which arose earlier in the discussion (187c9-10). This problem, we are told, is judging what is false. When Socrates assumes that false beliefs do occur (187e5-8), despite what Protagoras may have said earlier, Socrates provides the first of two puzzles against the possibility of judging falsely. This first puzzle argues that false beliefs are impossible because if an agent either knows or does not know the object of his judgment, then he cannot mistake one object for another if one object is known and the other not, if neither are known or if both are known. The overall reason why the first puzzle makes false belief impossible is that Plato argues that if an agent has an object before his mind, in the sense that he knows it, then it cannot be the case that he can mistake this object for another object which is either known or unknown. As we shall see, this puzzle and the assumptions which underlie it are the primary impediments to Plato finding a satisfactory resolution to the problem of false beliefs.

In this chapter I shall deal with the problems associated with interpreting this first puzzle. Some of the problems which I shall deal with are the following: (a) What underlying assumptions occur in the first puzzle which enable it to rule out false judgments? (b) Does the first puzzle restrict false beliefs to only one kind, namely, false judgments of identity? (c) What sense of 'know' is operative in the first puzzle? How does this sense of 'know' rule out false judgments? (d) What is the purpose of the first puzzle? (e) Is Plato bothered by the problems he sets out here or is false belief merely a

problem for his opponents, namely Protagoreans? (f) What is the relationship between this first puzzle and the rest of discussion?

In my view, the assumptions which occur here are the primary impediments to accounting for false beliefs in the *Theaetetus* (See 1.5). As I shall argue in this chapter and throughout this project, it is because of Plato's failure to see how an object can be before an agent's mind and at the same time an agent can be wrong about what he is thinking of, which leads to the account's failure. However, the problems associated with the first puzzle, will set up the main questions of this project; a fuller analysis and account of the assumptions and problems which occur here will be given in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3: Second Puzzle: Being/Non-Being and the *Allodoxia* Model

When Socrates states that the considerations of the first puzzle show that false beliefs are impossible, he furthers the claim to its impossibility by espousing a second puzzle. This second puzzle rests on the Parmenidian assumption that it is impossible to speak or think about that which is not (i.e., what does not exist or is not the case). This claim was used by the sophists (most notably Protagoras) to argue that false judgments are impossible. That is, the sophists argue that if it is impossible to speak or think of what does not exist and if thinking or judging falsely is thinking of what does not exist, then it is impossible to judge falsely. The consequence of such an argument is that all judgments/beliefs are therefore true; it is impossible for an agent to judge falsely.

The second puzzle against the possibility of false belief takes off from such an argument. Here, Plato has Socrates argue that in the same way that it is impossible to see or hear something which does not exist, it is likewise impossible to believe/judge what does not exist. While the second puzzle is similar to these earlier sophistic puzzles against false belief, the puzzle here is different. This puzzle rests on an analogy between perceiving what is not and thinking/judging what is not. As the argument goes, if it is impossible to perceive what is not, it is likewise impossible to judge or think what is not.

As I will argue in this chapter, Plato is here presenting a Protagorean argument against the possibility of false beliefs. For as Protagoras was made to argue earlier, there

is no difference between an agent's perceptions and judgments/beliefs (Note). Whatever an agent perceives is part and parcel with what an agent judges to be the case. Since there is no difference between judgments and perceptions (i.e., judgments are perceptions), and if it is impossible to judge what an agent is not perceiving, then false judgments become impossible. With this in mind, it is Plato's intention here to reiterate the Protagorean argument that falsity is impossible. The reason for doing, ultimately, is to show that Protagoras was wrong to assert that falsehood is impossible.

So, in this chapter I will argue for the above claims. Here I will show that the underlying assumptions of the second puzzle lend themselves to the thesis that Plato is taking another stab at Protagorean relativism.⁴

In attempting to refute Protagoras' argument, Plato proposes the *alldoxia* model. According to this consideration, false judgment arises whenever an agent 'other-judges'. That is, Plato has Socrates state that false judgment occurs whenever an agent substitutes one thing as another in his thought. For instance, according to the *alldoxia* model, I may mistakenly confuse Socrates as regal-nosed when in fact he is snub-nosed.

The suggestion that false belief occurs through a substitution or 'interchange' of one thing as another arises because of the assumptions of the second puzzle. There Socrates made the distinction between judging what is not about something which is (e.g., that Socrates, an existing thing, is something which is not true of him, regal-nosed) and judging what is not "by itself" (e.g., thinking of a non-existent state of affairs). It is Plato's recognition of this distinction which allows him to attempt to circumvent the Protagorean suggestion that false beliefs are impossible because it is impossible to think about what is not.

However, despite such a promising suggestion, Plato refutes it. He argues that the considerations of the first puzzle make it impossible for an agent to be actively thinking of two separate objects and to mistake or substitute one for the other. While the *alldoxia* model is intended to explain how an agent can think of what is not the case of something which is, the *alldoxia* suggestion fails because of the first puzzle's assumptions.

⁴ I will also argue in Chapter 4 that Plato further rejects Protagoras' denial of falsehood in the Wax Block Model (see below).

With this in mind, both the second puzzle and the *allodoxia* present many interpretive difficulties. In this chapter I shall try to find some resolution to the following questions: (a) Is the *allodoxia* model intended to cover only false judgments of identity or does it also consider false judgments of misdescriptions? (b) Why does the *allodoxia* model fail? (c) Is Plato's refutation of the *allodoxia* model fallacious, that is, does he confuse the distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* constructions? And finally (d) what is the relationship between Protagoras' denial of falsehood, the second puzzle and the *allodoxia* suggestion?

I will attempt in this chapter to find a satisfactory resolution to these questions. Doing so will support the claim of this project, that Plato is genuinely bothered by the problem of false belief and that his overall goal is to find a satisfactory resolution to the problem.

The next chapter will support some of the considerations of the third chapter. There I shall outline the first genuine attempt to circumvent the assumptions of the first puzzle. As we shall see, some of the same problems which arose in the failure of the *allodoxia* model are evident in the next attempt.

Chapter 4: The Wax Block Model and the Aviary Model

When it is shown that the *allodoxia* suggestion failed to account for the possibility of false beliefs, Socrates suggests that he and Theaetetus return to the considerations of the first puzzle. As stated above, the proposed solution provided here is the first genuine attempt to overcome the first puzzle's assumptions.

To overcome the first puzzle, Socrates proposes that false belief arises through a mismatch between an object which is presently being perceived and a record or memory of that object. Here Socrates and Theaetetus consider cases in which an agent both misidentifies a perceptual object and judges that it corresponds to a previously recorded memory and cases in which an agent mistakes one memory for another.

In order to further explain how such misidentifications of perceptions with memory can occur, Socrates proposes a model of the mind whereby perceptual objects and thoughts are recorded/imprinted on a wax block. We are to suppose that in each of us

a wax block records everything we perceive or think of ourselves. Since Socrates assumes that we know either a perceptual object or thought when it is imprinted in the waxen block and ignorance is not have an imprint in the waxen block, false belief occurs by mistaking what an agent already knows (i.e., what is recorded in memory) with a perception of some object which an agent does not know (e.g., the perception of a man in the distance). The mistake occurs by thinking and judging that the perceptual object not recorded in memory corresponds to what is recorded in memory. In this way then, false belief occurs by mismatching something an agent knows (i.e., an object recorded in memory) with something which he either perceives or thinks and judging falsely that the two are identical.

While this account seems promising, Plato argues that it fails to account for every kind of occurrence of false belief. Plato specifically argues that it fails to account for purely *a priori* mistakes. Plato's point is that while the Wax Block explanation can account for cases in which an agent mistakenly judges something he knows as something he does not know, it cannot overcome the first puzzle's contention that an agent cannot mistake or judge that two known objects are identical. Here Plato considers mathematical mistakes and argues that if an agent has imprints in the waxen block of two numbers and knows both, he cannot make the mistake of judging that they are identical.

Since it is argued that the Wax Block can account for mistakes between perceptual objects and memories recorded in the block but not *a priori* mistakes, Socrates proposes another model of the mind. Socrates begins the explanation of this model by making a distinction between having something in the sense of possessing it and having something in the sense of possessing it and actually having it at the present moment (197c8). Utilizing this distinction, Socrates constructs the following model of false judgments: Our minds are like an aviary full of birds where each bird represents different pieces of knowledge. Knowledge arises whenever we acquire a new bird and store it in the aviary (197e).

According to this model, false judgments arise whenever we "grab" the wrong piece of knowledge stored in the aviary (i.e., grasp the wrong bird, "catch a ring-dove instead of a pigeon" (199b7)). For instance, whenever one is searching for an item of knowledge within one's mind, one may mistakenly pick out the wrong piece of

knowledge (199b). So, true judgment will be whenever one “gets hold” of the right piece of knowledge and false judgment will be whenever one gets hold of the wrong piece of knowledge (199b9). For example, when adding five and seven we may reach into our aviaries and grab the bird 11 instead of 12 and in this way grab the wrong piece of knowledge.

But like the previous attempts to account for the possibility of false belief, the Aviary model fails. Since this is the case, part of this chapter will be devoted to not only examining why Plato disregards the Wax Block as unsatisfactory but also why the Aviary Model fails. Furthermore, in this chapter I shall deal with the following issues as they relate to the Wax Block and Aviary Models: (a) Whose theory is the Wax Block? Is Plato merely outlining and refuting an empiricist explanation of false belief? (b) Why does this account fail and does it fail because of Plato’s continued confusion between *de re* and *de dicto* belief constructions? (c) What is the relationship between Part I of the dialogue and the Wax Block? Is Plato continuing his refutations of Protagoras by arguing that false perceptions are possible? (d) Why does the Aviary model fail? Why does it fail to overcome the problems associated with the Wax Block?

In this chapter I shall attempt to answer and examine these questions. In doing so I will argue that the Wax Block is a continuation of the overall purpose of the false belief passage: showing that Protagoras is wrong to assert that false beliefs are impossible. Some cases of false belief can be accounted for even though not every case can be.

Conclusion: Why Does the Discussion of False Belief End in *Aporia*?

In the final chapter I will review all of the problems and assumptions of each of the five parts of the discussion of the possibility of false belief. I shall also review some of the reasons commentators have provided for thinking that the discussion into the possibility of false belief fails to explain adequately how false beliefs are possible. After reviewing these, I will argue that Plato fails to account for false beliefs because of the trappings of the first puzzle, that is, Plato could not ultimately see how an agent can be thinking of an object and at the same time be mistaken.

The trappings of the first puzzle's assumptions lead Plato into thinking that all false judgments are identity judgments. In this way, Plato could not see that cases of misdescription (e.g., that Socrates is regal-nosed) are not fundamentally misidentifications. That is, one problem for Plato is that he treats cases of misdescription as a misidentification of two objects. For example, in misdescribing Socrates as regal-nosed, Plato holds that an agent is thinking of both Socrates as Socrates (*as* having the property of snub-nosedness) and thinking of Socrates as regal-nosed Socrates. In this way, Plato does not see that misdescriptions need not entail thinking of something's true properties in order to ascribe false properties to it. The problem of treating misdescriptions as essentially misidentifications arises because Plato could not see how an agent could be thinking of an object (i.e., have an object before his mind) and fail to know it and mistake it for some other object.

Plato tells us that the reason why the explanation fails to account for the possibility of false judgments is because of a lack of an adequate definition of knowledge (200c6-d3). If knowledge is defined adequately, as Plato seems to state, then falsity could be accounted for. Here I shall argue that Plato's pronouncement at the end of the discussion highlights the fact that, for him, without a clear conception of knowledge we cannot determine how an agent can have an object before the mind and yet be mistaken about it.

CHAPTER ONE: WHY IS THERE A DISCUSSION OF FALSE BELIEF?

1.0 Why Falsity?

As I have stated in the introduction, the *Theaetetus*' primary concern is to define knowledge. However, Theaetetus' third definition, that knowledge is true belief, is not immediately refuted by Socrates but rather a lengthy discussion ensues into false beliefs. The refutation of the third definition takes merely one page preceded by thirteen pages filled with an investigation into the possibility of false judgments. So, why the topic of false beliefs at this stage? Why does Plato wait thirteen pages to finally refute the suggestion that knowledge is true belief? Initially the answer may seem obvious. At 187c Socrates and Theaetetus have the following exchange.

Soc: Now I wonder if it's worth while, at this stage, to go back to an old point about judgment

The: What point do you mean?

Soc: I have something on my mind which has often bothered me before, and got me into great difficulty, both in my own thought and in discussion with other people – I mean, I can't say what it is, this experience we have, and how it arises in us.

The: What experience?

Soc: Judging what is false (Τὸ δοχάζειν τινὰ ψευδῆ). Even now, you know, I 'm still considering; I'm in two minds whether to let it go or whether to look into it in a different manner from a short while ago (187c9-d8).

A natural reading of the analysis of false judgment at 187c- 200d is that it may merely harp back to a discussion that arose earlier at 167a. Earlier in the dialogue Protagoras is made to remark that “it is not possible either to think the thing that is not or to think anything but what one experiences, and all experiences are true.” Protagoras' position then entails that falsity is impossible since an agent can never be wrong about what he perceives. Socrates' response at 167a is that if it is the case that all perceptions are true and falsity is impossible, then there would be no need for Sophists since there is no need for and impossible for a Sophist to make one man wiser than another. We see the same *ad hominem* argument being leveled against the Sophists in the *Euthydemus* and the *Cratylus*, that if all beliefs are true, the Sophists cannot make one man wiser than another, that is, there will be no need for Sophists (see Chapter 2). So, the problem of false belief at 187c-200d may very well be a continuation of a point that came up earlier and that Plato's task is to continue that track and put the final nail in the coffin of Protagoras' position “in a new way.” This view (call it the digression view) is proposed

by Cornford. As Cornford states, “Instead of developing and criticising Theaetetus’ new suggestion, Socrates here goes back to a point that arose earlier in the Defence of Protagoras” (110). Since, according to Cornford, Plato has merely utilized an *ad hominem* argument against Protagoras’ position on falsity, the point of 187c-200d is to further the discussion of false beliefs and “to see how far we can get towards an explanation of false judgment without invoking the Forms” (111). So, for Cornford, the discussion of false beliefs in the *Theaetetus* merely furthers the view that the dialogue as a whole is *reductio* to the effect that without the Forms a definition of knowledge and an account of false judgments will fail. So Cornford’s view is that the discussion is merely a digression from defining knowledge and is doomed to failure without the forms.

The question then remains what role, if any, does the discussion of false belief play in relation to the rest of the dialogue? In other words, what bearing does this discussion have on the search for an adequate definition of knowledge? In this chapter, I will first outline various attempts to address the question why we have a discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus*. After outlining these various views and arguing that there are inherent problems in each, I shall argue, in partial agreement with Cornford, that the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* does harp back to “a point that arose earlier”, namely, Plato intends to explain how judgments can sometimes fail to match up with the world. Since Protagorean Subjectivism tells that our beliefs always match up and can never fail, Plato’s purpose in the false belief passage is to attempt to explain how they can. Plato’s purpose, then, is to show that Protagoras was wrong to claim that falsehood is impossible. False judgments occur, but we need to explain how they can. Any adequate account of knowledge, for Plato, must include an adequate account of false judgments. If an account of false judgments is not provided, then there will be no distinction between knowledge and ignorance, no distinction between true and false beliefs (for all beliefs will then be true as Protagoras asserts) and no account of contradictory beliefs between two agents (as the περίτροπή argument seems to warrant; see 170aff). So, Plato’s intent in the passage is to explain how judgments can sometimes fail to “grasp being and truth.” But this attempt at an explanation fails and we need to see why. In section 1.3 I will explain the preceding view and provide a basic synopsis of why the account fails. A fuller

account and analysis of the preceding view and why Plato's account of falsity fails will be given a fuller treatment throughout the ensuing chapters.

1.1 Fine's View

Another view is suggested by Fine. For Fine, the discussion of false belief provides one of two arguments against Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true belief (Fine, 213-14). The discussion of false belief is used as an indirect argument against Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true belief. To show that this is the case, Fine argues that the definition of knowledge as true belief is supported by an acquaintance model. It is because of this underlying acquaintance model that the passage ends in *aporia*.

...Plato is not committed to the underlying acquaintance model that occurs here. Rather, he uses it to buttress Theaetetus' suggestion...that knowledge is true belief. When, at the end of the discussion, Socrates rejects Theaetetus' suggestion (201 a-c), he also rejects the acquaintance model that had made Theaetetus' suggestion look plausible and that also precludes a satisfactory explanation of false belief (Fine, 213).

According to the acquaintance model, knowledge becomes an all or nothing affair. Either one "hits" the objects of one's judgments and thus has knowledge or "misses" and therefore lacks knowledge. As Fine argues, if Theaetetus' definition of 'knowledge as true belief' is supported by the acquaintance model and if Plato accepts such a model, then false beliefs will be impossible. Yet, as Plato explicitly states false beliefs are possible (187e6-7); and if this is the case, then knowledge is neither true belief nor should the acquaintance model be accepted. So, for Fine, the false belief passage is used as an indirect argument against the suggestion that knowledge is true belief and against a particular model of knowledge, namely, the acquaintance model.

Fine supports her case by arguing that the first puzzle⁵ (188a-c10) is committed to an underlying acquaintance model. For Fine, it is the identification of knowledge as true belief that leads to a commitment to the acquaintance model. As Fine argues, what makes the first puzzle work is the commitment to a view of knowledge whereby if an agent is acquainted with an object this acquaintance entails complete knowledge of that object

⁵ For a detailed explanation of the first puzzle see Chapter 2. For a brief explanation of the first puzzle in relation to Fine's view see below.

(Fine, 216). In other words, if I am acquainted with my pet cat Tuesday, I either know everything about her or I am completely ignorant of her. Since I am acquainted with Tuesday and there is no distinction between my beliefs about Tuesday and my knowledge of her (which, as Fine argues, Theaetetus' definition warrants) then, according to the first puzzle, I cannot mistake my pet cat Tuesday (of which I know everything about) for my other cat Monster (whom I am also acquainted with and know everything about). To do so, according to the argument of the first puzzle, will entail knowing and not knowing the same object.⁶ (188b3-5). The same then will also hold where one object is known but not the other or where neither object is known. So, what makes false misidentifications impossible according to the argument of the first puzzle is the having of complete knowledge of an object or complete ignorance of an object. What the underlying acquaintance model entails is that for any two objects they cannot be mistaken for one another if everything about them is known, if everything is known about one but not the other, or if nothing is known about either.

So, for Fine, if true belief is the same as knowledge, then anyone who is committed to a definition of true belief as knowledge will therefore be committed to an underlying acquaintance model. Since this is the case, and if the sense of "know" in the first puzzle means the same as "true belief", then it is Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true belief and its commitment to an acquaintance model that makes false belief impossible.

The question then is how such a commitment to an acquaintance model is utilized by Plato as an indirect argument against Theaetetus' definition. Fine argues for this indirect argument against Theaetetus' definition in two further ways. First, by analyzing the first model of false belief, the *allodoxia* model, and second by arguing that Socrates' statement at the end of the passage that an account of false belief requires an adequate definition of knowledge Fine suggests that Theaetetus' definition is faulty (Fine, 223). In support of her case that the *allodoxia* model suggests such an indirect rejection, Fine argues that the *allodoxia* model fails

...only because of its reliance on K [first puzzle]. But since Plato is not committed to K, this does not show that he cannot handle the subtleties of *allodoxia*. Rather, *allodoxia*'s failure to explain in

⁶ For a fuller explanation of the reasoning behind this claim see Chapter 2.

what false belief consists is an indirect argument that Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true belief is faulty, since that definition requires K in its support, and K in turn precludes a satisfactory account of false belief (214).

According to Fine then, it is because of a reliance on the assumptions of the first puzzle which makes it possible for the *allogoxia* consideration to be reduced to absurdity. Given the assumptions of the first puzzle, it is impossible for someone to "substitute in his thought" one thing for another (189c2), since one cannot say to oneself that one thing is another (190c5-d2). That is, one cannot "other-judge" (*allogoxia*) that Socrates is beautiful when he is in fact ugly since one cannot say to oneself that "Socrates is beautiful" and "Socrates is ugly", if one knows everything about ugliness and beauty. In this way then, Fine argues that the assumptions of the first puzzle make *allogoxia* type judgments impossible since one cannot intelligently mistake or cross-believe two known objects in which everything about them is known. So, according to Fine, it is not because *allogoxia* is a bad explanation of false beliefs that this model fails. In fact, for Fine, this model is similar to Plato's explanation in the *Sophist*, but because of its reliance on the assumptions of the first puzzle, namely its reliance on an acquaintance model of knowledge, the account in the *Theaetetus* fails (217-221). So, when Plato rejects the *allogoxia* model as a satisfactory account of false belief he is not arguing that *allogoxia* itself is unsatisfactory but that the underlying acquaintance model of knowledge is unsatisfactory. Since it is the acquaintance model that Plato rejects in the *allogoxia* model, Plato therefore rejects the assumptions of the first model and with this Theaetetus' definition (Ibid).

Further evidence, which Fine highlights, for the view that the passage is an indirect argument against Theaetetus' definition is Plato's explicit statement that a satisfactory account of false belief cannot be accomplished without a satisfactory account of knowledge:

Then don't you think, my boy, that the argument is perhaps dealing out a little chastisement, and showing us that we were wrong to leave the question about knowledge and proceed to inquire into false judgment first? While as a matter of fact it's impossible to know this until we have an adequate grasp of what knowledge is (200c6-d3).

As Fine states this assertion suggests that somehow Theaetetus' definition is related to the discussion of false belief. If this is the case and since the discussion ends in *aporia*, then the definition of knowledge which underlies the discussion is faulty (Fine, 222). So,

for Fine, since Plato explicitly states that since an account of falsity requires “grasping what knowledge is” and the discussion of falsity fails, the assumptions about knowledge that underlie this discussion, namely Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as true belief and its commitment to an acquaintance model, are likewise faulty (Ibid).

Based upon these considerations then, the purpose of the false belief passage in the *Theaetetus* is to argue indirectly that Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge and the assumptions which underlie it are faulty.

While I shall argue in the second chapter that the first puzzle is not committed to an acquaintance model there are further reasons for not accepting Fine’s view. First, as Bostock argues, it is unclear why we are to agree with Fine that if it is supposed that knowledge is true belief, we are also to suppose that knowledge of an object entails knowing everything about it (Bostock, 198). Although Bostock does not elaborate on this point, it can be surmised that his basic point is that if one has a true belief about something, and therefore has knowledge, it does not follow that one knows everything about the object or in fact needs to. For if S has a true belief about a pet cat named Tuesday, that she is big and black, and therefore by Theaetetus’ definition has knowledge, it does not seem to follow that S needs to know everything about Tuesday in order to satisfy Theaetetus’ assertion that S’s true belief is equivalent to knowledge. Yet, Fine argues that the acquaintance model’s support of Theaetetus’ definition is to obliterate the distinction between knowledge and true belief (Fine, 222). But it is still unclear why an obliteration of the line between knowledge and true belief entails an acquaintance model.

Furthermore, it is likewise unclear, if Fine is correct, why Plato is being so coy if the passage is intended as an indirect argument against Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as true belief. Plato has already offered an argument in the *Meno* to the effect that true belief is not the same as knowledge. In the *Meno*, Plato draws a fairly sharp distinction between true belief and knowledge (97a-f). As Plato argues, true belief is as good a guide to right action as knowledge, but is fleeting and will not stay around if it is not tied down with an *aitias logismos* (97e2-98a8). In this way then, Plato has already asserted, earlier in the *Meno*, that true belief is not the same as knowledge. So to do so here and to spend thirteen pages in a discussion of falsity would be overkill if not a waste

of papyrus. Furthermore, Plato's quick rejection of Theaetetus' definition (201a5) and Theaetetus' restatement of that definition (200e1) seem to suggest that it is not Plato's intent to implicitly reject Theaetetus' definition in the false belief passage.

1.2. Chappell's View

According to Chappell, the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* has a distinct purpose. For Chappell, the discussion is intended as a *reductio ad absurdum* of certain empiricists' accounts of false belief. As Chappell states, "My story says that Plato is not casting around a satisfactory explanation of false belief *of his own*. Rather he is attacking *someone else's* explanation, or non-explanation, of false belief" (Chappell, 13 PAP).⁷ Plato, is not, as one might suspect, genuinely bothered by the puzzles and accounts of false belief in 187-201. He is, however, merely criticizing other attempts at arriving at a satisfactory account of false beliefs. So, for Chappell, Plato is not puzzled by any of the considerations in 187 – 201; but his empiricist opponents are.

Thus the strategy of the *Theaetetus*' discussion of false belief is not...that of an unsuccessful search, sincerely if rather blunderingly conducted by Plato himself, for a working account of false belief. *Theaetetus* 187 – 201 is not such a record of honest perplexity (or display of uncharacteristic obtuseness) as it has to be on their reading; and any *naïveté* it appears to contain is most definitely *fausse*. What the discussion presents is an ingeniously oblique *reductio ad absurdum* (Chappell, 6 PAP).

How is this *reductio* supposed to work? First, Chappell argues that there is an implicit theory of knowledge underlying the Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle. Chappell deems such a theory the "Pebble Theory." According to such a theory, knowing an object is similar to holding a pebble in my hand.⁸ Either I am holding the pebble or I am not. Likewise, I either know an object or I do not. So knowledge here is an all or nothing affair. For any object, either I know all about (I know that I am holding a pebble in my hand) or I don't. Such a theory, then, prevents misidentifications about two objects. In the same way that I cannot misidentify Theaetetus as Socrates when I know Theaetetus but not Socrates I cannot mistakenly assume that I am holding a pebble and not holding a

⁷ All citations from Chappell, which include the notation PAP, are from his article "The Puzzle About the Puzzle of False Belief: *Theaetetus* 188a-c" (1997). All other citations, without PAP, are from *Reading Plato's Theaetetus* (2005).

⁸ Barton [1999] argues for a similar thesis, namely that there is an analogy between holding and grasping an object and having an object before the mind in the sense of having it. However, Barton thinks that the purpose of the false belief passage is to reject the thesis that thinking is a sort of mental grasping.

pebble. So, this theory supports a reading of the Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle that makes misidentifications impossible.

Yet, the motivation behind the view that misidentifications are impossible is what Chappell calls “the mental image theory” (Chappell, 6 PAP). This theory, which is empiricist in nature, underlies the entire discussion of false belief. According to this theory, knowledge consists in acquaintance *with mental images*, not objects per se. Here an agent either knows or is acquainted with a mental image or he is not. Furthermore, there is only one way for an agent to know a mental image, by acquaintance. Thought, then, consists purely in the apprehension of mental images. There can be no thoughts without acquaintance with mental images. Chappell refers to such a view as a mental image theory (MIT for short). Knowledge results in the direct acquaintance with mental images. Either I am directly acquainted with a mental image or I am not. For Chappell, the mental operations that occur within this mental image theory are what he calls “Ideationism” and “Associationism.”

A natural way of spelling out this empiricist idea is to suggest that when I perceive something, Socrates for example, my perception of Socrates leaves a perceptual “echo” in my mind: an idea or mental image of Socrates: a picture in my head. (Call this view *Ideationism*). Then thinking about Socrates will be associating this mental image with other mental images, e.g., the mental image of Theaetetus. (Call this view *Associationism*.) So, for the empiricist, the judgment that “Socrates is Theaetetus” (188b8) will be an association of the ideas SOCRATES and THEAETETUS (Chappell, 161).

So, Plato’s question is not, “how are false beliefs possible?”, but “What sort of association between ideas of this sort could possibly amount to our *meaning* anything, e.g. that ‘Socrates is Theaetetus’?” (Chappell, 161). So, 187-201 is not a long, protracted examination of how false beliefs are possible, but an examination and rejection of certain empiricist assumptions, namely a mental image theory.

According to Chappell, it is Theaetetus and not Plato who is truly bothered by the problems of false belief. It is Theaetetus who is the unwilling adherent of the mental image theory (Chappell, 7 PAP). Theaetetus is then, according to Chappell, the mouthpiece for the empiricist accounts of false belief.

The thesis is that, throughout the discussion, Theaetetus is an unwitting adherent of MIT; though to be sure he is less and less unwitting of his commitment to MIT as the discussion proceeds. During the discussion Socrates prompts Theaetetus to try out a number of variants of MIT, to see if they can furnish him with a way around the puzzle of false belief (Chappell, 7 PAP).

Each of the five puzzles or accounts (i.e., the first and second puzzles; the allodoxia model, wax block, and aviary models) are merely various empiricist attempts to account for false beliefs. As Chappell argues, it is this adherence to a mental image theory that prompts the failure to account for false beliefs. The passage is not to be read as Plato genuinely bothered by the problems therein with Plato himself falling into *aporia*. It is, however, an empiricist account of false belief that fails. So, 187- 201 is merely a *reductio* of an empiricist account of false belief, namely a mental image theory.

What evidence does Chappell offer for this claim? That is, what textual evidence does Chappell cite in order to motivate the claim that the passage is a *reductio* of an empiricist proposal? First, to support this reading, Chappell finds support in the Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle. In this first puzzle, Plato argues that false beliefs are impossible if both of the objects of an agent's judgment are known, if one is known but not the other, or if neither are known. While at first glance it seems as if Plato is arguing for the conclusion that it is not possible for an agent to mistake two objects, Chappell's reading of the first puzzle seems to entail that the puzzle is not a problem for Plato but only for a mental image theorist since it is mental images which are mistaken and not objects per se. So, for Chappell, the first puzzle ought to be read as a puzzle for mental image theorists who hold that knowledge is an all or nothing affair. So, our first consideration is whether it is Plato that is bothered by this puzzle or is he merely proposing a puzzle for his empiricist opponents. If we read the first puzzle as Chappell suggests, then it does seem evident that it is a puzzle for empiricists. But as I shall argue in the second chapter (section 2.4), it is Plato who is genuinely bothered by the possibility of false beliefs. Furthermore, there is not any indication in the first puzzle that we are merely concerned with mistakes which arise purely from the confusion of two mental images. The first puzzle is concerned with the confusion of judging that two objects are identical when they are not; it is not concerned with judging that two mental images are identical when they are not. Plato's concern is to figure out how judgments/beliefs can fail to match up with things in the world. It is not however to assume that he knows how they can fail to match up (by assuming empiricism) as Chappell would have us believe. Plato has already argued that perceptual accounts of knowledge cannot get at "being and truth" (186d4). Since they cannot the natural way forward is to investigate whether or not

knowledge can be found in judgments and whether judgments per se can get at “being and truth.” So, a continued critique of perceptual accounts of knowledge (e.g., Protagoreanism) would be redundant if not unnecessary.⁹

Even if we cannot find evidence for an empiricist tone in the first puzzle, the subsequent solutions may lend themselves to such a reading. According to Chappell, we can find support for this reading in both the Wax Block and Aviary models of false belief. According to Chappell, both models are anti-Platonic.

The two most obvious anti-Platonic features of the Wax Block and Aviary are these. First, one picture given by these accounts, learning and teaching are unqualifiedly possible (191c3, 198b2-4): as they are not either in the *Meno* (80c -96b) or in the *Republic* (514a – 519a). Second, in both accounts the subject of the learning process begins with an empty receptacle, a *tabula rasa* or an empty aviary (191d2ff., 197e2)...If Plato had meant to offer what *Theaetetus* 187-201 says about learning, knowledge and thought as his own proposal, surely he would have attempted to reconcile that new proposal with these earlier accounts, or at least to register the points of difference. It cannot be accidental that he makes no effort at all to do either (Chappell, 8 PAP).

Chappell is correct to point out that the Aviary model assumes that the mind is empty at birth (197e2), but the Wax Block Model does not suggest this. In fact it is completely silent on whether or not the mind is a *tabula rasa* at birth (See Chapter 4). Furthermore, Chappell may also be correct to point out that in these models Plato may be utilizing other people’s assumptions about knowledge: “Well, then, have you heard what people are saying nowadays that knowing is?” (197a9-10). Although Chappell is right to highlight these assumptions, it does not follow, based upon these, that Plato is criticizing other accounts of false belief and that he is not genuinely bothered by the problem of false belief. He may merely be utilizing other accounts as a way of solving a dilemma that he finds himself in (See Chapter 2).¹⁰ In fact, he finds most of the Wax Block model satisfactory (195bff). Furthermore, there is no need, if these are Plato’s attempts to solve the problem of false belief, “to reconcile” these new accounts with any epistemological assumptions that he once held. Since, if Plato is bothered by the problem, then a

⁹ Chappell also suggests that Plato is arguing against the first puzzle in its initial presentation (Chappell, 166). That is, Plato has already refuted the first puzzle as a satisfactory account of false belief (i.e., an empiricists’ account). But Plato does not, contra Chappell, argue against the first puzzle when he initial offers it. He leaves its assumptions as they are; making falsehood impossible. Furthermore, if Plato has an argument against the first puzzle, it is not in the text. Likewise it is unclear what such an argument would look like.

¹⁰ There is a further point to be made in regards to the Aviary Model. Plato does not, as Chappell seems to assert, assume other’s definitions of knowledge (197a9-10) verbatim but adds his own qualifications: “Let us make a slight change;” (197b3). See Chapter 4.

connection with previous epistemological assumptions which could not solve the problem would be unnecessary if not surprising.

Whether or not the Wax Block and Aviary models are in fact empiricist's models will be dealt with in later chapters. Despite this, a few points can be made about this claim at this juncture. First, the Wax Block model not only deals with impressions deriving from sense perception but also conceptual impressions. "We make impressions upon this of everything we wish to remember among the things we have seen or heard or *thought of ourselves*;..." (191d5-6). The Wax Block does not seem to be wholly empiricist in tone; purely *a priori* imprints are likewise considered and it is because of such imprints that the account eventually fails (196a-d). Second, Chappell also seems to ignore the intentionality on the part of the agent in choosing which perceptions or thoughts are imprinted (191d5). It seems as if we are not just passive receptacles but in fact have a choice in which things we remember. If the model is an empiricist model, we would expect imprints to be received passively and not actively. In this regard, Plato is silent, in both models, of the way in which both the wax block and the aviary are filled up with items of knowledge. He does not tell us that the derivation of knowledge arises solely from sense experience. In fact, in some places he seems to suggest both. Finally, the assumptions about knowledge which are attributed to "what people are saying nowadays" are in fact Platonic in spirit. The distinction between actually having something (actually knowing) and potentially having something (potentially knowing) is reminiscent of the theory of recollection and some commentators have made such a connection (McDowell 222 -223). So, some of the assumptions at work in both models may be closer to Plato's views than Chappell thinks.

A fuller analysis of Chappell's assertions concerning both the Wax Block and Aviary models will have to wait until Chapter 4. However, there seem to be some basic indications in the text itself, that Plato is not merely refuting empiricist accounts of false belief but may in fact be bothered by the problem himself. But these assertions will be considered in later chapters.

1.3 Objects of Judgment View

The discussion is neither a mere digression (as Cornford suggests), a reductio of Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as true belief (as Fine suggests) nor a refutation of certain empiricist's accounts of false belief (as Chappell suggests). Theaetetus' third definition of knowledge is aborted on account of other considerations, namely, how is it possible for our judgments to fail to refer to things in the world. This consideration is, in fact, a natural progression from the first part of the dialogue. As I shall attempt to show, not only in this section but throughout the following chapters, Plato's purpose in discussing false belief at this juncture in the *Theaetetus* is to explain how our beliefs/judgments can sometimes fail to "grasp being and truth" (186d4). That is, the discussion has a distinct purpose in the *Theaetetus*: Plato attempts, although unsuccessfully, to explain how beliefs/judgments can sometimes fail to match up with things in the world. If an agent has an adequate grasp of an object (i.e., has the requisite knowledge of objects) and knows what distinguishes one object from another, then how is it possible for an agent to judge falsely that one thing is another? Since Protagorean subjectivism tells us that our beliefs always identify the objects of our judgments and Heraclitean flux tells us that we can never accurately identify the objects of our judgments, Plato, at this juncture of the dialogue, wants to explain, despite the views of Protagorean subjectivism and Heracliteanism, how judgments can fail to refer to the objects of our consideration. His question is not, as Chappell suggests, "What sort of association between ideas of this sort could possibly amount to our *meaning* anything, e.g. that 'Socrates is Theaetetus'?" (161) but "Why it the case, on some occasions, that our judgments can fail to "grasp being and truth"?" In other words, why is it the case that our judgments can sometimes fail to refer to the objects of our judgments? The first puzzle tells us that our judgments always match up correctly with the world if we make certain assumptions about the objects of our judgments, that is, we can never fail to pick out or refer to the objects of our judgments. The subsequent models attempt to explain how we may fail to adequately refer to objects. Even though each of these models fails, Plato's attempt to explain false beliefs is genuine, and likewise, so is his aporetic state.

Plato's purpose in the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* is multifaceted. First, he wants to show why Protagoras was wrong to claim that falsehood is

impossible.¹¹ Second, he wants to argue that judgments about objects are a necessary condition for having knowledge. It is not the case that perception alone can give us knowledge; judgments must also do some work (184b-187a) (See Chapter 2). So, if Plato can explain how there can be both true and false judgments he will be much closer to finding an adequate definition of knowledge. Third, in order to do this, explain how there can be both true and false judgments, he must explain how judgments can sometimes go awry and fail to pick out the objects of their considerations. Fourth, if Plato can explain the relationship between beliefs/judgments and the world, he will be closer to explaining how there can be knowledge of perceptual objects, which may very well be his goal in the *Theaetetus*.

To show that this is Plato's question, *viz.*, he seeks to explain how beliefs can sometimes fail, consider what happens prior to the discussion of false belief. Plato has already cogently argued against Protagoras' Measure Doctrine and Heraclitean Flux. Both fail because of their denial of an objective state of affairs (152e3). For Protagoras, every one of an agent's beliefs is true, the denial of these beliefs is impossible and therefore an agent's beliefs will never fail to refer. Heracliteanism tells us that judgments can never match up to an objective state of affairs because everything is in constant flux. We are never able to judge that x is y because there are never stable objects for us to refer to. As I shall show in the second chapter, Plato did not previously in the dialogue have an adequate response to Protagoras' denial of falsehood; he merely offered an *ad hominem* argument (see 2.4). Furthermore, if Plato is to show, contrary to Protagoras, that contradictory and conflicting beliefs can occur, he will need to show that false beliefs are possible. In other words, he will need to show that "false judgment repeatedly occurs and one of us judges falsely, the other truly" (187e6-7). For example, Plato's criticism of Protagoras' Subjectivism that it is self-refuting may need further support (170c-171c). This support comes from Plato's attempt to account for falsity, since Protagoras cannot refute himself if contradictory beliefs are not possible.

So, Plato's purpose in discussing false belief in the *Theaetetus* is to continue a line of argument that began with his earlier refutation of Protagoras' denial of falsehood.

¹¹ Although this is not to say that he rejects empiricists' accounts of false belief (*a la* Chappell) but that he is truly bothered by Protagoras' denial of falsehood and seeks to find a way around it (see Chapter 3).

He wants to explain how both Protagorean Subjectivism and Heracliteanism were wrong to suppose that there is no objective state of affairs. To do so, that is, to show that some judgments do adequately refer to an objective state of affairs he will also need to explain how some judgments can sometimes fail to refer, i.e., how there can be false beliefs. The investigation into the possibility of false beliefs is therefore used to certify and support some of the arguments leveled against Protagoreanism and Heracliteanism.

Yet despite this, the account fails. Plato fails to achieve his purpose. The question then is why. The most obvious reason, as Socrates asserts, is that any account of false beliefs must derive from an accurate definition of knowledge. Without a satisfactory definition of knowledge, as Plato asserts, any account of false beliefs will fail. Yet despite this, determining precisely why the account fails will have to wait until I examine each of the proposed solutions and the relationship between Plato's account in the *Theaetetus* and his account in the *Sophist*. However, a few preliminary remarks may highlight some of the themes that prevent Plato from arriving at a satisfactory solution in the *Theaetetus*. First, Plato is working under a model of thought which makes mistaking two objects impossible. In this way, Plato's own assumptions about thinking and therefore judgments about objects prevent him from finding a satisfactory account of falsehood.

This is most evident in the *allodoxia* model where Plato asserts this model of thought. In refuting the *allodoxia* model Plato argues that an agent cannot judge/think/state that one thing is another (e.g., that the ugly is beautiful) since to do so would be tantamount to saying that one thing is another when an agent knows that they are not identical. Second, Plato is bothered by Parmenides' Claim (see chapters 2 and 3). He could not see, as yet, how an agent can think about that which is not either of things that are (e.g., judging that Socrates is beautiful when he in fact is ugly) or purely non-existent objects (e.g., judging that a unicorn is a horse with one-horn). This view, that Plato is bothered by Parmenides' Claim, will get a fuller treatment in the third chapter. There I shall argue that the *allodoxia* model is intended to overcome the problems associated with the claim that false judgment is thinking or believing what is not.

So in the following chapters I will defend the thesis outlined here. Plato is bothered by the problem of false beliefs and seeks to show that Protagoras is wrong to

claim that falsehood is impossible. Plato's task in discussing false beliefs in the *Theaetetus* is to explain, contra Protagoras, how it can be possible for our judgments to sometimes fail to refer to the objects of their consideration.

1.5. First Puzzle and Second Puzzles as Primary and the structure of *Theaetetus* 187b4-200c4.

There seems to be some basic disagreement concerning the way in which each of the five sections of 187b4-200c4 ought to be read. According to my reading, the false belief passage ought to be parsed in the following way:

1. 188a1 – 188c10: First Puzzle – Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle.
2. 188d4 – 189b5: Second Puzzle – Being/Non-Being Puzzle.
3. 189c1 – 190e4: First Solution – Αλλοδοξία Model.
4. 191b11 – 196c9: Second Solution – Wax Block Model.
5. 197a – 200c4: Third Solution – Aviary Model.¹²

The suggestion here is that the false belief passage is broken up into five sections. First, Socrates offers a basic puzzle (Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle) that is seen as an impediment for the rest of the discussion. Second, Socrates offers a second puzzle, which is likewise viewed as an impediment to the possibility of falsehood (see Chapter 3). Third, we are given three attempts to circumvent the problems provided by the first and second puzzles. The first of these is what I shall call the *allodoxia* model. Here the suggestion is that false judgment is a kind of 'other-judging' (*allodoxia*). False judgments arise, according to this model, by a kind of exchange or interchange of one object with another. For instance, one judges falsely when one exchanges two things, e.g., 'ugly' as

¹² There is some agreement with my reading in the literature. Sedley, Fine, Waterfield, Ackrill, all view the first puzzle as primary. As Sedley states, "the initial puzzle must be why Plato, or anyone, thought false belief puzzling in the first place. Unless we can answer that question, the attempted solutions will lose much of their philosophical point" (119 – 120). Likewise, Fine views the false belief passage in a similar manner, despite her contention that the second puzzle is essentially the same as the first (Fine, 214). "Socrates presents two puzzles designed to show that false belief is impossible, and three models that attempt, but fail, to overcome the puzzles" (Ibid). Others, however, view the passage in a different manner, most notably Chappell who views each of the five sections as genuine empiricist accounts of false belief. But this view is wrong as I shall argue in subsequent chapters.

‘beautiful’ or ‘unjust’ as ‘just’ (189c8, 190b2). The second attempt at accounting for false judgments is what is commonly known as the Wax Block model. The suggestion here is that false judgments arise whenever one mismatches a perception with an imprint in our memory (i.e., wax block). According to this proposal, we are to assume that in each of us there is a wax block which records our perceptions. So we can account for false judgment by arguing that false judgment arises through the misalignment (or mismatch/misidentification) of what is presently being perceived with the wrong memory. The final attempt at accounting for false judgments is the aviary model. This final model that Socrates proposes seeks to explain the failure of the wax model, that is, it seeks to account for false judgments arising from *a priori* considerations. Socrates begins the explanation of this model by making a distinction between actually having something and potentially having something (197c8). Utilizing this distinction, Socrates constructs the following model of false judgments: Our minds are like an aviary full of birds where each bird represents different pieces of knowledge. Knowledge arises whenever we acquire a new bird and store it in the aviary (197e). According to this model, false judgments arise whenever we actualize the wrong piece of potential knowledge (i.e., grasp the wrong bird, “take a ring-dove instead of a pigeon” (199b7)). For instance, whenever one is searching for an item of potential knowledge within one’s mind, one may mistakenly pick out the wrong piece of knowledge (199b). So, a true judgment will be whenever one “gets hold” of the right piece of knowledge and false judgment will be whenever one gets hold of the wrong piece of knowledge (199b9).

What is the significance of all of this? That is, what is the importance of breaking up the false belief passage in this way? First, breaking up the passage in this way lends itself towards a certain interpretation, one that sees Plato genuinely struggling for a solution to the problem of false judgments; a problem that will find its solution in the *Sophist*. Contrary to scholars such as Chappell, this reading aligns itself with a certain view that we are not given five empiricists attempts to account for false beliefs, nor five separate attempts at accounting for false beliefs. We are, however, provided with an initial problem, namely, how is it possible for one to mistake one object for another when both objects are known, when one is known but not the other, or when neither is known? It is such cases as these that make false belief problematic. If it can be shown that

cognitive mistakes do occur when both objects are known, when only one is known, or neither, Plato would be able to arrive at an adequate solution to the problem. This suggestion makes the first puzzle's assumptions the primary impediment to finding an adequate solution. In other words, if Plato can find a way around the problems of the initial puzzle, he will be closer to finding a solution. We see the problems raised by the first puzzle throughout the discussion:

I am not going to tell you until I have tried every possible way of looking at this matter... While if we can't find any way of extricating ourselves, then I suppose we shall be laid low, like sea sick passengers, and give ourselves into the hands of the *argument* (τῷ λόγῳ)...(my italics, 190e9-191a7).

Here Socrates is made to remark that if they give up their search for an account of false beliefs then they will give themselves “into the hands of the argument.” This is clearly a direct reference to the first puzzle, that is, “the argument” is the first puzzle and any adequate solution to the problem of false beliefs must overcome its assumption. The support for this claim can be seen in the Wax Block and Aviary Models.

I am going to maintain that we were wrong to agree that it is impossible for a man to be in error through judging that things he knows are things he doesn't know. In a way, it is possible (191a11-b2).

In thinking, of things which he knows, sometimes that they are things which he knows and sometimes that they are things which he doesn't know – these cases being what at an earlier stage we wrongly admitted to be impossible (191e8-11).

Then haven't we come back to the things we were saying at the outset? You see, anyone to whom this happens is thinking that one thing he knows is another thing he knows. And this we said was impossible; in fact, it was just this consideration which led us to exclude the possibility of false judgment, because, if admitted it would mean that the same man must, at one and the same time, both know and not know the same objects (196b8-c2).

As it will be argued for in later chapters, each of the proposed solutions is problematic because of their failed attempts at overcoming the assumptions of the initial puzzle. Plato seeks to find out what is problematic concerning these assumptions and attempts, although without success, to meet these assumptions and explain how false judgments occur. In the following chapters, this view will be defended when I endeavor to examine each of the proposed solutions to the first puzzle and second puzzles.

CHAPTER TWO: FIRST PUZZLE OF FALSE BELIEF: KNOWING/NOT-KNOWING PUZZLE

2.0 First Puzzle: Assumptions & Problems

At 187e Plato has Socrates remark:

We claim, don't we, that false judgment repeatedly occurs and one of us judges falsely (δοχάζειν ψευδῆ), the other truly, as if it was in the nature of things for this to happen? (187e5-7).

Here Socrates is claiming that false judgments do occur, despite the view of Protagoras that false judgment is impossible (167a). In other words, Socrates states that despite the assertion of Protagoras that no one ever judges falsely since each individual judgment is always true, false judgments do occur, since "it is in the nature of things" for this to happen, *viz.*, that one person can judge *x* truly and another judge *x* falsely.¹³ So, in order to motivate a discussion into false judgments, Socrates makes the assumption (A): false judgments do occur.

With the assumption that false judgments do occur, Socrates provides the first of two puzzles against this.

Now isn't it true about all things, together or individually, that we must either know (εἰδέναι) them or not know them? I am ignoring for the moment the intermediate conditions of learning and forgetting, as they don't affect the argument here (188a1-4).

Theaetetus understands Socrates to mean that for any object of a person's judgment (δοχάζειν) that object must either be known or unknown.¹⁴ Furthermore, if an object is known, then it is impossible for a person not to know it, that is, if a person has an object "before his mind" he cannot fail to know it. With the dichotomy that all objects of a person's judgment are either known or unknown on the table, Socrates outlines four cases¹⁵ in which false judgment is impossible.

¹³ This statement that "false judgment repeatedly occurs and one of us judges falsely, the other truly" is an explicit rejection of Protagoras' Measure Doctrine (see Section 1.4).

¹⁴ The phrase of "object of a person's judgment" reflects Plato's usage of the verb δοχάζειν, where the verb "to judge" designates a direct object construction. So δοχάζειν is used by Plato in the sense of judging that *x* or judging that *y*, where *x* and *y* are objects of judgment (Burnyeat, 70, McDowell, 194).

¹⁵ Heretofore I will refer to cases 1-4 in the first puzzle in the uppercase (e.g., Case 1, Case 2, etc.) In Chapter 4 I will refer to the impossible and possible cases of misidentification in the lower case (e.g., case 15, case 16, etc.).

Case 1: Now take the man who judges what is false. Is he thinking (οἶετοι) that things which he knows are not these things but some other things which he knows – so that knowing both he is ignorant of both? (188b3-5)

Case 2: Then is he imagining that things which he doesn't know are other things which he doesn't know? Is it possible that a man who knows neither Theaetetus nor Socrates should take it into his head that Socrates is Theaetetus or Theaetetus Socrates? (188b7-10)

Case 3: But a man certainly doesn't think that things he knows are things he does not know, (188c2-3)

Case 4: that things he doesn't know are things he knows (188c3-4).

Since these are the only four possibilities given the assumption that each thing is either known or unknown, false judgments become impossible. So, this suggests the following argument.

1. For all x , it is not the case that S knows x and S does not know x (LNC).
2. It is not the case that S can make judgments about objects that are not known (RP).¹⁶
3. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows x and y , then (S knows x and does not know x) & (S knows y and does not know y). (Case 1)
4. It is not the case that S knows x , y and does not know x , y (1, R).¹⁷
5. \therefore It is not the case that S judges falsely that x is y (3,4 MT).
6. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows x and not y , then S judges that x is y even if y is not known (Case 2).
7. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows y and not x , then S judges that x is y even if x is not known (Case 3).
8. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows neither x nor y , then S judges that x is y even if x and y are not known (Case 4).
9. \therefore It is not the case that S judges falsely that x is y (2, 6, 7, 8, MT)
10. \therefore False judgments are impossible (5, 10).

The argument as it stands is valid and premise 1 seems to rest on the law of non-contradiction. Despite this, it is still unclear why we should accept the conclusion that false beliefs are impossible. The inference from 9 to 10 doesn't seem to follow since the puzzle seems to make the leap from false judgments of identity to all false judgments. Furthermore, why ought we to agree with Socrates and Theaetetus that cases C1-4 are all impossible? Initially it seems evident that if I know neither Socrates nor Theaetetus then

¹⁶ Premise 2 is a variant of Russell's Principle (RP). See section 2.0.1.

¹⁷ In the notation above, LNC for Law of Non-Contradiction, RP for Russell's Principle, R for reiteration and MT for *Modus Tollens*.

it will be impossible for me to make the mistake of confusing Socrates as Theaetetus since being ignorant of both Socrates and Theaetetus entails being unable to form beliefs about either (premise 2). But it only initially seems evident; premise 2 may be questionable and Plato seems to rely heavily on such a premise in ruling out false beliefs. Similarly why should we agree that if I know both Theaetetus and Socrates or know Socrates but not Theaetetus or Theaetetus but not Socrates then I cannot mistake one for the other? Counterexamples to each of these cases come quite easily, for it seems as if we make such judgments all the time (see below).

There is much scholarly disagreement over how this first puzzle is supposed to work. Most notably premise 2 and cases 1-4 have fueled the most debate and seem to be the primary impediments to accounting for false judgments not only in this initial puzzle but also throughout the discussion. After attempting to find a consistent reading of this puzzle, I will set the stage for later chapters by arguing for a reading of the first puzzle which makes its problems and assumptions primary. However, before arguing in this way, I shall first analyze questions that ought to strike any reading of this puzzle: why should we agree with Theaetetus and Socrates that cases 1-4 are impossible?

Part of the answer is that the puzzle seems to warrant only false judgments of identity, i.e., mistakenly judging that x is y , and seems not to be concerned at all with a wider class of false judgments, including those of misdescriptions, e.g., judging that Socrates is beautiful. If it is assumed that Plato is restricting the puzzle to only false judgments of identity, then counterexamples can be easily constructed despite the fact that the objects involved in the judgments are either both known, one but not the other or neither. For example, the following can be offered as a counterexample to Case 1.

Suppose that Dan meets and is introduced to both Steve and Sean on separate occasions. Dan then comes to know certain relevant facts about each (e.g., what they both look like) and can distinguish between them if they are standing next to each other. In this sense then we can say that Dan knows both Steve and Sean. Yet, on a certain occasion, say Halloween, Steve is dressed as Sean and Sean as Steve. Upon seeing Steve, dressed as Sean, in the corner of the room, Dan judges that “the man in the corner of the room is Sean” when in fact it is Steve in Sean’s clothing. So, Dan judges falsely that Sean is Steve even if both are known by Dan.

Despite such counterexamples, the puzzle seems to argue that such cases of misidentification are impossible. The reasons given in support of ruling out the possibility of such cases is that if S judges that x is y and S knows both x and y then S would know and not know the objects of his judgment. This Socrates argues is

impossible. But counterexamples, such as the one described above, may show that this (Case 1) is false. So in order to see why Plato feels that such cases are impossible we need to figure out what principles and what sense of ‘know’ Plato is relying on in the first puzzle. Furthermore, to find the reasons why Plato thinks that the first puzzle rules out all kinds of false judgments two further questions must be answered: first, what is the operative sense of ‘know’ in use throughout the puzzle and how does this sense of ‘know’, whatever it is, rule out false judgments? Second, what underlying principles or assumptions is Plato utilizing to rule out false judgments, most notably cases 2-4?

The only example given to support any of the cases is used to support Case 4 and this example adds a little clarity:

Is it possible that a man who knows neither Theaetetus nor Socrates should take it into his head that Socrates is Theaetetus or Theaetetus Socrates? (188b8-10).

It is premise 3 that does the work in ruling out the possibility of Cases 2, 3 and 4. But why should we accept 3 and therefore think that these cases are impossible? It seems that I have many beliefs about things that I do not know, e.g., beliefs about future events that I do not know. For instance, I can make the judgment that when I leave my office in the afternoon my car will be in the same place I parked it, but I certainly can’t claim that I *know* it will be there. However, despite such examples, what seems to rule out cases 2-4 and supports premise 10 is the following principle:

(RP) It is not the case that S can make judgments about objects that are not known.

This principle, which would later be proposed by Russell,¹⁸ states that what makes it impossible for a person to judge falsely that Theaetetus is Socrates is the assumption that in order for someone to “take something into one’s thought” (ei]v thn dia[noian labei<n 188b9), that something (e.g. Socrates or Theaetetus), must be known. In other words, what motivates and precludes false beliefs from occurring is that if one is to have thoughts of object (in the sense of being able to form judgments) that object must be known. And likewise, if one does not have thoughts of an object, that object cannot be known and therefore cannot be a part of an agent’s judgments. This principle, then, supports and rules out Cases 2-4. The reason suggested is that if Socrates is an object of

¹⁸ See Section 2.0.1

S's beliefs and Theaetetus is not an object of S's beliefs and therefore S does not know Theaetetus, then S will be unable to mistake Socrates as Theaetetus. S, then, cannot entertain beliefs of objects that he does not know. The question then is why is it the case that S cannot entertain beliefs of objects that S does not know (e.g. Theaetetus)? If not knowing an object is to be completely ignorant of an object, then clearly forming a judgment of an object in which nothing whatsoever is known (e.g., none of its properties, what kind of object it is, or even its name) is impossible. A partial answer is that Plato thinks that a necessary condition for making judgments is that the object of judgment is known.

(OJ) For all x , x can be an object of S's judgments only if S knows x .

(RP) rests on such a principle since the reason why an agent cannot make judgments of the sort that x is y where both x and y are not known (or one is known but not the other) is that a necessary condition for making judgments of objects is that an agent knows the objects of his/her judgments. An agent must, in some sense, know what an object is in order to make judgments of that object. For instance, in order to make judgments of Socrates an agent must, in some sense, know Socrates. Plato seems to accept such a principle, not only in the first puzzle but also in the *allodoxia* model (see Chapter 3). If Plato does accept such a principle (OJ) in the first puzzle, then we need to see why Plato thinks that such a principle restricts judgments only to those objects that are known. Initially what makes it the case that only known objects can be objects of an agent's judgments is the bare dichotomy between knowing and not-knowing. The puzzle seems to assert that if all objects are either known or unknown then judgments can only be restricted to those objects that are known. Any object that is unknown cannot become an object of judgment. In this way then, a partial reason why Plato holds that unknown objects cannot be objects of judgment is the bare dichotomy between knowledge of objects and ignorance. So, (OJ) seems to rest on the following:

(ANA) For all x , either S knows x or S does not know x .

This premise initially tells us that for any object (e.g., Socrates or Theaetetus), S either knows Socrates or does not or knows Theaetetus or does not. This is all that Socrates' initial presentation of the puzzle tells; that there is a bare dichotomy between knowledge and ignorance. If there is a dichotomy between knowledge and ignorance of objects, then

knowledge is a necessary condition for making judgments (OJ). As Burnyeat states, “The puzzle makes out that a necessary condition for mistaking X for Y is also a sufficient condition for not mistaking X for Y. The necessary condition is that one know X and know Y. But this, it is claimed, is a sufficient for knowing that X is not Y” (Burnyeat, 77). The puzzle argues that a necessary condition for making judgments about an object is that an agent knows, in some sense, what the relevant objects in a judgment are. Yet, this is all the puzzle tells us. It is still unclear how (OJ) is supposed to rule out false beliefs and what the operative sense of know is in this first puzzle.

In what follows, I will attempt to answer these questions in order to find some clarity and formulate a consistent reading of the first puzzle. By understanding how these important assumptions ((OJ) and (ANA)), which underlie the first puzzle, work, we will be much closer to understanding why an account of false belief fails in the *Theaetetus*. What we need is for the puzzle to work in order to see where it goes wrong and why Plato offers the subsequent solutions that he does. If we can find out why these assumptions make false judgments impossible and formulate a consistent reading of the puzzle in relation to the rest of the passage, then the failure of Plato’s account in the *Theaetetus* will be brought to light.

2.1 Russell’s Principle

As stated above (section 1.0) the first puzzle relies on a principle (RP), one that would later be advanced by Russell, which seems to preclude false beliefs from occurring. According to Russell’s Principle, we cannot make a judgment about an object without knowing what we are making a judgment about. As Russell states, “for it is scarcely conceivable that we can make a judgment or entertain a supposition without knowing what it is that we are judging or supposing about” (58). For Russell, we must be acquainted with the objects of which we are making a judgment about. But this is not to say that we must be directly acquainted with these objects. For instance, in making a judgment about Julius Caesar we are not acquainted directly with Julius Caesar (since this is not possible) but merely know some description(s) about Julius Caesar, *viz.*, that he was “the founder of the Roman Empire” (Russell, 58-59). According to Russell then, in

order to make a judgment about something we must know some description of that object, that is, we must know certain descriptions about what the thing is. Whether or not Plato has something like Russell's distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description in mind in the first puzzle will be dealt with below. What is important at this juncture is that Plato seems to be relying on a principle similar to Russell's.

Is it possible that a man who knows neither Theaetetus nor Socrates should take it into his head that Socrates is Theaetetus or Theaetetus Socrates? (188b8-10)

Here (Case 4) Plato seems to be in agreement with Russell that it is not possible for an agent to make judgments about objects such as Theaetetus or Socrates unless the agent knows Theaetetus and Socrates. What is crucial, for both Russell and Plato, is that in order for an agent to make a judgment about an object, an agent must, in some sense, know something *about* an object. In this way, Plato seems to hold that knowledge of objects entails both knowing something about the object (*savoir*) and knowing an object (*connaitre*). So, Plato seems to hold that for an agent to make judgment, an agent must both know what a thing is (*connaitre*) and know certain facts about it (*savoir*). Some commentators hold that this is a fundamental confusion on Plato's part (cf. McDowell; Crombie; Fine). Plato is mistakenly treating *connaitre* knowledge and *savior* knowledge as equivalent and this, it is argued, is the "fundamental flaw" in the first puzzle.

That assumption leads Plato to regard the knowledge which is required for a thing to figure in one's judgments as an all-or-nothing matter. One's making a mistaken judgment as to what the thing is shows that the knowledge is not all there (McDowell, 197)¹⁹

According to McDowell, Plato's confusion between *connaitre* and *savoir* leads Plato to regard knowledge as an all-or-nothing affair. In the next section I will argue that an all-or-nothing acquaintance view is not at work in the first puzzle, and therefore such a

¹⁹ McDowell also 147b4-5 as evidence of such a confusion (McDowell, 115). According to McDowell, Plato's use of the Greek idiom "know knowledge" is treated by Plato as equivalent to "know knowledge what it is." This, for McDowell, is dangerous for Plato.

For in order to understand properly what it is to know what knowledge (or anything) is, one would need to see that the words "what knowledge is", in the context 'know what knowledge is', constitute an indirect question, so that 'know' needs to be taken in the sense in which we talk about knowing *that something is the case* (French *savoir*). In a phrase like 'know knowledge', on the other hand, it would be natural to take 'know' in the sense in which we talk about knowing *objects* (French *connaitre*). Now Plato takes 'know what knowledge is' and 'know knowledge' to be equivalent (McDowell, 115).

confusion between *savoir* and *connaitre* will not lead to an all-or-nothing sense of 'know'; despite this it is still unclear whether or not Plato does fall into such a confusion and whether such an equivalence between the two is detrimental for Plato.

First, Plato certainly seems to treat knowledge as *connaitre* knowledge in the false belief passage. The examples used throughout seem to suggest that Plato is concerned with knowledge of objects (Socrates, Theaetetus, Theodorus, cows, horses, etc.). Yet, Plato also seems to suggest that there is a relationship between an agent's judgments and its objects. This is most evident in the second puzzle raised against the possibility of false beliefs. In the second puzzle Plato rehashes the sophistic argument that false beliefs are impossible since false belief consists in believing what is not and it is not possible to think what is not.

So: Can a man judge what is not, either about one of the things which are, or just by itself? I suppose we shall reply, Yes, when he is thinking, but thinking what is not true. Or how shall we answer?

The: That's our answer.

So: Now does this kind of thing happen elsewhere?

The: What kind of thing?

So: Well, for instance, that a man sees something, yet sees nothing.

The: How could he?

So: On the contrary, in fact, if he is seeing any one thing, he must be seeing a thing which is. Or do you think that a 'one' can be found among the things which are not?

The: I certainly don't.

So: Then a man who is seeing any one thing is seeing something which is?

The: Apparently.

So: It also follows that a man who is hearing anything is hearing some one thing and something which is.

Th: Yes.

So: And a man who is touching anything is touching some one thing, and a thing which is, if it is one?

Th: Yes, that also follows.

So: And a man who is judging is judging some one thing, is he not?

Th: Necessarily.

So: And a man who is judging some one thing is judging something which is?

Th: I grant that.

So: Then that means that a man who is judging something which is not is judging nothing?

Th: So it appears.

So: But a man who is judging nothing is not judging at all.

Th: That seems clear.

So: And so it is not possible to judge what is not, either about the things which are or just by itself.

While I shall deal with the intricacies of this argument and its relationship to the rest of the discussion in the third chapter, what is relevant at this juncture is that Plato treats the objects of judgments in the same way as he treats the objects of the senses. Both the

senses and judgments must be of something, for Plato, something which is. In the same way then that seeing or touching cannot be accomplished without actually seeing or touching something, judgments cannot be made unless an agent is actually making a judgment of something. This analogy between the senses and judgments reflects Plato's reliance on Parmenides' Claim, *viz.*, it is impossible to think or speak about that which is not. Such reliance, then, on Parmenides' Claim traps Plato into holding that judgments must be of objects (*connaitre*) and this reliance is one indication that Plato is bothered by the problem of falsehood (see Section 2.4). So, for Plato, judgments, like the senses, must be of objects. Further evidence for this claim can be found throughout the false belief passage (e.g., numbers such as five and seven 196a1). But unlike the senses, we need not be directly acquainted with objects which we know. Plato allows that an agent can have knowledge of objects, and make judgments about them, which are not immediately present to an agent.²⁰

Now please take this first point that I want to make clear to you --- that we sometimes perceive and sometimes do not perceive the things that we know (192e2-4).

Then as regards the things we don't know, we often don't perceive them either, but often we only perceive them (192e6-7).

By allowing that judgments can be made about objects which are not immediately present to an agent (by perception), Plato thinks that *connaitre* knowledge comes in degrees.²¹ An agent need not be directly acquainted with an object in order to make judgments about it (191b3-5; 191d4-e2; 191e4-6; 192ac5; 192d4-10; 193b6-7; 194a7-8; 195d7-10). So, Plato seems to be committed to holding that knowledge of objects (*connaitre*) is a necessary condition for making judgments of objects. While Plato holds that *connaitre* knowledge is primary for making judgments - an agent must first know what something is - he also holds that in order to know something an agent must know certain facts about it (*savoir*). In this way, Plato is in further agreement with Russell. "[I]t would be rash to assume that human beings ever, in fact, have acquaintance with things without at the same time knowing some truth about it" (Russell, 46). This agreement with

²⁰ But this is not to say that an agent can think of what is not, contra Parmenides' Claim, but only that an agent need not be directly acquainted with an object (e.g., by perception).

²¹ Crombie [1965] argues that Plato is not confused, as McDowell thinks, but that Plato is struggling with the question of how there can be degrees of knowledge (108).

Russell that object knowledge entails knowing something about an object is evident at 184b7-187a6 where Plato refutes Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception.

In the final refutation of Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception, Plato argues that perception cannot "get at being and truth" (186d4) and therefore cannot be classified as knowledge since "...knowledge is to be found not in the experiences but in the process of reasoning about them..." (186d2-3). This "process of reasoning" we are told is judgment, that is, "whatever we call that activity of the soul when it is busy by itself about the things which are" (187a4-5). Plato arrives at this conclusion by arguing that the senses, such as hearing or sight, are not what we see or hear *through* but what we see *with* (184c1-d5) For example, we may see two objects, for example an orange and a tangerine, *with* the sense of sight but it is *through* the "process of reasoning" (i.e. judgment,) which enables us to distinguish between the two, cite the relevant similarities, whether they are or are not, or how many of each there are.

Socrates: Now through what does that power function which reveals to you what is common in the case both of all things and of these two – I mean that which you express by the words 'is' and 'is not' and the other terms used in our questions about them just now? What kind of instruments will you assign for all these? Through what does that which is percipient in us perceive all of them?

Theaetetus: You mean being and not-being, likeness and unlikeness, same and different; also one, and any other number applied to them. And obviously too your question is about odd and even, and all that is involved with these attributes; and you want to know through what bodily instruments we perceive all these with the soul (185c6-d4).

The "power" (δύναμις) through which "reveals to us what is common (κοινά)" is the soul.

But as regards their being – the fact that they are – their opposition to one another, and the being, again, of this opposition, the matter is different. Here the soul itself attempts to reach a decision for us by rising to compare them with one another (186b7-10).

So, Plato's point in refuting Theaetetus' definition is that while perception can identify what something is (e.g., there is a thing in front of me), perception is not knowledge because it cannot "grasp being and truth". In other words, perception cannot tell us *that* something is the case; it cannot judge *that* objects are or are not, like or unlike, the same or different than other objects or how many they are. Knowing that something is the case is, for Plato, a necessary condition for knowledge, and this cannot be accomplished by the senses.

Plato's argument refuting Theaetetus' definition highlights Plato's distinction between *connaitre* and *savoir* knowledge. As McDowell correctly points out

By insisting that knowledge requires a grasp of truth, Socrates comes near to making the claim that the 'verb' know requires a propositional construction; which would involve confining his attention to that use of the verb in which its French equivalent is *savoir* as opposed to *connaitre*. This point...indicate[s] that the argument of this passage against equating knowledge and perception is, in effect, that 'know' takes propositional constructions, whereas 'perceive' does not (McDowell, 192 -193).

But while McDowell is correct to point out that Plato treats the verb 'know' as propositional, he is wrong to assert that Plato was unaware of a distinction between *connaitre* and *savoir*. He is not, as McDowell asserts treating these as equivalent (193). He is, however, quite clearly treating the two as distinct. If he did not, then perception would be just as good a candidate for knowledge as anything else. If he treats *connaitre* and *savoir* as equivalent and perception, as the argument suggests, can satisfy *connaitre* type knowledge, then it would follow that perception can also satisfy *savoir* knowledge. But the argument states that perception cannot satisfy propositional knowledge but only object knowledge. So, the argument suggests another reading, that Plato treats *connaitre* and *savoir* as distinct kinds of knowledge; perception can satisfy the former but not the latter, only something which can satisfy both can count as knowledge.²² Thus, contrary to McDowell, Plato does not treat object knowledge and propositional knowledge as equivalent but as distinct; in order for an agent to know something he must have both object and propositional knowledge.

What bearing does this have on the first puzzle? First, Plato's awareness of a distinction between these two kinds of knowledge highlights the fact that Plato is utilizing a variant of Russell's principle in the first puzzle. In this way, Plato agrees with Russell that an agent cannot know what something is without also knowing something about it. An agent cannot make judgments about something (i.e., what it is; *connaitre*) without knowing some relevant facts about it (*savoir*). Second, for both Russell and Plato, a necessary condition for making judgments is that an agent knows something *about* an object (as the example of Case 4 seems to warrant). If an agent does not know

²² There are further reasons for thinking that Plato does not treat these two as equivalent. First, Protagoreanism suggests that there is no distinguishing line between objects and facts or descriptions about them (e.g., there is no difference between perceiving the wind and perceiving the wind as cold). Second, Heracliteanism argues that there are no objects but merely momentary descriptions.

something about an object, then that object cannot be an object of his judgment, as (OJ) requires.

So there are sufficient reasons to think that Plato held something like (OJ) and that such an assumption is based upon his views of *connaitre* and *savoir* knowledge and the relevant similarities with Russell's Principle. Why such a reliance on Russell's Principle makes false judgments impossible will be dealt with in section 2.3. There I shall argue that his reliance on Russell's Principle does not commit Plato to an acquaintance model of knowledge but to something weaker, namely that the sense of 'know' operative in the first puzzles is knowing both what something is and knowing that certain propositions are true of it. However, before doing so, I shall first examine a popular view of the sense of 'know' in the first puzzle. According to this view, what precludes false beliefs from occurring is an implicit acquaintance model of knowledge.

2.2 Acquaintance View

Commentators have offered various readings of how we are to understand the verb 'know' and subsequently assumptions (OJ), which states that something can be an object of an agent's judgment only if that something is known, and (ANA), which states that an agent either knows an object or does not. According to one reading, assumption (OJ) merely entails that one can know an object and therefore form beliefs about it in the sense of being able to identify or recognize it (Barton, 166, Fine 215). Likewise, one could not form beliefs and therefore know objects that one has never encountered and could not identify. So, the operative sense of 'know' in (OJ) is that one 'knows' an object when one is able to recognize or identify it. For instance, I could not form beliefs about Theaetetus if I never heard of such a man. I would not be able to identify him as Theaetetus even if he walked right past me (Fine, 215). Yet, as Fine points out, such a reading will not rule out false judgments since it seems evident that I may be able to identify or recognize two objects, say Theaetetus and Sicily, and still believe falsely that

Theaetetus was from Sicily (Ibid). So, this reading may not be strong enough for the argument to work.²³

What is needed then, according to some commentators, to rule out C1 and subsequently C2 – 4, is something stronger. According to some scholars, what supports (OJ) and (ANA) is an acquaintance model of knowledge (McDowell, 196; Burnyeat, 75; Fine, 216). According to such a model, knowledge of objects becomes an all or nothing affair. Either I am fully acquainted with an object or I am not. To support this claim, commentators cite the authority of Russell. “Whenever a relation of judging or supposing occurs, the terms to which the supposing or judging mind is related by the relation of supposing or judging must be terms with which the mind in question is acquainted. This is merely to say that we cannot make a judgment or supposition without knowing what it is that we are making our judgment or supposition about” (Russell, 118). Yet, the operative sense of ‘acquaintance’, for Fine, is not the sense in which I am acquainted with or know a thing, e.g., I am acquainted with my cat Tuesday in the sense that I am familiar with a cat that has certain properties; being big and black. But if this is the sense of ‘acquaintance’ that is operative it will not prevent me from mistaking two objects I am acquainted with, e.g., Tuesday and her sister Wednesday who is also big and black. So, any sense of ‘acquaintance’ which is equivalent to being familiar with objects will not preclude false beliefs (Fine, 216).²⁴ According to Fine, what supports (OJ) and (ANA) is a stronger sense of ‘acquaintance.’²⁵ Under this sense, acquaintance (knowledge) with an object entails knowing everything about that object, e.g., knowing that Tuesday is a cat, that she is black, a female, a member of the species *Felis catus*, distinct from her sister Wednesday, etc. (Burnyeat, 75). So, according to this reading, our assumption (OJ) and (ANA) become:

(OJ*) For all x , x can be an object of S’s judgments only if S knows everything about x .

(ANA*) For all x , S either knows everything about x or S knows nothing about x .

²³ But the capacity to identify an object, i.e., know what an object is, will be one component in my assessment of the operative sense of ‘know’ in the first puzzle (See below 2.3).

²⁴ Contra Fine, Plato has something like this in mind (see Section 2.2).

²⁵ According to Barton, Fine misunderstands Russell’s notion of acquaintance (170). Whether or not she does misunderstand Russell this does not detract from her reading of the first puzzle since all Fine needs to support her case is that knowledge entails knowing everything about an object, in the sense of being fully acquainted with it, and ignorance entails knowing nothing about it.

So, for Fine *et. al.*, what makes C1 – 4 impossible is an implicit reliance on an acquaintance model of knowledge. We can then read the first puzzle as follows:

- (1a) For all x , it is not the case that S knows everything about x and knows nothing about x (LNC).
- (2a) It is not the case that S can make judgments about objects in which S does not know everything about (RP*).
- (3a) If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows everything about x and y , then (S knows x and does not know x) & (S knows y and does not know y). (Case 1)
- (4a) It is not the case that S knows everything about x , y and knows nothing about x , y (2, R).
- (5a) \therefore It is not the case that S judges falsely that x is y .
- (6a) If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows everything about x and nothing about y , then S judges that x is y even if S knows nothing about y (Case 2).
- (7a) If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows everything about y and nothing about x , then S judges that x is y even if S knows nothing about x (Case 3).
- (8a) If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows nothing about x and y , then S judges that x is y even if S knows nothing about x and y (Case 4).
- (9a) \therefore It is not the case that S judges falsely that x is y (3, 7, 8, 9).
- (10a) \therefore False judgments are impossible (6,10).

Here we can see that if we read the first puzzle as entailing an underlying acquaintance model, C2-4 are impossible precisely because of the fact that knowing everything about an object, in the sense of being fully acquainted with it, entails being unable to mistake that object for an object that one is completely ignorant of, in the sense of being in no way acquainted with it. C1 is likewise impossible because it is impossible to mistake two objects if everything is known about them. To do so would be to confuse two objects of which one is fully acquainted and this, it is argued, is impossible. So, ‘know’ is equivalent to knowing everything about a thing and therefore false beliefs are impossible.

But is this reliance on an acquaintance model too strong? Does the text warrant such a reading? First, there is little textual evidence to support the claim that the first premise and (OJ) relies on an implicit acquaintance model of knowledge. As Chappell argues, there is little support for the claim that Plato ever held such a view after the

Republic (160).²⁶ Yet, Plato's views and motivations are sometimes cryptic. So lack of textual evidence may not be a sufficient reason to reject this acquaintance model wholesale. Despite this, however, another reason for not favoring an acquaintance model reading is that it precludes a whole class of judgments. That is, if 'know' is to be understood as acquaintance, where acquaintance is an all or nothing affair, then it is unclear how one could know or make judgments about objects in which knowing everything about them is impossible.²⁷ For instance, I seem to be capable of forming judgments about Napoleon, e.g., that Napoleon was married to Josephine. Yet if what is required for me to have beliefs or form judgments about Napoleon is that I know everything about him, then it seems as if I cannot make judgments of the sort 'Napoleon lost at Waterloo to the Duke of Wellington.' The reason for this is that while I know some facts about Napoleon (e.g., that he was exiled to Elba; short; married to Josephine; emperor of France, etc), I do not know everything about Napoleon (e.g., who his birth parents are; the city he was born in; the time of his death, etc.). Since this is the case, that I don't know everything about Napoleon, then by (OJ*) Napoleon cannot be an object of my beliefs or judgments. But surely this is wrong. I know enough about Napoleon to have him as an object of my belief and form true judgments about him, viz., "Napoleon was a short man" and false ones, such as "Napoleon is Napoleon Dynamite." But (OJ*) precludes such results.

But further problems arise if an acquaintance model is read into the assumptions of the first puzzle. For instance, if 'know' is to be read as acquaintance, and if the class of objects which one can have judgments about is restricted to those in which one knows everything about, then it seems as if the class of objects that can be known will be quite limited and will not include concrete individuals such as Socrates or Theaetetus. For instance, if (OJ*) is accepted the only objects that can be considered are simple objects, such as numbers or simple properties such as roundness or squareness. But the passage seems to suggest that Plato is concerned with complex concrete individuals (e.g.,

²⁶ Although, curiously, Chappell's view seems to support such a reading (see Chapter 1).

²⁷ This argument is derived from McDowell (196) who states "...if it is interpreted in this way, the principle {OJ*} is counter-intuitive...e.g. it rules out making judgements {sic} about Julius Caesar." McDowell doesn't tell us why this would be the case, but I take it that he is referring to Russell's example (*Problems of Philosophy*, 58-59). As Russell argues, we cannot be directly acquainted with certain objects (e.g., Julius Caesar) but can only be acquainted with certain descriptions which are true of certain objects (see Section 1.0.1).

Socrates, Theaetetus, Theodorus, cows and horses) and not merely simple objects. If any of this is the case, then it seems as if what is required for the puzzle to go through is not a reliance on an implicit acquaintance model but a weaker assumption; an assumption which will allow judgments of objects that we know enough about to distinguish them from others.

2.3 Discriminating Knowledge View

What is needed, then, is a reading of (OJ) and (ANA) that aligns itself with assumptions that Plato might have held and one that can avoid certain counterexamples such as those presented above (Section 2.0), and one that is able to account for a wide variety of judgments, not merely those that an acquaintance view seems to warrant. Such a view will rely heavily on the notion of discriminating knowledge.²⁸ In what follows, the operative sense of ‘know’ will be knowing that an object of an agent’s judgment is different or distinct from all other objects of an agent’s judgment.²⁹ Initially then, such a reading will take (OJ) and (ANA) as follows:

(OJC) For all x , x can be an object of S’s beliefs only if S believes enough true propositions about x to distinguish x from everything else.

(ANAC) For all x , S either knows enough true propositions about x to distinguish x from everything else or S does not.

To explicate this reading, consider an example from the beginning of the dialogue. In introducing Theaetetus to Socrates, Theodorus describes Theaetetus as follows:

But as a matter of fact – if you’ll excuse my saying such a thing – he is not beautiful at all, but is rather like you, snub-nosed, with eyes that stick out; though these features are not quite so pronounced him...I have never yet seen anyone so amazingly gifted. Along with a quickness beyond the capacity of most people, he has an unusually gentle temper; and to crown it all, he is as manly a boy as any of his fellows...this boy approaches his studies in a smooth, sure, effective way, and with great good temper; (143e8-144b6).

²⁸ The notion of discriminating knowledge derives from Evans, Gareth, *The Varieties of Reference* (1982): Oxford.

²⁹ Plato certainly is concerned with discriminating knowledge in the *Theaetetus*. At 174b, Socrates in speaking to Theodorus remarks “The question he [the philosopher] asks is, What is Man? What actions and passions properly belong to human nature and distinguish it from all other things? This is what he wants to know and concerns himself to investigate” (174b4-6). While Socrates here is concerned with the species ‘man’ and what distinguishes it from all other species, the general idea is the same. A philosopher wants to know what the distinguishing features of a thing are. Also at 175c Socrates remarks that the ‘justice’ and ‘injustice’ can be distinguished by their differences.

Here Theodorus is describing some of the qualities that Theaetetus possesses, i.e., his snub-nosed, his intelligence, temper, etc. Theodorus is describing certain propositions about Theaetetus which pertain to who Theaetetus is. He therefore knows Theaetetus in the sense that he can distinguish Theaetetus from his friends (144c1-5). In this way then Theodorus knows who Theaetetus is, he knows what characteristics make up Theaetetus even though he does not know everything about Theaetetus, e.g., he does not know who his father is (144c1). Similarly, Socrates knows who his father is, but does not know who Theaetetus is (144c5). So, Theodorus *has* knowledge of who Theaetetus is, in the sense of being able to use the name ‘Theaetetus’ to pick out Theaetetus and distinguish him from everything else even though he does not have complete knowledge of what Theaetetus is (e.g., he does not know who his father is). Socrates, on the other hand, does not know who Theaetetus is and would not be able, if asked, to pick him out from the lineup of his friends. So, we have an example in which someone is able to know who someone is and be able to adequately use a name to distinguish him from other things. But this is only an example and is therefore not evidence that Plato assumes such notion of knowing objects. Despite this, it does however provide us with a way of viewing the puzzle that removes some of the problems associated with taking an acquaintance approach. For under (OJC) an agent can have partial knowledge of objects so long as this partial knowledge is sufficient to distinguish it from everything else.

If (OJC) and (ANAC) are assumed, the first puzzle will be as follows:

1. For all x , it is not the case that S knows enough true propositions about x to distinguish it from everything else and S does not know enough true propositions about x to distinguish it from everything else (LNC).
2. It is not the case that S can make judgments about x in which S does not know enough true propositions to distinguish x from everything else (RP).
3. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows* x and y , then (S knows* x and does not know* x) & (S knows* y and does not know* y). (Case 1)³⁰
4. It is not the case that S knows* x , y and does not know* x , y (2, R).
5. \therefore It is not the case that S judges falsely that x is y .
6. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows* x and not y , then S judges that x is y even if y is not known* (Case 2).

³⁰ For simplification know* = knowing enough true propositions about x to distinguish x from everything else.

7. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows* y and not x , then S judges that x is y even if x is not known* (Case 3).
8. If S judges falsely, for two distinct objects, that x is y and knows* neither x nor y , then S judges that x is y even if x and y are not known* (Case 4).
9. \therefore It is not the case that S judges falsely that x is y (3, 7, 8, 9)
10. \therefore False judgments are impossible (6, 10).

So, false belief becomes impossible if S knows enough true propositions about x and y , x but not y , y but not x or neither x nor y . For instance, if I know enough true propositions about Theaetetus (e.g., that he is snub-nosed, clever, etc.) and I know enough true propositions about Socrates I cannot mistake one for the other since I ‘know’ both, i.e., if I am able to distinguish Socrates from Theaetetus I cannot judge that Theaetetus is Socrates.

So what are the benefits of (OJC) and (ANAC)? That is, why favor (OJC) and (ANAC) over an acquaintance reading? Furthermore, how do (OJC) and (ANAC) help to support the first puzzle’s contention that false beliefs are impossible? First, (OJC) and (ANAC) align themselves nicely with Plato’s views on *connaitre* and *savior* knowledge. For if to know what something is requires knowing certain facts about it, then only those objects by which an agent knows what something is (e.g., Socrates) and knows certain facts about it (e.g., that Socrates is snub-nosed, short, a philosopher, etc) can be an object of judgment. That is, only if an agent has object and propositional knowledge can an agent make judgments about objects. For instance, reconsider the case of Theodorus introducing Theaetetus to Socrates. In this example, Socrates can be described as having some propositional knowledge about Theaetetus (e.g., he knows who his father is, but does not know his name) but Socrates lacks object knowledge (e.g., he cannot pick out Theaetetus). On the other hand, Theodorus is described as knowing Theaetetus; he knows who Theaetetus is and knows certain relevant facts about him. In this way then, Theaetetus can be an object of Theodorus’ judgments but not Socrates. The reason for this is that Socrates lacks *connaitre* knowledge of Theaetetus; he is not acquainted with an object (i.e., Theaetetus, that has certain properties or certain descriptions that are true of it); Socrates cannot identify a certain object as Theaetetus.

Second, based upon the above considerations, we can now see how (OJC) will support the first puzzle’s contention that false beliefs are impossible. First, consider Case

1. Earlier I had remarked that what makes false judgment impossible in this case is that if S judges that x is y and both x and y are known by S, then S would both know x and y and not know x and y . But this, it is argued (by the Law of Excluded Middle), is impossible. But why ought we to think this is impossible? The counterexample outlined above seems to show that this is impossible, *viz.*, I cannot judge that x is y even if I know x and y . The answer proposed by the acquaintance model suggested that what makes Case 1 impossible is that if everything is known about x and y , then an agent cannot even make the judgment that x is y since it would be apparent that the judgment x is y is false. But I have already argued that such a reading will not work, since the scope of identity judgments at play in the first puzzle would be severely restricted.

But, (OJC) will not have the same result; (OJC) will uphold Case 1's contention that false beliefs are impossible without restricting the class of objects to those in which everything is known nor to mere simple objects. For instance, reconsider Case 1 in light of (OJC). Suppose that S judges that x is y and knows x and y in the sense that S would be able to distinguish x from y if each were presented to S. In this way, if S knows that x is one object of which certain propositions are true and y is a separate object in which other propositions are true, then it is not the case (if each were presented to S) that S would judge that x is y . To elaborate this point, consider the following example:

Socrates is presented with two distinct individuals (Charmides and Theaetetus) both of which he knows. Since he knows both Charmides and Theaetetus, he therefore knows certain true propositions about each. In knowing these propositions about each, he therefore knows what differentiates Charmides from Theaetetus. In knowing what differentiates what Charmides is from what Theaetetus is, Socrates cannot judge that Charmides is Theaetetus nor Theaetetus Charmides.

However, it is still unclear why it is the case that an agent cannot mistake x as y if (OJC) is assumed since counterexamples such as those described above seem to show that an agent can. For Plato the way around such counterexample is to assume that 'believes/knows/thinks that' occurs in an opaque context. For instance, if Dan or Socrates knows that each of the objects of their judgments has certain true propositions about them and that these true propositions are peculiar to each object, then there is no possibility in which Dan or Socrates can 'think that' one of the objects is the other. Even if Dan or Socrates can be described as believing that one object is the other (*i.e.*, where 'believes that' is given a *de re* reading), Plato's point is that Dan or Socrates can never themselves believe or think of one object *as* another (*i.e.*, where 'believes that' is given a *de dicto*

reading) if both objects are known by the agent. The reason for this is that Plato holds that if an agent knows that “Socrates is snub-nosed” and knows that “Theodorus is regal-nosed” and believes that Socrates is Theodorus, then both ‘Socrates’ and ‘Theodorus’ must be substitutable, *salva veritate*, in any descriptive sentence containing ‘Socrates’ and ‘Theodorus’ which the agent knows. So, if an agent believes that Socrates is Theodorus, this belief can be true only if ‘Socrates’ is substitutable in any sentence containing ‘Theodorus.’

But given (ANAC) and (OJC) all such substitutions will not be truth preserving. For if an agent knows that an object (X) has certain descriptive qualities x, y, z and knows that another object (Y) has certain descriptive qualities a, b, c , then an agent can judge that X is Y only if any description of X will also describe Y or Y, X. But all such substitutions can only be relegated to tautological identities (e.g., Socrates is Socrates; Theaetetus is Theaetetus) since any two distinct objects will never share exactly the same descriptive qualities. Thus, for Plato, false beliefs are impossible precisely because of the fact that an agent himself can never think or believe that x is y if both x and y are known, one known but not the other or neither known; since to believe or think falsely that x is y is tantamount to substituting both x and y in the same descriptive sentences where such a substitution is known by the agent not to be truth preserving.

So, (OJC) has some benefits which other interpretations do not. First, it aligns itself with considerations about knowledge that Plato holds. Second, it ties in the false belief passage with what has preceded. The claims about the difference between perception and judgments in the refutation of Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception have a direct bearing on the false belief passage they highlight the fact that for Plato knowing x requires knowing both having object knowledge (i.e., acquaintance) and propositional knowledge (i.e., knowing that). This then, provides us with an operative sense of ‘know’ in the first puzzle. To mistake two distinct objects as identical is tantamount to confusing the distinguishing features of one object (i.e., the propositions that are uniquely true of it) for the distinguishing features of another object and this, the puzzle argues, is impossible. Second, (OJC) avoids some of the mistakes of the acquaintance model. (OJC) can account for both complex and simple objects, since it requires a certain degree of acquaintance with an object and knowing certain descriptive

features of an object. Finally, (OJC) accords well with a reading of the false belief passage as Plato genuinely attempting to explain how beliefs can sometimes fail to match up with the world. For Plato seems to be puzzled by the fact that we can know that two objects are distinct, know what characteristics distinguish one object from another, and yet sometimes mistake one object for another.

In the subsequent chapters, this view will become clearer. As we shall see the crucial assumption that I have argued for here (OJC) will go a long way towards acquitting Plato of some of the conceptual difficulties that he is often charged with (see Chapters 3 & 4). Furthermore, the initial trappings of the first puzzle will, in the end, make it hard to see how false beliefs can be possible for Plato. In the subsequent chapters I will argue that it is because of the assumptions and problems outlined in this first chapter which Plato finds so troubling and which ultimately is one of the reasons why his account in the *Theaetetus* fails. However, a fuller analysis of both assumptions and the relationship between the objects of our beliefs and our beliefs will be considered when not only the *allogoxia* proposal is analyzed but also the relationship between the first puzzle's assumptions and the Wax Block and Aviary Model's subsequent rejection of these assumptions.

2.3 False Judgments of Identity?

Cases 1-4 seem to suggest that the only kinds of false judgments we are concerned with in the first puzzle are false judgments of identity. The example given, “that Socrates is Theaetetus” reeks of a misidentification, viz., believing falsely that Socrates *is* Theaetetus. At first glance, then, the puzzle seems to favor a reading of false judgments where the false judgments under consideration are those of misidentification; mistaking x as y . We can then view the first puzzle as ruling out only false beliefs of misidentification, e.g., mistaking Socrates as Theaetetus is impossible if both are known, one is known but not the other, or neither is known. So, a wider class of false judgments, including those of misdescriptions (e.g., Tuesday is white)³¹ are precluded (Burnyeat, 71).

³¹ Where ‘Tuesday’ refers to a pet cat that is black.

If this is the case, that the puzzle's only concern is false judgments of identity, then the entirety of the discussion (187-201) is not concerned with *all* false judgments, but only those in which a person misidentifies one object as another. Yet, if this is the case, and if the first puzzle's considerations are primary, then Plato is not accounting for nor attempting to explain a whole host of false judgments despite the fact that the puzzle's conclusion seems to suggest that we are concerned with a wider class of false judgments (Chappell, 155; Burnyeat 71-72). In fact a wider class of false judgments is considered in the subsequent attempts to solve the first puzzle. For instance, in the *allodoxia* model we are given examples of both misdescriptions (e.g., a beautiful thing is an ugly thing) and misidentification (e.g., a cow is a horse). So, one problem in reading the puzzle as a puzzle about misidentification is that the wider conclusion that all false judgments are impossible does not follow (Chappell, 155).

In this way, then, we can formulate two readings of the first puzzle. A first reading suggests that only false identity judgments are under consideration in the first puzzle and the rest of the discussion (187-201). A second reading suggests that it is not only false identity judgments but also any and all kinds of false judgments that are under consideration. Chappell deems these two readings misidentificationism and anti-misidentificationism (154). Commentators are generally split along these two lines. Rudebusch, Lewis, Ackrill, Burnyeat, and Fine think that it is only false judgments of identity that are at issue in the discussion. The most prominent proponent of anti-misidentificationism is Chappell. For Chappell, anti-misidentificationism is the most cogent reading of the first puzzle and subsequent discussion for four reasons. First, it would be anachronistic to attribute to Plato our modern distinction between senses of *is*. Our modern distinction attributes an 'is' of identity to sentences of the form 'Socrates is Theaetetus' and an 'is' of predication to sentences of the form 'Socrates is white.' Yet, Greek makes no such distinction. So to ascribe such distinction to the first puzzle and subsequent discussion would be to import a linguistic distinction that Plato was unaware of. Second, the second puzzle does not seem to warrant a restriction to only judgments of false identity but to all false judgments. The second puzzle argues that all judgments must be about something which exists. Judgments about nothing are not judgments at all. So if we expect to import only false identity judgments into this puzzle we will be at a loss

since the puzzle does not suggest that only false identity judgments are about that which is not but all false judgments (189b4-5). Third, as stated in section 1, the inference from 9 to 10 doesn't seem to follow since the puzzle seems to make the leap from false judgments of identity to all false judgments. Similar to the second puzzle, the first puzzle seems to warrant a wider class of false judgments, not just those restricted to false identity judgments. As Chappell argues, if we are concerned with only false identity judgments throughout the discussion we would need an argument that would warrant such a restriction; since none is offered the best explanation is that Plato is concerned with all false judgments not just false identity judgments (Chappell, 155). Fourth, Plato's examples of false judgments in the passage suggest that he is not concerned merely with false identity judgments. As Chappell argues, the *alldoxia* model suggests false judgments of misdescription and not only false judgments of identity, e.g., that "Theaetetus is beautiful." Furthermore, Chappell thinks that Plato would treat cases 2 and 3 as symmetric if false judgments of identity were the issue, but he does not. For Chappell, Plato does not treat the judgment "'X known is Y unknown' as the very same judgment as 'Y unknown is X known'" (155). So Chappell argues that Plato either does not treat identity as symmetric or does not hold that cases 2 and 3 are cases of false identity (Ibid).

My own view straddles the line between misidentificationism and anti-misidentificationism. Chappell is right to point out that Plato is not aware of the distinction between the 'is' of identity and an 'is' of predication. But Chappell's view seems to suggest that since Plato was unaware of such a distinction he could not have seen false judgments as false judgments of misidentification. This is surely mistaken. Merely based on the fact that Plato was not aware of the distinction does not mean that he did not treat all false judgments as judgments of misidentification. Mere ignorance of this distinction does not mean that he could not have thought of false judgments as false judgments of identity. Furthermore, even if he was not aware of such a distinction, the examples throughout the discussion do suggest that Plato thinks of false judgments as misidentifications. Contrary to Chappell's assertion that the examples used include both judgments of identity and misdescriptions (nowhere in the passage does Plato use the example "Theaetetus is beautiful"), the examples do not suggest this but merely suggest

false judgments of misidentification. “Thus a man who has both things before his mind when he judges cannot possibly judge that one is the other” (190d4-5). For instance, the *allodoxia* suggestion fails precisely because one cannot say to oneself (think/judge) that one thing is another, judge that x is y , viz., that “the beautiful is ugly”, “the unjust is just”, “a cow is a horse”, “two is one” (190bff).³² The examples suggest that false belief occurs whenever one takes one thing as another, where taking one thing as another is judging/thinking/saying that x is y . Since this is the case, Plato, even though he does not have the modern distinction between senses of ‘is’, may take all false judgments as foundationally based on misidentifications, i.e., judging/saying/thinking that x is y (White 164).³³ White suggests such a reading and offers the following argument in support:

It may be that Plato held 1) that if a person believes falsely that a is beautiful when a is in fact ugly, that person must in some manner have beauty figuring in his belief instead of ugliness, and 2) that a person who does this must be believing, falsely, that ugliness is beauty (188-89).

Chappell thinks this is a bad argument since it begs the question against the misidentificationist since the explanation of why Plato would hold that false judgments of identity are primary already assumes false judgments of identity (156). But begging the question can be avoided if the reason why Plato thinks that false judgments of identity are primary is because he assumes a certain model of thought and speech which makes it impossible that one can make false identity judgments. The reason why Plato may have held that false identity judgments are primary is because he could not see how one could think or say that one thing, which someone knows, is another thing which someone knows; even if this means saying, oddly, that Theaetetus cannot say to himself that Socrates is regal nosed when Theaetetus knows ‘Socrates’ and ‘regal nosedness.’ But whether or not it is Plato’s model of the mind that makes false identity judgments primary will be dealt with in Chapter 3. But at the moment, Plato may view all false judgments as at their core false identity judgments and the examples throughout the discussion seem to suggest this.

³² At this point I am non-committal as to whether the examples here “the beautiful” “the ugly” “the just” or “the unjust” refer to particular beautiful or just things or refer to “beauty” or “just” in abstraction (see Chapter 3 for a consideration of this). What is important here is that Plato is arguing that when an agent judges he is taking two things (whatever these things are) as identical.

³³ As Burnyeat asks “Is misidentification in thought necessary for misdescription?” (81). According to my view, the answer for Plato is yes. In the third chapter I shall argue (in agreement with Burnyeat) that Plato, in the *allodoxia* model, treats all false beliefs as foundationally misidentifications.

But (OJC) can be utilized to overcome these difficulties. (OJC) can account for both false judgments of identity and false judgments of misdescription. For instance, I cannot judge that Theaetetus is beautiful, by (OJC), since if I know enough true propositions about Theaetetus (e.g., that he is snubbed nosed, ugly, etc.), I cannot mistake his ‘ugliness’ for something that is beautiful (e.g., Charmides). So if (OJC) is accepted then even false judgments of misdescription can be accounted for. Yet, in saying this, I am also arguing that Plato holds, in the *Theaetetus*, that all false beliefs are, at their core, false judgments of identity.

So, according to my view Plato holds that all false beliefs are at their core false judgments of identity. This view will be defended throughout the rest of the chapters. As stated above, analysis of the reason why Plato might hold them as primary will have to wait for analysis of the *allodoxia* model where it will be shown that Plato views misdescriptions as entailing misidentifications (Chapter 3.2.1).

2.4 Is False Judgment a Problem for Plato?

A major disagreement in reading *Theaetetus* 187-201 is the question whether or not Plato is truly bothered by the problem of false belief, not only in the first puzzle but the subsequent discussion. According to some commentators, it is Theaetetus and others (Sophists such as Protagoras) who are the ones truly bothered by the problem of false belief and not Plato himself. As Chappell states:

As Plato is careful to emphasize to us throughout the dialogue, e.g., by the use of the Midwife image, it is *Theaetetus* who is caught in this problem about false belief. It is not Socrates, nor Plato. There is clear evidence at *Philebus* 38c ff that false belief (at least of some sorts) was no problem at all to Plato himself (at least at some points in his career) (153).³⁴

So, for Chappell, it is Theaetetus and anyone who is sympathetic to empiricist assumptions and not Plato who is truly bothered by the problem of false belief. This view reflects Chappell’s general reading of the false belief passage; that Plato is refuting others’ attempts at accounting for false beliefs, namely, empiricists’ accounts of false

³⁴ Chappell’s citation of the *Philebus* as evidence that Plato is not bothered by the problem of false belief does not have much merit if the *Philebus* comes after the *Sophist*. If it is assumed that Plato is satisfied with his solution in the *Sophist*, then clearly the problem would be no problem for Plato by the time he came to write the *Philebus*. Despite this, Waterfield argues that the *Philebus* should be placed in Plato’s Middle Period. If so, this would support Chappell’s contention. But Chappell is non-committal on where the *Philebus* should be placed.

belief. While I have covered some of Chappell's reasons for believing this in the previous chapter, for now it may be remarked that despite Chappell's view there is evidence in the *Theaetetus* itself that Plato was truly bothered by the problem of false belief. After Theaetetus offers his second definition of knowledge as true belief, Socrates states:

I have something on my mind which has often bothered me before, and got me into great difficulty, both in my own thought and in discussion with other people – I mean, I can't say what it is, this experience we have, and how it arises in us (187d1-4).

This experience, Socrates tells us, is "judging what is false." If Chappell is correct, that it is Theaetetus who is bothered by "this experience", then we should expect Theaetetus and not Socrates to remark that he is the one bothered by the problem. But we don't. Plato puts the difficulty into the mouth of Socrates. Socrates does not bring to birth this baby from Theaetetus, as the midwife image might suggest, but gives birth to it himself. What Theaetetus gives birth to is the definition of knowledge as true belief and not the problem of false judgment. If the midwife image were at work in the false belief passage, then we would expect Theaetetus to be presenting us with the problems therein. But it is Socrates who espouses the first and second puzzles and the subsequent solutions. Theaetetus is no more than a "yes" man. He readily assents to much of what Socrates says.

It is also likewise clear that Plato did not have, prior to the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, an adequate response to Parmenides' Claim which led some Sophists such as Protagoras to proclaim that all beliefs are true. In the *Euthydemus*, *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus*, Plato only presents an *ad hominem* argument against Protagoras' claim that falsity is impossible.³⁵ At *Euthydemus* 286c, Plato attributes the following position to Protagoras and others:

The followers of Protagoras made considerable use of it [Parmenides' Problem], and so did some still earlier...The argument amounts to claiming that there is no such thing as false speaking, doesn't it? And the person speaking must either speak the truth or not speak? (286c2-8)

To which Socrates responds:

This is just where my stupid question comes in, I said. If no one of us makes mistakes either in action or in speech or in thought --- if this really is the case --- what in heaven's name do you come here to teach? (287a6-8).

³⁵ Plato is essentially putting forth an *ad hominem silencer*, i.e., Protagoras has no right to speak or teach about virtue if each person's beliefs are subjectively true.

Likewise in the *Cratylus*, Plato gives the same response; that if all beliefs are true, then there is no need for Sophists to impart wisdom to others since no one is wiser in any respect than another.

But if Protagoras is telling the truth – if it is the *Truth* that things are for each person as he believes them to be, how is it possible for one person to be wise and another foolish? (*Cratylus* 386c1-3).

We see the same critique in the *Theaetetus*:

...[if] only the individual himself can judge of his own world, and what he judges is always true and correct: how could it ever be, my friend, that Protagoras was a wise man, so wise as to think himself fit to be the teacher of other men and worth large fees;...? (161d8-e2).

However, in the *Theaetetus*, Plato gives Protagoras a response to this criticism. The sophist does not make one person wiser than another, since this is impossible if all beliefs are true, but merely “changes the appearances” for the better (166d8). Here truth and falsity is likened to a person in a sick state. It is not the case that one person can be wiser than another, but a sophist can change a person’s beliefs much like a doctor can heal the sick (166eff).

As these passages reflect, Plato did not have a direct argument against Protagoras’ claim that false beliefs are impossible. He could only offer an *ad hominem* argument. He has not, up to this point, been able to explain how false beliefs occur. He could not account for or explain how our beliefs can sometimes fail to match up with the world if all beliefs are true as Protagoras claimed. That is, he did not have an adequate account of false beliefs prior to writing the *Theaetetus* and could not have an adequate response to Protagoras’ Measure Doctrine.

Furthermore, Plato, at certain points in his career, accepted Parmenides’ Claim³⁶ that it is impossible to speak of that which is not and with it, that false speech is impossible. In fact, Plato uses Parmenides’ Claim not only to bolster some of his most important theses but also to criticize some attempts to salvage them. This is most evident in the *Republic* and the *Parmenides*. For instance, in the *Republic* (V. 476e – 478e), Plato

³⁶ Parmenides’ Claim, as I shall call it, is the view attributed to Parmenides that it is impossible to think or speak of that which is not. For Parmenides, all thought and speech must be about that which is; thought must be about existent objects. Thought or speech about nonexistent things is, as Sophists such as Protagoras would later argue, is equivalent to not thinking or not speaking at all. The argument above states that Plato not only used Parmenides’ Claim to support some of his theses, but also did not have an adequate account of dealing with judgments about nonexistent objects.

makes use of Parmenides' Claim to formulate a distinction between knowledge, belief and ignorance.

It's impossible given what we agreed, for if a different power is set over something different, and opinion and knowledge are different powers, then the knowable and the opinable cannot be the same.

Then, if what is is knowable, the opinable must be something other than what is?

It must.

Do we, then, opine what is not? Or is it impossible to opine what is not? Think about this. Doesn't someone who opines set his opinion over something? Or is it possible to opine, yet opine nothing?

It's impossible.

In this passage Plato utilizes Parmenides' Claim to bolster the thesis that belief is intermediate between ignorance and knowledge. Belief cannot be about what is not, since then it would be ignorance and it cannot be about what is, since then it would be knowledge, so belief must be about that which is and is not. The reason given as to why belief cannot be about what is not is that to believe that which is not is to believe "nothing" (478c1) and this we are told is pure ignorance. Here Plato is explicitly utilizing Parmenides' Claim to bolster the thesis that only knowledge can be set over that which is (476e7-11) since it is impossible for something that is not to be known. The entirety of the passage has been subject to much scholarly debate and much of what is going on here is opaque. But what is clear is that Plato cannot, as the passage suggests, deal with the problem of being able to think about that which is not. The consequence of this is that if Plato agreed with Parmenides and Protagoras' position for this very reason then he may not have had an adequate account of false judgments. In other words, if Plato accepts some of the same assumptions as Protagoras, namely Parmenides' claim, he may not have, at the time of writing the *Republic*, been able to deal with the problem of falsehood. It may very well be that Plato was unsatisfied with his account of beliefs as set over or being about both what is and what is not which led him to rethink the problem in the *Theaetetus*. So, Plato may very well have succumbed to the same assumptions as Protagoras and therefore falsehood was a problem for Plato at some point in his career.

We also find Plato utilizing Parmenides' Claim when criticizing his own theory of forms in the *Parmenides*. In an attempt to circumvent the 'Third Man' criticism (132a1-b2), as it would later come to be called, Plato has Socrates revert to an idealist interpretation of the forms:

But, Parmenides, maybe each of these forms is a thought...and properly occurs only in minds. In this way each of them might be one and no longer face the difficulties mentioned just now (132b3-5).

In response to this, Parmenides argues that the forms cannot exist in thought alone since thoughts about the forms must refer to something which is. Furthermore, the forms cannot be located only as forms in our thoughts since if this were the case, they would be about something which does not exist and there cannot be “thought of nothing” (132b6-c4). As the with passage in the *Republic*, Plato seems to be committed, even when he came to rethink his own theory of forms, that thinking or speaking about that which is not is impossible. Again if he accepted such a claim as late as the *Parmenides*, he may very well have been bothered by the same problem of falsehood (i.e., false beliefs are about nothing and it is impossible to think about nothing) as his contemporaries.

So, there is adequate evidence that Plato was indeed bothered by the problem of falsehood. First, if he was not, we should expect Plato to put the problem into the mouth of Theaetetus and not Socrates; but he does not. He explicitly puts the problem into Socrates’ mouth as he has done often. Second, Plato did not have an adequate response to Protagoras’ denial of falsehood and therefore utilizes the *Theaetetus* as an opportunity to refute such a denial. Third, in this way, it is because of Plato’s reliance on Parmenides’ Claim that Plato did not have an adequate response to Protagoras’ denial. Again, the *Theaetetus* is an opportunity to explore how the objects of our beliefs can fail to match up with the world despite the claims of Protagoras and Parmenides.

Plato’s problem with the problem of falsehood will, like most of the issues in this chapter, come to light in later chapters. There is further evidence in each of the subsequent models that Plato was bothered by the problem.

CHAPTER THREE: BEING/NON-BEING PUZZLE AND ALLODOXIA

3.0 The Being/Non-Being Puzzle

Since Socrates and Theaetetus agree that the first puzzle shows that false judgments are impossible (188c6-11), Socrates suggests that he and Theaetetus take a different track.

Then perhaps we had better take up a different line of inquiry; perhaps we should proceed not by way of knowing and not-knowing, but by way of being and not-being (188c10-d1).

According to this new line of inquiry, Plato trots out what initially looks like the old sophistic puzzle that false judgment (or speech) is to judge what is not; but it is impossible to judge what is not, so false judgment is impossible.

Perhaps the simple fact is this: it is when a man judges about things which are not, that he is inevitably judging falsely, no matter what may be the nature of his thought in other respects (188d3-5).

This claim, that false belief is to judge what is not, is derived from Parmenides' Claim that to think (or judge/believe) of that which is not is not to think (or judge/believe) at all.³⁷ Accordingly, various Sophists utilized Parmenides' Claim to argue that falsity is impossible. According to these Sophists, to judge that which is not is to judge nothing and to judge nothing is to make no judgment at all. So, if an agent has a belief about that which is not, then he believes nothing. But believing nothing is impossible (by Parmenides' Claim), so an agent cannot have a belief about that which is not. So, false beliefs are impossible and all beliefs must be true. Earlier in the *Theaetetus*, Plato gives such a view to Protagoras.

What never happens is that a man judges what is false is made to judge what is true. For it is impossible to judge what is not, or to judge anything other than what one is immediately experiencing; and what one is immediately experiencing is always true (167a8-b2).

Although the puzzle presented in the *Theaetetus* is, in spirit, similar to earlier sophistic formulations, Plato is here presenting a Protagorean version of the puzzle. Plato has Socrates argue that in the same way that seeing something or hearing something requires

³⁷ This is certainly how Plato views the roots of the puzzle. See the *Sophist* 237a1 – 237b.

actually seeing or hearing something which is, judgments also require judging something which is.

So: Can a man judge what is not, either about one of the things which are, or just by itself?
Now does this kind of thing happen elsewhere?
The: What kind of thing?
So: Well, for instance, that a man sees something, yet sees nothing.
The: How could he?
So: On the contrary, in fact, if he is seeing any one thing, he must be seeing a thing which is. Or do you think that a 'one' can be found among the things which are not?
The: I certainly don't.
So: Then a man who is seeing any one thing is seeing something which is?
The: Apparently.
So: It also follows that a man who is hearing anything is hearing some one thing and something which is.
Th: Yes.
So: And a man who is touching anything is touching some one thing, and a thing which is, if it is one?
Th: Yes, that also follows.
So: And a man who is judging is judging some one thing, is he not?
Th: Necessarily.
So: And a man who is judging some one thing is judging something which is?
Th: I grant that.
So: Then that means that a man who is judging something which is not is judging nothing?
Th: So it appears.
So: But a man who is judging nothing is not judging at all.
Th: That seems clear.
So: And so it is not possible to judge what is not, either about the things which are or just by itself (188d8-189b2).

In this second puzzle Socrates draws out the consequence that to think what is not (either about something which is or by itself) would be analogous to seeing, hearing or touching nothing; and this, it is argued, is impossible.

1. If S perceives falsely, then S perceives that y about x where y is not the case of x or S perceives that x where x is not.³⁸
2. If S perceives that y about x where y is not the case of x or S perceives that x where x is not, then S perceives something (x or y) that is not.
3. Perceptions must be about something which is (PA).³⁹
4. \therefore S cannot perceive that y about x where y is not the case of x or perceive that x where x is not (MT) (2,3).
5. \therefore S cannot perceive falsely that y about x where y is not the case of x or perceive that x where x is not (MT) (1,4).
6. \therefore False perceptions are impossible.

³⁸ The phrase "...that y about x where y is not the case of x " is longhand for judging what is not about something which is.

³⁹ Above PA = Protagoras' Assumption, MT = *Modus Tollens* & PPA = Protagoras' Parmenidean Assumption.

7. If S judges falsely, then S judges that y about x where y is not the case of x or S judges that x where x is not.
8. If S judges that y about x where y is not the case of x or S judges that x where x is not, then S judges something (x or y) that is not.
9. Judgments, like perceptions, must be about something which is (PPA).
10. \therefore S cannot judge that y about x where y is not the case of x or judge that x where x is not (MT) (8,9).
11. \therefore S cannot judge falsely that y about x where y is not the case of x or judge that x where x is not (MT) (7,9).
12. \therefore False beliefs are impossible.

As stated above, this puzzle relies on an analogy between perceiving what is not and judging what is not. Both, it is argued, are impossible. The puzzle first asks us to suppose that to have false perceptions is analogous to seeing, touching, or hearing nothing and to see, touch or hear nothing would be not to see, touch, or hear at all. In this way then, what rules out false perceptions is the assumption that perceptions such as seeing, touching or hearing, must be relegated to seeing, touching or hearing something which is. In other words, the argument rules out cases in which an agent misperceives. For instance, we may suppose that it is possible for Theaetetus to perceive that Socrates is tall when in fact he is short or that it is possible for Theaetetus to perceive that Socrates is standing in the corner of the room when there is no such object in the corner of the room. But such cases, as it is argued, are impossible since all perceptions must be about something which is. What makes false perceptions impossible, then, is the following assumption:

(PA) Perceptions must be about something which is.

Earlier in the dialogue this assumption (call it Protagoras' Assumption) is given to Protagoras as a consequence of his Measure Doctrine.⁴⁰ According to Protagoras' Measure Doctrine "Man is the measure of all things: of the things which are, that they are, and of the things which are not, that they are not" (152a3-4). This is Plato's initial presentation of Protagoras' Measure Doctrine, yet, he spends most of the first section of the *Theaetetus* elucidating this doctrine and connecting it with a Heraclitean thesis. While most of the details of this connection are unimportant for our purposes here, what is important and has bearing on the second puzzle is that Protagoras' Measure Doctrine

⁴⁰ (PA) is evident at 160a8-b2. "But I must necessarily become percipient of something when I become percipient; it is impossible to become percipient, yet percipient of nothing."

entails that all perceptions are subjectively true.⁴¹ The argument for such a claim relies on Parmenides' Claim that it is impossible to think of that which is not. Utilizing this claim, Protagoras is made to argue that if false belief is to judge what is not and by Parmenides' Claim judging what is not is impossible, then all beliefs must be true. Furthermore, since no two agents' belief can contradict one another (for if they did, then one would believe falsely (think what is not) and the other truly (think of what is)), then all beliefs must be subjectively true for the one who believes. At 160c7-d4 Socrates sums up the Protagorean position in the following way:

Soc: Then my perception is true for me --- because it is always a perception of that being which is peculiarly mine; and I am judge, as Protagoras said, of things that are, that they are, for me; and of things that are not, that they are not

The: So it seems.

Soc: How then, if I am thus unerring and never stumble in my thought about what is – or what is coming to be – how can I fail to be a knower of the things of which I am a perceiver?

Theaetetus responds that there is no way that Socrates could fail to know that which he perceives. Why does Theaetetus grant this? He does so because Protagorean subjectivism entails that if an agent perceives an object x , then x is true for that agent; it can't be the case that he has false perceptions since to do so would be tantamount to perceiving an object which does not exist and this, it is argued, is impossible. So, Protagoras' Measure Doctrine entails that there can be no false perceptions; perceptions are unerring and must always be of what is. Thus, in the second puzzle Plato assumes (PA) and by doing so draws out the analogy that judgments like perceptions must also be about what is.

To draw out such an analogy Plato utilizes another Protagorean assumption: (PPA) Judgments, like perceptions, must be about something which is.

From this assumption it is argued that like perceptions an agent cannot make a judgment about what is not either about something which is or about something just by itself (call this 'Protagoras' Parmenidean Assumption'). The question then is why should we accept such a "scandalous analogy" between judgments and perceptions (Burnyeat, 78)? The answer is that for Protagoras perception of an object x is equivalent to a judgment or belief about x . As Cornford states, "He [Protagoras] saw no important distinction between

⁴¹ His doctrine is a version of subjectivism and not, as some have thought, relativism (see Dancy "Theaetetus' First Baby: *Theaetetus* 151e -160e" contra Fine (139).

what appears *real* to me in direct perception and what appears *true* to me, what I believe or judge to be true” (his italics, 116). For Protagoras, what appears to me in perception is equivalent to the truth of my beliefs since beliefs/judgments are just perceptions. In this way then, “[H]e assumed that belief was like direct acquaintance with a sense-object, and must be infallible in the same way” (Ibid). So, the analogy isn’t that scandalous if it is a restatement of Protagoras’ position that perceptions are the same as judgments. Since judgments are just perceptions, then if it is impossible to perceive what is not, it will likewise be impossible to judge what is not.

With this in mind, the second puzzle is a Protagorean argument against the possibility of false judgment. The assumptions utilized in the second puzzle are Protagorean. Since this is the case, and as we shall see, Plato presents the second puzzle as another impediment to the attempt to account for false beliefs. Like the first puzzle, Plato’s intent in the false belief passage is to show that false beliefs are possible. To do so, he will need to refute the assumptions of Protagoras, that is, refute the assumptions (PA) and (PPA). In other words, he will need to show that Protagoras is wrong to assert that false perceptions and false judgments are impossible.

Yet, while presenting a Protagorean puzzle against the possibility of false belief, Plato provides, within this puzzle, two separate arguments presented as one (Bostock; Burnyeat, 78). The assertion that an agent cannot judge what is not either “about one of the things which are” or “just by itself” suggests that we are provided with two separate lines of argumentation. The first suggests that to judge falsely is to judge what is not about something which is, for example, thinking that Theaetetus is beautiful when he is in fact ugly. So, judging what is not about one of the things that is entails that to believe something false about an object x (e.g., Theaetetus), is to believe something about x which is not about x . But this is not to suggest that an agent is thinking of a non-existent object; he is merely thinking what is not of an existent object. The second, however, that an agent cannot judge what is not “just by itself”, is merely a reformulation of the sophistic claim that to judge falsely is to judge what is not the case; where judging what is not the case is judging a non-existent entity (e.g., judging that there is a man in the corner of the room when there is no such entity). So, the second puzzle suggests two separate lines of argumentation:

- (1) To judge falsely is to judge what is not the case about x ; where x is an existent object.⁴²
- (2) To judge falsely is to judge what is not the case about x ; where x is a non-existent object.⁴³

Such a distinction is significant for Plato's views of falsity; (1) above is dealt with by Plato in the *Sophist* and likewise seems to be given a treatment in the *allogoxia* model. While I am not going to give a full treatment and analysis of Plato's solution in the *Sophist*, I will, at the end of this chapter compare his account of false belief in the *Sophist* with that of the *Theaetetus*. Doing so will bring us much closer to seeing why the account in the *Theaetetus* fails.

According to some commentators, Plato is here presenting a *reductio* of the claim that false belief is to judge what is not (Ackrill, 386; Burnyeat, 78; Chappell 163; Cornford, 115; Crivelli, 1).⁴⁴ Here the disagreement between my reading of the second puzzle and some commentators is evident. While I hold that the second puzzle is a puzzle, an impediment to accounting for false beliefs, others hold that it is an unsatisfactory explanation of false belief. That is, the second puzzle is an attempt or model which seeks to explain how false beliefs may arise. This is certainly the view of Cornford. As he states, "Plato's is different, namely that, since there is such a thing as thinking falsely, it cannot be 'thinking what is not', if that means (as the argument implies) having nothing at all before the mind" (115). For Cornford, Plato's presentation of the second puzzle shows that it is not a satisfactory account of false belief since false beliefs do occur (187e6-8) and if they do, then any argument (such as the second puzzle) which shows that false beliefs are impossible must be wrong. The text certainly seems to suggest such a reading, viz., that false belief cannot be judging what is not since falsity

⁴² In the *Sophist* Plato confirms that it is impossible to judge or think of 'what in no way is' (τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν) (*Sophist* 237b1-e). This passage highlights the fact that for Plato the 'totally unreal' (to use Cornford's phrase) can be removed from discussions of thinking about what is not, since it is impossible to think about something which has no existence whatsoever. This seems to be the direction that (1) above takes in the *Theaetetus*, viz., that it is impossible to think of things which are μηδαμῶς ὄν. But while this is discarded in both the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*, in both dialogues (2) is not discarded but is considered as a possible way to account for false judgments (see Cornford 203-205).

⁴³ The argument also makes a distinction between (1*) perceiving what is not the case about x , where x is an existent object and (2*) perceiving what is not the case about x , where x is a non-existent object. Both (1) and (2), and (1*) and (2*) will be shown to be impossible in the second puzzle (see above).

⁴⁴ For Burnyeat, the second puzzle is a *reductio* of (2) which also, implicitly, is a *reductio* of (1) (Burnyeat, 78).

does occur. At the end of Socrates' presentation of the second puzzle, he seems to suggest that falsity cannot be accounted for by assuming that it occurs by judging what is not:

Soc: False judgment, then, is something different from judging things which are not?

The: It looks as if it were true.

Soc: Then neither on this approach nor on the one we followed just now does false judgment exist in us (189b4-8).

Socrates' statement here seems to suggest that the conclusion of the argument is that false judgment is not judging what is not. In other words, since the puzzle argues that it is impossible to judge what is not, then Plato is arguing that, given this claim, the occurrence of false judgments must be explained by other means. So, the conclusion of the second puzzle is that judging what is not cannot explain the occurrence of false judgments. In this way then the second puzzle is a *reductio* of the claim that false judgments occur by judging what is not; since false beliefs do occur, it can't be judging what is not.

But if we assume with Burnyeat, Chappell, and Cornford that it is Plato's intent to show that this puzzle is a failed explanation of falsity, then Plato would effectively be begging the question against Protagoras. In other words, if Protagoras (or any other Sophist committed to such an argument) claims that falsity is impossible since every case of false belief is a case of judging what is not, then Plato's response would assume the question at hand. How are false beliefs possible if false belief is judging what is not? But Plato's response to this question is not question begging, he does not assume that false beliefs do occur, his response (or attempted response) in the *Theaetetus* is to show how an agent may judge what is not and yet judge falsely. To do this, Plato, in the second puzzle, sets up an argument which is Protagorean in nature. If this reading is correct, then Plato is arguing against the assumptions of the second puzzle in the attempts to explain false belief which follow.

In the second chapter I stated that a partial reason for the discussion of falsity in the *Theaetetus* is that Plato wants to show that Protagoras is wrong to claim that false beliefs are impossible. To do so, Plato, in presenting the second puzzle, is highlighting the assumptions of Protagoras' claim that falsehood can't occur. In the *allodoxia* model, which immediately follows this second puzzle, Plato attempts, although unsuccessfully,

to show how it may be possible to judge falsely while judging what is not the case.⁴⁵ In this proposal Plato seems to be arguing that Protagoras is wrong to claim that an agent cannot judge what is not by stating that false judgment is thinking something other about something which is. This model, that false belief is *allodoxia* or “other-judging”, is intended as a response to (1); that it is impossible to judge falsely if false judgment is thinking what is not about something which is. In the next section, I shall argue that the *allodoxia* model is intended as response to Protagoras’ puzzle.

3.1 *Allodoxia* Synopsis

At 189c1 Plato offers the first of three solutions to the problems set forth by the first and second puzzles. Initially, this first solution reads as if it is intended as a way of responding to (1).

We say that there is false judgment, a kind of ‘other-judging’, when a man, in place of one of the things that are, has substituted in his thought another of the things that are and asserts that it is. In this way he is always judging something which is, but judges one thing in place of another; and having missed the thing which was the object of his consideration, he might fairly be called one who judges falsely (189c1-6).

The proposal given here is that false judgment occurs whenever an agent ‘other-judges’ (*allodoxia*). The suggestion supposes that false belief occurs whenever an agent substitutes (*antallaxamenos*) one thing as another in thought. To judge falsely then is to exchange or interchange in thought one thing for another. Theaetetus understands Socrates’ account to mean the following:

Now you seem to me to have got it quite right. When a man judges ‘ugly’ instead of ‘beautiful’, or ‘beautiful’ instead of ‘ugly’, then he is truly judging what is false (189c7-9).

Theaetetus takes Socrates to mean that false judgment occurs whenever an agent is judging that Fx is not Fx but something else, Gx . For instance, in thinking about Socrates Theaetetus may believe (i.e., other-judge) that Socrates is beautiful when he is in fact ugly. In other words, Theaetetus seems to take Socrates to mean that false judgment occurs whenever an agent assigns the wrong predicate to an object.⁴⁶ So, according to

⁴⁵ Plato’s rejection of (PA) is evident in the Wax Block Model (see Chapter 4).

⁴⁶ This reading of Theaetetus’ understanding of *allodoxia* is rejected by Cornford and Ackrill (see below).

Theaetetus' understanding of this suggestion, to judge falsely is to substitute one predicate for another, i.e., "judges one thing in place of another."

While the *allogoxia* suggestion seems promising to Theaetetus, Socrates reduces this suggestion to absurdity. He does so by utilizing a model of thought which seems to be Plato's own.⁴⁷

A talk which the soul has with itself about the objects under its consideration. Of course, I'm only telling you my idea in all ignorance but this is the kind of picture I have of it. It seems to me that the soul when it thinks is simply carrying on a discussion in which it asks itself questions and answers them itself, affirms and denies. And when it arrives at something definite, either by a gradual process or a sudden leap, when it affirms one thing consistently and without divided counsel, we call this its judgment. So, in my view, to judge is to make a statement, and a judgment is a statement which is not addressed to another person or spoken aloud, but silently addressed to oneself (189e7-190a7).

According to this model of thought, thinking is internal speech. Whenever an agent thinks, he is, in effect, speaking to himself; affirming or denying internally the answers to certain questions. When an agent affirms something (e.g., says internally that x), he is making a judgment. In this way then, a judgment is a statement which makes an affirmation about something. For instance, if Theaetetus judges that Socrates is snubbed-nosed, he is internally saying to himself that 'Socrates is snubbed-nosed.' So, Socrates asserts that thinking and therefore judgments is internal speech; an agent is saying (affirming) that something is the case whenever he makes a judgment. As Socrates states,

So that when a man judges one thing to be another, what he is doing, apparently, is to say to himself that one thing is another (190a9-10).

According to Socrates, to judge that one thing is another (i.e., that x is y) is to say, internally, that one thing is another. But this, viz., judging that one thing is another if both things are being actively thought about, is argued to be absurd since no one can say to themselves (think) that one thing is another.

Well, then, if to make a statement to oneself is to judge, no one who makes a statement, that is, a judgment, about both things, getting hold of both with his soul, can state, or judge, that one is the other. And you, in your turn, must let this form of words pass. What I mean by it is this: no one judges 'The ugly is beautiful' or makes any other such judgment (190c5-d2).

As Socrates argues, it is impossible for an agent to judge that two separate things are identical since no one can say or consistently assert the truth of such statements as 'a cow

⁴⁷ See Chapter 4 where I shall argue that the Wax Block is Plato's own attempt at accounting for the possibility of false beliefs.

is a horse', 'two is one', 'just is unjust' or 'beautiful is ugly.' So, the suggestion that false belief is 'other-judging' is absurd since to mistake one object as another requires that an agent judge (say to himself) that one thing is another; but this is impossible, since no one can assert that two separate things are identical if both are actively being thought (or one but not the other or neither).

So, Socrates argues that the *alldoxia* proposal is absurd. It cannot, by Socrates' lights, be an adequate account of false judgments. As Socrates argues the problems proposed by the first and second puzzles cannot be overcome by this suggestion.

3.2. Analysis of *Allodoxia*

Before delving into my interpretation of the *alldoxia* model and its relationship to the first and second puzzles, I shall first outline various interpretations of the *alldoxia* model. Most specifically, there are various interpretations of how we are to understand the exchange involved in substituting one thing for another. In other words, commentators generally disagree on how to interpret precisely what false belief as a substitution or exchange of one thing for another entails.

As I have stated above, the *alldoxia* model initially reads as if it is a response to (1). In this regard, I view the *alldoxia* model as a response to the second puzzle. Before delving into this reading, many interpretive problems arise concerning the *alldoxia* proposal. As stated above, this proposal states that false belief occurs whenever an agent "in place of one of the things that are, has substituted in his thought another of the things that are and asserts that it is" (189c2-3). Socrates' initial statement of this proposal is quite unclear. Likewise, Theaetetus' statement adds little clarity "When a man judges 'ugly' instead of 'beautiful', or 'beautiful' instead of 'ugly', then he is truly judging what is false" (189c7-9). This ambiguity has prompted various interpretations. Accordingly, commentators have offered the following interpretations of the *alldoxia* proposal:

- (A) False belief occurs by confusing concepts or universals. S mistakes the concept or universal x as y and asserts that x is y .
- (B) False belief occurs by inadvertently mistaking two distinct simple mental images.
- (C) False belief occurs by assigning the wrong predicate (or property) to an object. S mistakes z as U rather than B and asserts that z is U .

(D) False belief occurs by mistaking two distinct objects. S mistakes X as Y and asserts that X is Y.⁴⁸

The first, (A), is defended by Ackrill. According to Ackrill's interpretation, there is a distinct difference between the first puzzle and the *alldoxia* model. In the first puzzle, Ackrill argues, Plato is considering misidentifications of proper names of individuals, such as 'Theaetetus' or 'Socrates.' However, in the *alldoxia* model, Plato is considering "properties and other universals such as beauty, ugliness, the ox, the horse" (Ackrill, 388). So, for Ackrill, whereas the first puzzle considered misidentification of concrete individuals, the *alldoxia* model considers misidentifying abstract universals or properties. Since Plato is considering abstract universals or properties "He is making a sound point: sentences like 'justice is injustice' or 'an ox is a horse' *cannot* serve as correct expressions of any possible belief" (his italics; Ackrill, 389).⁴⁹ For Ackrill, then, Plato is arguing that *alldoxia* is an inadequate proposal since it is absurd to suppose that an agent can say to themselves (i.e., think) that 'ugliness is beautifulness' or 'justice is injustice.' So, Ackrill views the *alldoxia* proposal as entailing that false belief occurs whenever an agent mistakes one universal/ property as another and asserts that they are identical.

Akrill's interpretation of the *alldoxia* model raises one of the chief difficulties in interpreting the passage, namely, does Plato's use of such phrases as 'the beautiful' (*to kalon*) refer to abstract universals/properties or to an adjectival or predicative use such as 'the beautiful girl' (Fine, 217)? According to Chappell and Bostock, Ackrill is wrong to assert that the *alldoxia* model is restricted to considering only abstract universals or properties. As Chappell rhetorically states, "Isn't a cow or a horse, an ugly person or a handsome person, an individual?" (170). Likewise, Bostock, non-rhetorically, argues that the *alldoxia* passage "...begins with the idea that *all* false belief can be described as 'other-judging' [*alldoxia*] (189b12-c2), and it proceeds to an illustration which at least seems to cover false beliefs that some object is ugly (189c5-7)" (171). Bostock suggests that *alldoxia* proposal is concerned with *all* kinds of false beliefs, not just those of

⁴⁸ This breakdown of the various interpretations of *alldoxia* is derived from Crivelli.

⁴⁹ As both Bostock and Chappell point out, Ackrill's "sound point" is unsound since it is possible to mistake two properties or universals (e.g., a sloop is a schooner (Burnyeat's example) or a Dalmatian is a cat (Chappell's example)) (Chappell, 170; Bostock, 171; Burnyeat, 83).

misidentifications, but also those of misdescriptions. In taking this line, Bostock is effectively arguing that Ackrill is wrong to assert that the passage is concerned with only universals/property beliefs since the initial presentation of the proposal suggests mistakes involving false predications or misdescriptions, e.g., mistaking Socrates as beautiful (170-171). Furthermore, Plato's use of the verbs *doxazein* (to judge of), *dianoieisthai* (to think of) and *legein* (to state of) takes a direct object construction (Burnyeat, 70). The use of these verbs in this way suggests that Plato is not merely concerned with properties or universals but also with concrete objects. The definition of *doxazein* at 187a4-5 suggests that Plato is concerned with judgments about concrete objects: "...whatever we call that activity of the soul when it is busy by itself *about the things which are*" (my italics; 187a4-5). Judgments, according to this definition, are about things which are, that is, anything which can intelligently be said to exist (e.g., Socrates, Theaetetus, justice, beauty, etc). This definition is clearly applicable to the *alldoxia* passage where Socrates argues that an agent cannot judge (*doxazein*) that one thing is another: "...if to make a statement to oneself is to judge, no one who makes a statement, that is a judgment, about both things, getting hold of both with his soul, can state, or judge, that one is the other" (190c5-7). Here Socrates is arguing that an agent cannot judge that one thing is another whenever he gets hold of two distinct objects. Furthermore, the first and second puzzles are clearly concerned with concrete individuals. In the first puzzle the examples used, Socrates and Theaetetus are clearly concrete individuals. Likewise, in the second puzzle Plato draws out the analogy that judgments like perceptions must be about something which is. These existent objects must be concrete since it makes not sense to suppose that an agent can touch, or hear a universal or concept. The *alldoxia* model continues this concern with concrete individuals. The initial presentation utilizes language which suggests this: "...in place of one of the things that are...". The restriction in the *alldoxia* model is, like the first and second puzzles, to things which exist and these things are concrete individuals and the properties which individuals may possess. So, because of these considerations Chappell and Bostock are correct in their assessment of Ackrill's interpretation. Plato in the *alldoxia* passage is concerned with objects per se. While Ackrill is right to point out that Plato is concerned with concrete individuals in the first puzzle, he is also, contrary to Ackrill, concerned with individuals in the *alldoxia*

passage. He is not, as yet, considering conceptual mistakes. Such mistakes will be considered in both the Wax Block model (191d6; 195d7ff) and the Aviary model (197d6ff) (see Chapters 4 and 5). But the present discussion is concerned with individual concrete existent things (Socrates, Theaetetus, oxen, horses, beautiful and ugly things, etc.), which continues the considerations of false beliefs about concrete things that the first and second puzzle began.

The second interpretation (B) is defended by Chappell. As Chappell states, "...the difference between the first and the third puzzles is that the third introduces the notion of inadvertency" (168). For Chappell, then, what makes the *allodoxia* proposal distinct is that whereas the first puzzle is silent on how false beliefs arise (whether inadvertently or purposefully), the *allodoxia* proposal "...focuses specifically on the proposal that false belief happens when someone *accidentally* confuses two different objects" (Ibid.) Chappell offers a few arguments in support of this contention. First, *allodoxia* is derivative of *allognoein* "to mistake one person for another" (Cornford, 117) and this is, for Chappell, "*obviously* a matter of inadvertency" (my italics; Chappell, 169). Second, Socrates' use of the phrase ἀμαρτάνων οὐ ἔσκόπει δικάίως is *obviously* analogous to inadvertency (Ibid). Third, Chappell argues that the refutation of the *allodoxia* proposal "...makes good sense if what is being refuted is the suggestion that false belief arises from inadvertent confusions (169-170).⁵⁰ So, for Chappell, the kind of exchange involved in *allodoxia* is an inadvertent exchange; false belief occurs by inadvertently exchanging one thing for another. However, given such an inadvertent exchange, Chappell further argues that the purpose of the refutation is to show that an empiricist has no explanation of how inadvertent confusions can take place. As he states, "We have no explanation, because we are working – still fairly tacitly, no doubt – on empiricist, not Platonist, assumptions" (Chappell, 168). Hedging aside, Chappell is arguing that an empiricist assumes that the objects of thought are "simple mental images" (See Chapter 1) and this assumption underlies the *allodoxia* passage (Ibid)

⁵⁰ Chappell also cites another justification. In the *Symposium*, Plato refers to *Iliad* VI. 230-236 and Chappell argues that Plato may have this passage in mind in the *allodoxia* proposal. However, this is not so obvious to Chappell or to me (Chappell, 170).

The Third Puzzle restricts itself (at least, up to 190d7 it does) to someone who *has* the requisite mental images, and adds the further suggestion that he manages to confuse them by a piece of inadvertency. Socrates' rejoinder is that nothing has been done to show *how* there can be inadvertent confusions of things that are as simple and unstructured, and as simply grasped or *not* grasped, as the empiricist takes mental images to be...What the empiricist needs to do to show the possibility of such a confusion is to explain how, *on his own principles*, either speech or thought can fail to be fully explicit and fully "in touch" with its objects, if it is "in touch" with them at all (Chappell, 169).

Chappell is certainly right in saying that the *allodoxia* model is concerned with *inadvertent* mistakes, but so is the entire discussion of false belief. Plato is not concerned with intentionally mistaking two distinct objects, in fact, such mistakes seem counterintuitive. Here we might imagine Plato asking, in a similar manner to the *allodoxia* refutation, have you ever intentionally mistaken Socrates as Theaetetus or an ox as a horse or 1 as 2? The answer would be simply no. Such intentional mistakes make no sense. Furthermore, Plato is not concerned with cases of false belief in which an agent intentionally chooses *x* over *y* even though the agent is aware that the evidence for *y* favors *x*.⁵¹ He is not concerned cases of self-deception or a kind of cognitive dissonance. Plato is not constructing a psychological analysis of false belief. Furthermore, a major component in Chappell's assessment of the false belief passage is that Plato is concerned with *all* kinds of false beliefs (Chappell, 154-58). Yet, Chappell's arguments for inadvertency restrict falsity to one class, contrary to his earlier assertions. So, Chappell is right to assert that the passage is *obviously* concerned with inadvertency. But it is so obvious that arguments for its defense are unnecessary.

Chappell's view, as the above quotation indicates, also states that the *allodoxia* model fails because Plato is implicitly arguing against an empiricists' account of falsity. According to this view, the empiricist cannot explain how inadvertent confusions between two simple mental images can occur if false belief is taken to be thinking that one thing is another in thought. Although I have already argued in the first chapter that Chappell is wrong to assert that Plato is refuting empiricists' accounts of falsity, two further points can be made regarding the contention that *allodoxia* is an empiricist account. First, if it is an empiricist's account it is unclear which empiricist Plato is attacking. It cannot be Protagoras, since the kind of empiricist that Chappell thinks Plato

⁵¹ For example, an agent may choose to believe that his wife is not being unfaithful even though evidence favors her being unfaithful. In this way, an agent intentionally believes something false.

is arguing against holds that falsity is possible. Protagoras, on the other hand, argues that falsity is impossible; there are no “stumbles in thought” (πταίωv τῆ διανοίᾳ) (160d1). However, even if it is granted that Plato is arguing against non-Protagorean empiricists and if the passage is concerned with empiricists’ assumptions, which take mental images to be simple, then Plato’s use of complex objects, such as oxen, horses, or individuals that are ugly or beautiful makes no sense. He would have restricted all his examples to simple objects or concepts (like 1 and 2 or odd and even). But Plato does not; as in the first puzzle Plato is concerned with beliefs about concrete complex individuals. Furthermore, if he is concerned with simple mental images it is unclear what a simple mental image of justice or unjust would be like, certainly these are complex notions or ideas, even if taken as a ‘just’ something or the universal or concept notion of ‘justice’.⁵²

A third reading (C above) is favored by Bostock, Burnyeat (with some guarding), Sedley and myself (also with some guarding see below 3.2.4). According to this reading of *allodoxia*, false beliefs occur by assigning the wrong predicate to an object. According to this proposal, the *allodoxia* suggestion is concerned with misdescriptions. For example, thinking that Socrates is beautiful when he is in fact ugly. In this way, an agent is misdescribing Socrates as beautiful or assigning the wrong predicate to Socrates. As stated above, Theaetetus’ understanding of *allodoxia* suggests such a reading.

Now you seem to me to have got it quite right. When a man judges ‘ugly’ instead of ‘beautiful’, or ‘beautiful’ instead of ‘ugly’, then he is truly judging what is false (189c7-9).

Theaetetus’ remarks suggest that Plato is concerned with misdescriptions. Even though Theaetetus’ understanding of *allodoxia* appears on the surface to differ from Socrates’ presentation of *allodoxia*, Theaetetus’ remarks merely make clear what Socrates says (pace Bostock).⁵³ Such a reading of *allodoxia* brings to light another interpretive difficulty. This difficulty arises when we reconsider whether the *allodoxia model* is considering merely false beliefs of misidentification (D above), just misdescriptions (C above) or all kinds of false beliefs, both misidentifications and misdescriptions. The problem arises when we consider the difference between Socrates’ presentation of

⁵² That is unless Plato is concerned with mistaking the correct definition of a term (e.g., the definition of justice, beautiful for its contrary (e.g., the unjust, the ugly). But Plato is not concerned with mistaken definitions or a definitional analysis of terms and how an agent may define a term wrongly.

⁵³ See Bostock 169-170.

allodoxia and Theaetetus' understand of Socrates' remarks. As Socrates states, *allodoxia* is mistaking one thing for another in thought. Socrates' presentation may *prima facie* suggest misidentifications, i.e., mistaking two distinct objects as identical. Yet, as stated above, Theaetetus seems to understand Socrates to mean that false belief occurs by someone's mistakenly believing that an object *x* is *B* when in fact *x* is *U*. So, *allodoxia* may very well be considering false beliefs that occur by assigning the wrong predicate to an object. For instance, an agent may mistake or misdescribe Socrates as handsome when in fact he is ugly. Theaetetus' presentation of *allodoxia* certainly looks like he understands *allodoxia* as false beliefs of misdescriptions. However, according to Cornford, Theaetetus' remarks should not be taken as such. "A discussion of what we call 'predicates' would inevitably lead to Forms. Possibly Theaetetus' remark is intended to remind us of their existence; but Socrates will not bring them in" (Cornford, 117). For Cornford, *allodoxia* is mistaking one thing for another and in this way reflects his view that the passage is concerned with misidentifications (D above) and not misdescriptions. Burnyeat also views the *allodoxia* passage as vacillating between misdescriptions and misidentifications (81-82). However apparent we read Theaetetus' remarks as suggesting misdescriptions, Burnyeat states that what may underlie the misdescription is a misidentification. According to Burnyeat, Plato may be explaining misdescriptions by appealing to misidentifications (81). Consider the following two sentences:

- I. Thrasymachus judged that Socrates is stupid, when in fact he is intelligent.
- II. In his thought about Socrates, Thrasymachus substituted stupidity for intelligence.

As Burnyeat argues, (I) is impossible precisely because the misidentification of (II) is impossible. If I cannot misidentify stupidity for intelligence, then I cannot misdescribe Socrates as stupid. According to this reading then, a necessary condition for misdescribing Socrates as stupid is that Thrasymachus have both 'stupidity' and 'intelligence' before his mind. If this is a necessary condition, then, as Socrates argues, one cannot think of 'stupidity' and 'intelligence' and mistake one as the other. So, Thrasymachus cannot misdescribe Socrates as stupid. Accordingly then, the *allodoxia* model argues that misidentification in thought is necessary for misdescriptions (Burnyeat, 83).

So, for Burnyeat the *allogoxia* model is not per se concerned with misdescriptions or false predications but appeals to misidentifications to explain how they may occur. Is Burnyeat's analysis of the *allogoxia* passage correct? Does Plato view misdescriptions as essentially hidden misidentifications? Plato's initial presentation of the *allogoxia* suggestion certainly seems to take this line (189c1-6). Here Plato speaks of *allogoxia* as occurring whenever an agent "...has substituted in his thought another of the things that are and asserts that it is." This presentation suggests that the mistake occurs in thinking that one thing is another. But it is wholly unclear how we are to understand the phrase "thinking that one thing is another." Above I remarked that the *allogoxia* model reads as if it is intended as a refutation of (1) from the being/non-being puzzle. If it is then Plato may be claiming that it is impossible to judge what is not about something which is and this comes about by thinking of an object as having the wrong property. Theaetetus, for example, would be thinking that Socrates, who is ugly, is beautiful. In this way, Theaetetus is thinking something which is not about Socrates, that he is beautiful. So, Theaetetus is misdescribing Socrates by thinking something other than what he is. But what is it that Theaetetus is thinking when he is misdescribing Socrates? According to Burnyeat, Theaetetus has substituted beauty for ugliness in his thought about Socrates. In his thought Theaetetus thinks that Socrates ugly is Socrates beautiful but has mistaken the two and judges that Socrates is beautiful. Bostock makes this point, but contrary to Burnyeat, does not think this entails misidentification in thought. "...on Plato's own principles one evidently cannot think that Theaetetus is ugly without thinking of Theaetetus. By hypothesis, Theaetetus is a beautiful thing. Hence, in having this thought, one *is* thinking of a beautiful thing. Of course, one is not thinking of it *as* beautiful, but rather as ugly. So the situation is that one thinking of one thing, a beautiful thing, *as* another, i.e., as ugly (-- or, if preferred, as an ugly thing)" (Bostock, 172 his italics). Bostock's analysis does away with any reliance on misidentifications in thought by supposing that when an agent other judges he is thinking of an object (e.g., Theaetetus) but rather than thinking of that object as it truly is, he is thinking of it *as* something which it isn't. If Socrates mistakes Theaetetus as ugly, Socrates is thinking of Theaetetus but is thinking of him not *as* what he in fact is, i.e., beautiful but is thinking of Theaetetus as ugly. So, according to Bostock, there is no misidentification involved; Socrates is

thinking of Theaetetus but does not mistake Theaetetus beautiful as Theaetetus ugly. While it does seem clear that Plato is concerned the kind of misdescriptions that Bostock attributes to him Plato is still relying heavily on Russell's Principle. Contrary to Bostock, in order for an agent to think of something (e.g., Theaetetus) he must be thinking of that object as having certain propositions which are true of it (e.g., that Theaetetus is beautiful). If this is the case, that an agent must know what propositions are true of an object in order for it to be an object of judgment, then the mistake involved is a confusion or a misidentification of which propositions are true of an object. In this way, the mistake involved is a misidentification. Whenever an agent makes an *allodoxia* type mistake he is actively thinking of two things (i.e., both are before the mind)⁵⁴ and if this is the case, Plato is arguing that such misidentifications of thoughts is impossible. So, Burnyeat is correct to assert that *allodoxia* treatment of misdescriptions entails an underlying misidentification. Contrary to Bostock *et. al.*, if this is not the case, it is hard to see how the *allodoxia* suggestion can be absurd.

Chappell, however, disagrees with this assessment of *allodoxia* as entailing misidentification. As Chappell states

Burnyeat's version of misidentificationism is, I think, the best available. However, the historical point that Plato did not distinguish identity-judgments from predications remains in force against this as against every version of misidentificationism. Furthermore, given the question "Can you judge that something you know, e.g. Theaetetus, is something else you know, e.g. intelligent?", it may well be that the *natural* answer (for us; for Plato?) is an unhesitating 'Yes'. Nonetheless there were at least four philosophers, probably known to Plato, who seem to have answered "No" to this question, holding, apparently, that predication was impossible *precisely because* Theaetetus was one thing and intelligence another (Chappell, 157).

First, the historical point which Chappell cites in favor of anti-misidentificationism argues that Plato was unaware of the different senses of 'is' as an 'is' of predication and an 'is' of identity. But as I have stated in the second chapter (2.3), mere ignorance of such a distinction (if there is one) does not mean that Plato does not treat misdescriptions or false predications as essentially misidentifications. Second, while Chappell is correct to assert that the answer to the question "Can you judge that something you know, e.g., Theaetetus, is something else you know, e.g., intelligent?" must receive an affirmative answer; it only receives such an answer when it is couched in these terms (Chappell,

⁵⁴ Notice how Socrates ignores the suggestion that an agent can be thinking of two things in succession in favor of the suggestion that both things must be thought about at the same time (189e1ff).

157). Contrary to Chappell, this is not Plato's question in the *allogoxia* passage. His question is: "Can you judge that something you are actively thinking about (e.g., Theaetetus *qua* beautiful) is something else you are actively thinking about (e.g., Theaetetus *qua* ugly)?" Plato's answer is "No". An agent cannot be thinking of two objects and intelligently assert that one is the other. This answer, as the question warrants, reflects Plato's view that false beliefs of the *allogoxia* kind are impossible precisely because they entail an absurd identification: An agent cannot say to himself (judge) that x is y if x and y are both being thought of. So, the *allogoxia* passage, while considering misdescriptions, treats these misdescriptions as essentially misidentifications in thought.

The importance of reading *allogoxia* type mistakes as essentially misidentifications is important for a few reasons. First, this reading goes a long way towards finding out why such a seemingly promising account of how falsity occurs eventually fails. Second, such a reading will also help acquit Plato from committing a fallacy in which many commentators attribute to his account of *allogoxia* (See below 3.2.3). In the next section I shall outline the contention that Plato is guilty of fallacious reasoning and show that taking *allogoxia* as essentially a thesis about misidentifications will acquit Plato of any such fallacy.

3.3 *Allogoxia* and the Gross Mistake

Some commentators think that Plato is committing a "very gross mistake" in the *allogoxia* passage (Ackrill, 389). The mistake attributed to Plato is that he fallaciously substitutes in an intentional context (Sedley, 131). The mistake occurs when we consider the argument of the *allogoxia* passage. In sum, the argument states:

1. Theaetetus thinks that Socrates is beautiful even though Socrates is ugly.
2. \therefore Theaetetus thinks that ugly is beautiful.
3. Theaetetus cannot think that ugly is beautiful.
4. \therefore Theaetetus cannot think that Socrates is beautiful.

(1) is Plato's initial presentation of *allogoxia*. To judge falsely is to think that an object is something other than what it is (For example, to think *of* Socrates as beautiful when he is in fact ugly). From this Plato concludes that such beliefs are absurd since an agent cannot

say to himself that an ugly thing is beautiful (premise 3 above). So, Plato’s mistake in this passage is that he seems to argue that since I cannot think or say that an ugly thing is beautiful, then I cannot make the mistake of judging that Socrates is beautiful even though he is in fact ugly (Ackrill, 389). As some commentators point out the mistake in the argument occurs in (2) (Bostock, 172; Fine, 217-221; Waterfield 201-202). (2) is ambiguous between a *de re* interpretation and a *de dicto* interpretation. Under the *de re* interpretation (2) is equivalent to ‘There exists an ugly thing [Socrates] that I think is beautiful.’ As Bostock states, “...the sentence reports what kind of thing I am thinking of, but does not say *how* I am thinking of it;” (Bostock, 174 his italics). The phrase ‘an ugly thing’ occurs in a transparent context. The main point of the *de re* reading according to Bostock is that “...the phrase is *not* to be taken as giving part of the content of my belief, but simply as indicating which object – or which kind of object – the belief is about (Ibid). So, according to this reading, I am thinking *of* Socrates (an ugly thing) that he is beautiful. However, (2) can also be given a *de dicto* interpretation. According to this reading, (2) gives a verbatim report of my belief; the phrase ‘an ugly thing’ occurs in an opaque context. “The point is that the sentence is now being interpreted as giving the whole content of my thought” (Ibid). So, according to this reading, I am *thinking* that an ugly thing is beautiful. Given these two possible readings of (2) a problem arises. If the *de re* interpretation is provided, then (2) will follow from (1) but will not state an absurdity since it is not absurd to suppose that I can think *of* Socrates that he is beautiful. If, however, a *de dicto* interpretation is provided, then (2) will not follow from the premises but will state an absurdity since it is absurd to suppose that I can think of an ugly thing as beautiful but this doesn’t follow from thinking *of* Socrates as ugly (Ibid). So, (2) is ambiguous and can be read in two ways:

- De re* – Thinking *of* an ugly thing as beautiful.
- De dicto* – *Thinking*: ugly is beautiful.

In this way, the fallacy occurs by equivocating between the two interpretations (Ibid).

Given this ambiguity, is Plato guilty as charged? Some commentators either do not think Plato commits this mistake or find a way to circumvent the charges. According to Ackrill, both (1) and (2) above should be given a *de dicto* reading. As he states, “...it is clear from the passage quoted above [190b-c] that Socrates is adverting precisely to

utterances (aloud or silent) like ‘an ox is a cow’. He is not considering what we may truly say of a man who says in the presence of an ox “this animal is a cow,” but what we may truly say of a man who says “an ox is a cow” (Ackrill, 389). Ackrill’s view reflects his overall interpretation of the *allodoxia* passage that Plato’s is confining *allodoxia* to considerations of universals or property mistakes. Ackrill can easily avoid Plato’s mistake by supposing that there is no difference between (1) and (2). In both Plato is dealing with conceptual mistakes and is not at all concerned with mistaking concrete individual things. As I have stated above this view is mistaken. Socrates’ initial presentation of *allodoxia* is concerned with concrete individual things. In this way, Socrates is initially presenting a *de re* reading of *allodoxia*.

Adalier argues for a similar reading to Ackrill. According to Adalier, Plato’s use of the verb *doxazein* (to judge/believe that) ought to read as *de dicto*. As he states, in the *allodoxia* model Socrates’ use of the verbs ‘thinking’ and ‘judging’ is understood as “speaking to oneself” and this “...clearly seems to indicate that he gives *de dicto* constructions to occurrences of “judges that”” (Adalier, 9). In this way, Adalier is relying heavily on Plato’s assertion that ‘judging’ ‘stating’ and ‘thinking’ are all just different names for the same thing, i.e., thinking that x is y . For Adalier, it is hard to believe that Plato could not have seen that the inference from a *de re* construction to a *de dicto* construction or vice versa is faulty (Adalier, 10). For instance, Adalier argues that it is hard to believe that Plato could not have seen that saying that “ $5 + 7$ is 11 ” (*de dicto*) is not the same as saying that *of 12* that it is 11 ” (*de re*) (Ibid). So, for Adalier, Plato is not confused by the distinction nor does he take the two constructions as equivalent.⁵⁵

According to Fine, Plato can be acquitted of such a mistake. As Fine argues, if *de dicto* reading of (2) is preferred, then it would be “...difficult to understand why Theaetetus initially takes *allodoxia* to be a plausible model of false belief, or why he needs such lengthy persuading that it is not” (Fine, 220). It is, for Fine, unlikely that Theaetetus would have needed such a lengthy argument to show that he cannot think that ‘ugly’ is ‘beautiful’, ‘just’ is ‘unjust’, etc. For Fine, Plato’s refutation of the *allodoxia* proposal can be viewed as validly deducing the *de re* reading of (1) to the *de dicto*

⁵⁵ For more on Adalier’s view see Chapter 4.

reading of (2) and therefore Plato can be acquitted of any mistake (Fine, 221). She does this by relying on the assumptions of the first puzzle, namely, the first puzzle's reliance on Russell's Principle ((OJ) see Chapter 2). As she states,

If 'Socrates' and 'beautiful' figure in one's judgment, one must, by (2c) [OJ*], know Socrates and beautiful. But if one knows Socrates, one knows that he is ugly. If one does not know this, one is ignorant of Socrates, and so cannot have any beliefs about him. If, though, one knows that Socrates is ugly, yet claims that he is beautiful, it is as if one said that ugly Socrates is beautiful. And such a belief is absurd (Fine, 221).

According to Fine, given the first puzzle, Plato can validly deduce (2) from (1). As she views the issue, it can be validly deduced in the following way:

1. Theaetetus thinks that Socrates is beautiful even though Socrates is ugly [1 above].
2. Theaetetus can only think about objects in which everything is known (OJ*).
3. ∴ Theaetetus knows Socrates and knows beauty (1,2).
4. ∴ Theaetetus thinks that Socrates is ugly and thinks that Socrates is beautiful (3).
5. ∴ Theaetetus thinks that ugly Socrates is beautiful [2 above] (4).

Reconstructed in this way, the passage argues that *allodoxia* is absurd precisely because if an agent (e.g., Theaetetus) knows everything about Socrates, viz. that he is ugly and knows everything beauty (i.e., that beauty does not apply to Socrates), then it is absurd to suppose that an agent can think to himself that Socrates *qua* ugly is beautiful (Fine, 220-221). Fine's way around the fallacy reflects her view that the purpose of the false belief passage is to refute an underlying acquaintance model (see Chapter 1). In this way, the *allodoxia* proposal fails, not because *allodoxia* is an unsatisfactory account, but because if an acquaintance model is assumed, *allodoxia* entails an absurdity (Fine, 221). But as I have argued in the first and second chapters, there is no need to read the passage as an indirect refutation of an underlying acquaintance model. In this regard, Fine's solution to the fallacy fails. If what I have argued is correct, then Fine's contention that (OJ*) will relieve Plato of any fallacy is inaccurate. Despite this, Fine is correct to suppose that Plato is relying on the assumptions of the first puzzle and that these assumptions may acquit him of a fallacy.

So, in summary, commentators have offered various alternatives regarding the charge of fallacious reasoning on Plato's part. The first alternative suggests that what is at issue is that Plato is concerned only with *de dicto* belief constructions. According to this

suggestion Plato is arguing that an agent cannot be thinking that one thing is another. The second alternative suggests that Plato is concerned only with *de re* belief constructions. As this alternative suggests, Plato is arguing that an agent cannot judge *of* one thing that it is another. But as we have seen, both of these first two alternatives run into problems. If the first suggestion is taken then, as Fine argues, it is hard to see why Theaetetus would need convincing that one cannot be thinking that two things are identical (Fine, 220). Furthermore, Plato seems to be treating belief constructions as *de re* in the initial presentation of the proposal and this is certainly how Theaetetus understands his proposal (see below 3.2.4). On the other hand, if the second suggestion is taken then Plato would be suggesting that an agent cannot judge *of* one thing that it is another. Yet this is clearly mistaken. As Ackrill argues, Plato is not arguing that in the presence of one object (e.g., an ox) an agent cannot mistake that object for another (e.g., horse). Such cases are clearly possible, as the examples used in the wax block model suggest. So, because of these considerations each of these alternatives is problematic. Therefore, Plato may be equivocating between the two alternatives. That is, initially he treats *allodoxia* as *de re* and then argues that such *de re* beliefs are impossible because certain *de dicto* beliefs are impossible. Yet, as we have seen, arguing in this way is fallacious. So, we can either attempt to acquit Plato of such a mistake or hold him guilty as charged.

Above I outlined Fine's view that Plato can be read as validly reducing the *de re* construction to a *de dicto* construction by utilizing the assumptions of the first puzzle. While, as I have stated above, Fine's view is problematic because of the reliance on the acquaintance model of knowledge, her suggestion is nonetheless promising.

3.4 *Allodoxia* as “Judging what is not” and the Gross Mistake

As stated above Fine's view is promising. Plato can be acquitted of such confusion in much the same way as Fine outlines. However, before taking a similar line as Fine's, I shall first offer an alternative interpretation of the *allodoxia* proposal.

The general strategy in proposing the *allodoxia* model is to first offer a general account of how misdescriptions may arise followed by a particular refutation of this general account. The general strategy of the *allodoxia* model is to argue that false beliefs

occur by thinking something other about something which is. In other words, the general account of false beliefs, as outlined here, states that false belief occurs by thinking of something (e.g., Socrates) as something else. In this way, the *allogoxia* proposal is intended as a response to (1) from the being/non-being puzzle. That is, Plato, in proposing *allogoxia*, is attempting show that it is possible to think what is not of something which is. In order to think what is not of something which is, an agent must be ‘thinking other’ or ‘other judging’ (*allogoxia*) that something which exists has properties which are not true of it.⁵⁶ For instance, Theaetetus may ‘other-judge’ that Socrates (something which is) is beautiful (something which is not of Socrates). For these reasons, Plato’s initial presentation of the *allogoxia* model is intended to do two things: first, attempt to show that it is possible to think what is not of something which is and second, to show that this is possible, Plato considers cases of misdescriptions.

So, while Plato’s intent in the *allogoxia* model is to refute the suggestion of the being/non-being puzzle that it is not possible to judge what is not of something which is, this attempt fails. Some commentators hold that this attempt to account for false beliefs fails because of Plato’s ignorance between *de re* and *de dicto* belief constructions. But this is not the reason why the account fails. In fact, Plato can be acquitted of such confusion by taking a similar line to Fine’s. Although Fine relies heavily on the acquaintance model to relieve Plato of the “gross mistake”, Plato can be acquitted of this mistake by taking a line similar to Fine’s *sans* the acquaintance model. As stated above (3.2.2), Plato is still explicitly relying on Russell’s Principle in the *allogoxia* model. Since this is the case, a way around the charge of a fallacy can be accomplished by viewing the *allogoxia* model as explicitly relying on Russell’s Principle. In the second chapter I argued that Plato’s reliance on Russell’s Principle in the first puzzle took the following form:

(OJC) For all x , x can be an object of S’s beliefs only if S believes enough true propositions about x to distinguish x from everything else.

Plato’s reliance on Russell’s Principle in the first puzzle (OJC) states that only those objects which an agent is able to discriminate from everything else can be objects of

⁵⁶ Remember that the Sophists and at times in his career Plato, treat ‘what is not’ as equivalent to being false or not the case and treat ‘what is’ as being true or what is the case (see 3.0).

judgment. This assumption (OJC) is likewise at work in the *alldoxia* model. The difference between its use in the first puzzle and the *alldoxia* model is that whereas the first puzzle is concerned with knowledge of distinguishing features, the *alldoxia* model is concerned with actively thinking of the distinguishing features of objects. For instance, consider the judgment that ‘an ox is a horse’. According to Socrates’ refutation of the *alldoxia* model I cannot think that an ox is a horse if I am *thinking* of an ox *as* having certain propositions true of it and thinking of what distinguishes an ox from a horse. In other words, if I am thinking about certain propositions which are true of a horse and true of an ox and both thoughts are before my mind, then it is, as the argument goes, impossible for me to state/judge that an ‘ox is a horse.’ I am here thinking of an ox that it has certain propositions true of it and, at the same time, thinking of a horse that it has certain propositions true of it and what distinguishes the two. In this way, if both are before my mind and I am thinking of what distinguishes the two, then it is not the case that I can think/judge that one is the other, i.e., I could never think/judge that an ‘ox is a horse.’ Such is the absurd conclusion that Socrates draws.

What of misdescriptions, such as thinking that Socrates is beautiful? Can the same analysis be applied? It can. Consider the above example, that S judges falsely or misdescribes Socrates as beautiful. As Socrates argues such misdescriptions are impossible because if S is thinking *of* Socrates and thinking *of* Socrates as beautiful what S is thinking of is Socrates *as* Socrates (i.e., an ugly thing) and thinking of Socrates as something he is not (i.e., as a beautiful thing). If we assumed (OJC), then such beliefs become impossible since in order for S to judge/think that Socrates is beautiful S must be thinking that Socrates *as* Socrates has certain propositions which are true of him (i.e., that he is ugly) and thinking that Socrates *as* beautiful has certain propositions true of him (i.e., that he is beautiful) and have both thoughts before mind. But, as Socrates, argues, if an agent is actively thinking of both (Socrates ugly and Socrates beautiful) he could not assert that one is the other, that is, he could not assert that Socrates ugly is Socrates beautiful. As Socrates states,

Well, then, if to make a statement to oneself is to judge, no one who makes a statement, that is, a judgment, about both things, getting hold of both with his soul, can state, or judge, that one is the other (190c5-7).

Socrates is stating that *allodoxia* type beliefs are impossible because an agent cannot judge that one thing is another if both are being thought of. As stated above it is because of Plato's reliance on Russell's Principle which makes such mistakes impossible. So, Plato is explicitly relying on the same assumptions of the first puzzle and it is because of these assumptions that Plato holds that *allodoxia* fails.

Above I stated that Fine's attempt to circumvent the charges against Plato is promising. As she argues, Plato can be acquitted of fallaciously substituting in an intentional context because, by utilizing the assumptions of the first puzzle, Plato can be shown to validly reduce the *de re* reading to the *de dicto*. However, while I agree that Fine's strategy is sound, the details are not. Instead of assuming an acquaintance model to relieve Plato of a fallacy, he can be acquitted utilizing (OJC) instead. This strategy will remove the problems associated with Fine's acquaintance model and highlight the correct reason why Plato fails to offer a satisfactory account of false belief.

Earlier I outlined Fine's reconstruction of the argument against *allodoxia* type beliefs. Instead of Fine's reconstruction I propose that the argument ought to be read as follows:

1. Theaetetus thinks that Socrates is beautiful even though Socrates is ugly [1 above].
2. The only objects that can be objects of Theaetetus' judgment are those in which he knows enough true propositions to distinguish those objects from everything else (OJC).
3. ∴ Theaetetus knows Socrates and knows beauty (1,2).
4. ∴ Theaetetus thinks that Socrates is ugly and thinks that Socrates is beautiful (3).
5. ∴ Theaetetus thinks that ugly Socrates is beautiful Socrates [2 above] (4).

Above I have outlined an argument which uses Fine's strategy to validly deduce the *de re* reading (i.e., Theaetetus thinks *of* Socrates that he is beautiful) to the *de dicto* (i.e., Theaetetus is thinking that Socrates beautiful is Socrates ugly). As Fine's strategy suggests Plato is explicitly relying on Russell's Principle to argue that *allodoxia* type beliefs are absurd. This strategy works in the following way: first assume that Theaetetus thinks/judges *of* Socrates that he is beautiful. In this way then, Theaetetus is thinking something other than what Socrates is. To show that such beliefs are absurd, Plato utilizes the assumptions which showed false beliefs to be impossible in the first puzzle, namely Russell's Principle. Since this is the case, Plato is arguing that if Theaetetus is to judge

that Socrates is beautiful he must be thinking *of* Socrates, that is, he must be thinking (if Socrates is to be an object of Theaetetus' judgments) of what propositions are true of Socrates (e.g., that he is ugly). In other words, Theaetetus cannot be thinking of Socrates (by Russell's Principle) unless he knows what propositions are true of Socrates. Granting this, what Theaetetus must be thinking (taking this *de dicto*), according to Plato, is that the object of his judgment, Socrates *as* Socrates (i.e., Socrates ugly) is identical to Socrates *as* beautiful. So, the judgment of Theaetetus that Socrates is beautiful is absurd because Theaetetus cannot be thinking that Socrates *as* Socrates (i.e., Socrates ugly) is Socrates beautiful. Since this is the case, *allodoxia* beliefs entail absurd cases of misidentification.

A further example may help to clarify the situation. The charge is that Plato fallaciously substitutes in an intentional context, for instance, we make take Plato as arguing that Theaetetus thinking falsely *of* Tuesday that she is dog is absurd because Theaetetus would be thinking that a cat is a dog. But such an assessment is not Plato's. He is arguing that Theaetetus, in thinking falsely *of* Tuesday that she is a dog, is not absurd because he is thinking that a cat is a dog, but is absurd because Theaetetus is thinking that Tuesday *qua* cat is Tuesday *qua* dog. In this way, such beliefs are impossible because Theaetetus cannot think that Tuesday *qua* cat is Tuesday *qua* dog if both are being actively thought of. So, Plato can be acquitted of any such fallacy because of his assertion that *allodoxia* type judgments require that both objects are actively being thought of at the same time.

Since I have argued along the same lines as Fine that Plato is not guilty of fallacious reasoning, what, then, is wrong with the account? That is, why does such a promising account go horribly wrong? A partial reason for this is that, as stated above, Plato views all misdescriptions as essentially misidentifications. Plato is trapped, by his own lights, by the assumptions of the first puzzle. In other words, Plato holds, in the *allodoxia* model that an agent must be thinking of two objects in all misdescriptions (e.g., thinking of Socrates as beautiful and Socrates as ugly). This requirement takes all misdescriptions as essentially misidentifications. The consequence of this is that Plato could not see how an agent could be misdescribing something (e.g., Socrates *as* beautiful) without also thinking of that something as it truly is (e.g., Socrates *as* ugly). If Plato had

seen (*pace* Bostock 172) that misdescriptions need not involve thinking of something as it truly is but only thinking of an object (e.g., Socrates) not as it truly is but as something else, then he may have seen that misdescriptions of the *allogoxia* kind are indeed possible. But Plato does not do this; he assumes that an agent cannot misdescribe something without thinking of that thing as it is (see 189e1-3; 190c1-10). So a partial reason why Plato's account of *allogoxia* type beliefs fails is because of his assumption that all misdescriptions entail an underlying misidentification.

But this is only one of the reasons why the account fails. In the conclusion of this project I will compare Plato's solution to the problem in the *Sophist* with his account in the *Theaetetus*. By making such a comparison, we may be closer to understanding why the account in the *Theaetetus* fails. But such an analysis and comparison with the *Sophist* will have to wait until I consider the last two attempts to account for false belief in the *Theaetetus*, namely the Wax Block Model and the Aviary Model.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE WAX BLOCK MODEL AND THE AVIARY MODEL

4.1. The Wax Block Model Synopsis

After Socrates argues that the *allogoxia* model cannot account for false beliefs, he states that it may be possible to account for false beliefs despite the assumptions of the first puzzle.

I am going to maintain that we were wrong to agree that it is impossible for a man to be in error through judging that things he knows are things he doesn't know. In a way, it is possible (191a11-b2).

Theaetetus immediately seems to understand the kind of case that Socrates has in mind.

Now I wonder if you mean the same thing as I too suspected at the time when we suggested it was like that – I mean, that sometimes I, who know Socrates, have seen someone else in the distance whom I don't know and thought it to be Socrates whom I do know. In a case like that, the sort of thing you are referring to does happen (191b3-7).

This case, as outlined by Theaetetus, is the first attempt to respond to the first puzzle. The claim that it is impossible for an agent to mistake something known with something unknown (Case 2) is now argued to be wrong; there is a way for someone to mistake something known with something unknown. As Theaetetus suggests, this kind of mistake can happen whenever an agent knows an object (e.g., Socrates) and mistakes an unknown perceived object (e.g., a man in the distance) as the known object. In this way, Case 2 is arguably wrong, since it is possible to mistake something known with something unknown through misperception.

However, prior to assessing this new suggestion Socrates offers a model of learning and memory whereby the mind is like a wax block in which our perceptions and everything we learn is stamped.

Now I want you to suppose, for the sake of the argument, that we have in our souls a block of wax, larger in one person, smaller in another, and of purer wax in one case, dirtier in another; in some men rather hard, in others rather soft, while in some it is of the proper consistency (191c8-d2).

We may look upon it, then, as a gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses. We make impressions upon this of everything we wish to remember among the things we have seen or heard or thought of ourselves; we hold the wax under our perceptions and thoughts and take a stamp from them, in the way in which we take the imprints of signet rings. Whatever is impressed upon the wax we remember and know so long as the image remains in the wax; whatever is obliterated or cannot be impressed, we forget and do not know (191d4-e2).

The general idea behind the notion of the wax block is that the ‘soul’ records everything in which we encounter; whether it is impressions from sense datum or impressions from thoughts. According to this notion, learning occurs by recording or stamping impressions into the wax block. In this way then, whenever we learn something new and it is recorded in the wax block we are said to know that impression. So, the wax block provides us, for the first time in the discussion of falsity, with a notion of what knowing is like. Learning, according to this model, is receiving a new impression on the wax block and therefore knowledge arises whenever this impression remains and can be thought about. The wax block offers the first genuine response to the Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle by defining knowledge in such a way as to allow for both perceptual and cognitive mistakes. So, the Wax Block model assumes the following definition of knowledge:

WBK: Knowledge is recalling (thinking of) a memory.

Knowledge is therefore aligned with memory; an agent knows something whenever it can be remembered. With this definition on the table, Socrates considers certain ways in which the assumptions about knowing and not-knowing made earlier, which in the first puzzle showed that falsity is impossible, can be circumvented.

Then take the case of a man who knows these things, but is also considering something he is seeing or hearing; and see if he might judge falsely in this way (191e4-6).

The way in which Socrates proceeds to circumvent the assumptions of the first puzzle is by reformulating the crucial assumption (OJ) which made falsity impossible. In the present discussion (OJ) becomes:

(OJWB) For all x , x can be an object of S’s judgment only if S is thinking of x (from memory) or is perceiving x .

This assumption (OJWB) highlights the fact that Plato is now arguing that a thing may figure as an object of judgment in two separate ways: either by thinking of an object from memory or by perceiving an object (Bostock, 177). As McDowell states the assumption “...if a thing is to figure in one’s judgment, then one must have *some* mental hold on it, either by knowing it or by perceiving it” (McDowell, 213 his italics). It is this reformulation of Russell’s Principle which allows Plato to widen the scope of what can count as an object of an agent’s judgment. It is therefore because of this assumption

(OJWB) that Socrates is now in a position to argue against the first puzzle's claim that falsity is impossible if both objects of an agent's judgment are known, or if one is known but not the other. He does so by arguing that false judgment arises through a mismatch between a previously imprinted item and a present perception. To do so Socrates outlines seventeen different cases in which such a mismatches may be possible and impossible.

We must begin this discussion by making certain distinctions. We must make it clear that it is impossible to think [1] that a thing you know, because you possessed a record of it in your soul, but which you are not perceiving, is another thing which you know – you have its imprint too – but are not perceiving, [2] that a thing you know is something you do not know and do not have the seal of, [3] that a thing you don't know is another thing you don't know, [4] that a thing you don't know is a thing you know.

Again, it is impossible to think [5] that a thing you perceive is another thing that you are perceiving, [6] that a thing you are perceiving is a thing which you are not perceiving, [7] that a thing you are not perceiving is another thing you are not perceiving, [8] that a thing you are not perceiving is a thing you are perceiving.

Yet, again, it is impossible to that [9] that a thing you both know and are perceiving, when you are holding its imprint in line with your perception of it, is another thing which you know and are perceiving, and whose imprint you keep in line with the perception (this is indeed even more impossible than the former cases, if that can be), [10] that a thing which you both know and are perceiving, and the record of which you are keeping in its true line, is another thing you know, [11] that a thing you both know and are perceiving and of which you have the record correctly in line as before, is another thing you are perceiving, [12] that a thing you neither know nor are perceiving is another thing you neither know nor perceive, [13] that a thing you neither know nor perceive is another thing you don't know, [14] that a thing you neither know nor perceive is another thing you are not perceiving.

In all these cases, it is a sheer impossibility that there should be false judgment. It remains that it arises, if anywhere in the cases I am just going to tell you (192a1-c8).

In these cases of things you know: when you think [15] that there are other things you know and are perceiving, [16] that they are things you don't know but are perceiving, [17] that things you both know and are perceiving are other things you both know and are perceiving (192c11-d2).

The catalogue of cases that Socrates outlines is clearly the most difficult of the passage. Since this is the case, below is a tablature of the cases. As Socrates argues, the first fourteen cases of misidentification are impossible and the next three are possible candidates for misidentification (Below SB = agent judges that; x and y = objects; M = remembered; ~M = not remembered; K = known; ~K = not known; P = perceived; ~P = not perceived).

I. Impossible Misidentifications

1. SB (MKx~Px is MKy~P)
2. SB (Kx is ~K~My)
3. SB (~Kx is ~Ky)
4. SB (~Kx is Ky)

5. SB (Px is Py)
6. SB (Px is ~Py).
7. SB (~Px is ~Py)
8. SB (~Px is Py)
9. SB (MKPx is MKPy)
10. SB (MKPx is Ky)
11. SB (MKPx is Py)
12. SB (~K~Px is ~K~Py)
13. SB (~K~Px is ~Ky)
14. SB (~K~Px is ~Py)

II. Possible Misidentifications

15. SB (Kx is KPy)
16. SB (Kx is ~KPy)
17. SB (KPx is KPy)

Since Theaetetus seems overwhelmed by this list (as he ought to be), Socrates seeks to rectify this confusion by elaborating on cases 15 and 17. He begins by explaining case 17.

So there remains the possibility of false judgment in this case. I know both you and Theodorus; I have your signs upon that block of wax, like the imprints of rings. Then I see you both in the distance, but cannot see you well enough; but I am a hurry to refer the proper sign to the proper visual perception, and so get this fitted into the trace of itself, that recognition may take place. This I fail to do; I get them out of line, applying the visual perception of the one to the sign of the other. It is like people putting their shoes on the wrong feet, or like what happens when we look at things in mirrors, when left and right change places. It is then that ‘other-judging’ or false judgment occurs (193b10-d2).

According to Socrates, it is possible for an agent to know two things (e.g., Theaetetus and Theodorus) by having a memory of both and perceive both things and yet still mistake one for the other. This occurs, as it is argued, by a misalignment with a present memory of one object with the visual perception of another. In other words, the visual perception gets put into the wrong “sign” in the wax block. So, false judgment occurs by a misalignment or a mismatch of one memory of an object with a visual perception. The account of false belief therefore rests on two assumptions. First, that knowledge is remembering (imprinting an impression on the wax) whatever we learn (WBK). Second, true judgments arise from a proper alignment (i.e., a fitting) of a presently perceived object with an imprint from an old perception (e.g., I perceive Socrates and fit that perception with my imprint/memory of Socrates and judge that the

person I perceive is Socrates). While true judgments occur by a proper alignment of a present memory with a present perception, false judgments occur through a misalignment of a perception with a memory.

There remained, I take it, the case we have just mentioned where false judgment arises in the following manner: you know both men and you are looking at both, or having some other perception of them; and you don't hold the two signs each in line with its own perception, but like a bad archer you shoot beside the mark and miss – which is precisely what we call falsehood (193e6- 194a5).

False judgments, then, occur according to the following principle:

(WBF) False judgment occurs whenever S mistakes a present perception with a present memory.

So, by applying (WBF) Plato argues that false belief is possible whenever: (15) S knows x and knows y and perceives y and judges that x is y (e.g., Socrates knows Theaetetus (but does not perceive him) and knows and perceives Theodorus and mistakes the perception of Theodorus with the memory of Theaetetus and judges that Theaetetus is Theodorus); (16) S knows x and does not know but perceives y and judges that x is y (e.g., Socrates knows Theaetetus and does not know but perceives Theodorus and mistakes the perception of Theodorus with the memory of Theaetetus and judges that Theaetetus is Theodorus); (17) S knows and perceives x and knows and perceives y and judges that x is y (e.g., Socrates knows and perceives both Theaetetus and Theodorus and mistakes the memory and perception of Theaetetus with the memory and perception of Theodorus and judges that Theaetetus is Theodorus).

While Plato argues that falsehood occurs in these cases by a misalignment of a memory with a perception, he gives very few hints as to *how* such a misalignment occurs. He tells us that this misalignment occurs either by unclear perceptions of objects (i.e., seeing two things in the distance “...but cannot see you well enough;”) or whenever someone is “...in a hurry to refer the proper sign to the proper visual perception,” but he also tells us that this misalignment can be due to the consistency of the wax, that is, some agents have the ability to preserve their memories or learn (i.e., make new imprints) better than others.

But it is a different matter when a man's 'heart' is 'shaggy' (the kind of heart our marvelously knowing poet praises), or when it is dirty and of impure wax; or when it is very soft or very hard. Persons in whom the wax is soft are quick to learn but quick to forget; when the wax is hard the

opposite happens. Those in whom it is ‘shaggy’ and rugged, a stony thing with earth or filth mixed all through it, have indistinct perceptions. So too if the wax is hard, for then the impressions have no depth; similarly they are indistinct if the wax is soft, because they quickly run together and are blurred. If, in addition to all this, the impresses in the wax are crowded upon each other for lack of space, because it is only some little scrap of soul, they are even more indistinct. All such people are liable to false judgment. When they see or hear or think of anything, they can’t quickly allot each thing to each impress; they are slow and allot things to impresses which do not belong to them – and these in turn are the ones we describe as in error about the things that are and ignorant (194e1-195a9).

As the above passage indicates, one of the reasons why false belief in cases 15-17 can be possible is that an agent’s memory may not be the “proper consistency.” An agent may be prone to mistaking or mismatching a perception with a memory because of the nature of an agent’s ability to remember impressions. That is, the notion of the “consistency of the wax” highlights the fact that some agents are able to remember perceptions or cognitive imprints better than other agents and therefore are less prone to mistake a perception with a memory. So, Plato provides a few reasons why or how a memory imprint may be mismatched with a perception. It can either arise through an agent’s natural memory capabilities, or through perceptual mistakes.

After elucidating this proposal and finding it a satisfactory account of false judgment, Socrates berates himself (195c1) for not considering all cases in which falsity may arise.

Well, now, take the case where a man is considering five and seven within himself – I don’t mean seven men and five men, or anything of that sort, but five and seven themselves; the records, as we allege, in that waxen block, things among which it is not possible that there should be false judgment. Suppose he is talking to himself about them, and asking himself how many they are. Do you think that in such a case it has ever happened that one man thought they were eleven and said so, while another thought and said that they were twelve? Or do all men say and all men think that they are twelve? (196a1-9)

Socrates is here considering cases in which an agent is not mismatching a perception with an imprint on the wax block (i.e., memory) but mismatching an imprint with another imprint. For instance, an agent may have imprints of two numbers, such as seven and five, and is thinking of both and asserts that the sum of seven and five is eleven. So, the case considered here is when an agent is actively thinking of two distinct memory imprints and suffers confusion about both imprints. In this way, such cases of falsehood arise not from the confusion of perceptions with memory but from *a priori*

considerations, i.e., confusing two memory imprints.⁵⁷ Even though Theaetetus states that such mistakes are possible, since every agent makes the sort of miscalculation in thought that Socrates' example warrants (196b1-3), Socrates argues that such cases are impossible because the assumptions of the first puzzle warrant that such mistakes are impossible.

Then haven't we come back to the things we were saying at the outset? You see, anyone to whom this happens is thinking that one thing he knows is another thing he knows. And this we said was impossible; in fact, it was just this consideration which led us to exclude the possibility of false judgment, because if admitted, it would mean that the same man must, at one and the same time, both know and not know the same objects (196b8-c2).

Socrates is arguing that the account of falsity outlined above fails because it cannot cover every case of false belief. Socrates is arguing that any account of falsity must cover every case of false belief. Since the wax block model only covers cases where there is a mismatch between a perception and memory and not cases where no perception is involved, the model fails because it lacks scope. The wax block model fails because it cannot account for *a priori* mistakes.

Such *a priori* mistakes are argued to be impossible because of the assumptions of the first puzzle. For example, Socrates argues that it is impossible for an agent to think of five and seven and know what five and seven are themselves and also know what twelve is and think that five and seven equal eleven. Here Socrates is arguing that the judgment that the sum of five and seven (twelve) is eleven is impossible. Again the reason for this rests on the considerations of the first puzzle. If an agent knows that five and seven equal twelve and knows eleven he cannot think to himself that five and seven is eleven. To do so would be tantamount to knowing and not knowing the same thing (Case 1).

Because of this consideration false judgment must be something other than a mismatching of perception with memory.

Then we shall have to say that false judgment is something other than a misapplication of thought to perception; because of this were so, we could never be in error so long as we remained within our thoughts themselves. But as the matter now stands, either there is no such thing as false judgment; or a man may not know what he knows (196c4-8).

⁵⁷ In using the term 'a priori' I simply mean that Plato is considering cases of false belief in which an agent mismatches an imprint with another imprint. However, this does not mean that these imprints have no derivation in sense perception, i.e., I may confuse the imprints of Socrates and Theaetetus with one another (both of whom I know from sense perception) even if I am not perceiving either of them right now. As David McNaughton has suggested, Plato may mean something in mind similar to Locke's "Ideas of Reflection". See Locke *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book II. Chapter VI.

So, the wax block model fails because it cannot account for *a priori* mistakes. Since this model fails to account for such mistakes in the next model of false belief Socrates will attempt to overcome this difficulty by proposing a separate model of the mind which may account for *a priori* mistake. However, before examining this final account of falsity, there are many interpretive difficulties involving the wax block. In the next few sections I shall deal with each of these difficulties followed by my own view.

4.2. Is the Wax Block Plato's Theory?

One of the crucial questions when attempting to interpret the wax block model is whether Plato is presenting a model of the mind which is his own or if he is merely arguing against someone else's account. For Chappell, the latter is precisely what Plato is up to in this passage. As he states, Plato is presenting an empiricist account of falsity and Plato is arguing against such an account.

The two most obvious anti-Platonic features of the Wax Block and Aviary are these. First, on one picture given by these accounts, learning and teaching are unqualifiedly possible (191c3, 198b2-4): as they are not either in the *Meno* (80c -96b) or in the *Republic* (514a – 519a). Second, in both accounts the subject of the learning process begins with an empty receptacle, a *tabula rasa* or an empty aviary (191d2ff., 197e2)...If Plato had meant to offer what *Theaetetus* 187-201 says about learning, knowledge and thought as his own proposal, surely he would have attempted to reconcile that new proposal with these earlier accounts, or at least to register the points of difference. It cannot be accidental that he makes no effort at all to do either (Chappell, 8 PAP).

As I have stated in the first chapter, there is no need to reconcile the Wax Block model with any assumptions that he once held. Furthermore, there are some serious difficulties with ascribing an empiricist's doctrine to the Wax Block model. However, before delving into these problems, I shall first survey the evidence for the claim that the model is an empiricist attempt to explain false belief.

The Wax Block certainly seems to have an empiricist ring to it. As Chappell sees the similarity "The picture now on offer says explicitly that perception relates to thought roughly as Humean "impressions" relate to Humean "ideas"..." (Chappell, 178). Other commentators also see a similarity between Modern Empiricists and the Wax Block Model (Ackrill, 392-93; Burnyeat, 100; McDowell, 209). As Cornford sees it, the Wax Block model is an exposition of empiricism.

The whole dialogue examines the claim of the world of external sensible objects to be the sole source of knowledge. This claim is taken as implying that outside us there are physical objects which can yield us sense-data through several organs, and inside us a *tabula rasa* on which impressions so received can be stamped and recorded. This mechanism is based on the empiricist assumption that all our knowledge must be derived somehow from the external objects of perception (Cornford, 129-30).

According to Cornford then, Plato is considering (and rejecting) an empiricist's account of falsity since Plato is considering only those cases in which the root of all ideas (i.e., imprints in memory) is external sensible objects. In this way, our idea of Socrates or the number 12 "...must be supposed to be extracted from a series of sense-impressions and added to our memory records" (Cornford, 130). So Cornford, like Chappell, views the Wax Block model as explicitly advocating a quasi-modern empiricist account of knowledge and because of this reliance of empiricism the account ultimately fails.

However, there are some disanalogies between the Wax Block model and modern empiricism. First, nowhere in the Wax Block model does Plato state that the mind is empty at birth or a *tabula rasa*; he does not say that *all* knowledge is derived from sense data and that these data are the originator of all memories. What he does say however is that imprints on the wax block are a result of intentionally remembering whatever we wish, whether it is from the senses or from our own conceptions.⁵⁸ "We make impressions upon this of everything we wish to remember among the things we have seen or heard or thought of ourselves; we hold the wax under our perceptions and thoughts and take a stamp from them" (191d4-6). The imprints are certainly derived from external sources, but Plato does not argue that these external sources must be from sense-data. Nor does he argue that, like Modern Empiricists,⁵⁹ the mind is a passive receptacle whereby sense data are recorded. In this passage and elsewhere, Plato makes the mind an active participant in the formation of knowledge. However, Chappell does not think these differences amount to much. For him, Plato's target may very well hold "...that *attention* always has a role to play in the formation of impressions" (his italics; 182). So while there are some disanalogies between Modern Empiricists and the empiricism Plato is targeting here, Chappell argues that these disanalogies do not make it impossible to read the Wax Block as a version of empiricism (Ibid).

⁵⁸ One example of an "imaginative construct", which Burnyeat points out, is the Wax Block model itself (Burnyeat, 91 note 32).

⁵⁹ The Modern Empiricists which Burnyeat and Chappell have in mind are Locke and Hume.

But even if we grant that it is “empiricism with a difference” (Chappell, 182); it is hard to see who or which empiricists Plato is targeting. It certainly cannot be a theory of perception a la Protagoras. The reason for this is that Protagoras argues that false beliefs are impossible, yet, the Wax Block Model, if it is an empiricist’s model, is a model which allows for its possibility. But as I have argued earlier (see Chapter 1) Protagoras is Plato’s target in the false belief passage. But this is not to say that Plato is refuting a Protagorean account of how falsehood is possible, but that Plato is attempting to show that it is possible. Furthermore, it is hard to see why Plato would agree with a Protagorean doctrine that falsehood is impossible, if his purpose in the Wax Block model (and elsewhere) is to refute an empiricist’s account of how false beliefs are possible.

Second, as Plato has already argued (184b7-187a6) that the senses cannot provide us with propositional knowledge. The senses, as he argued there, cannot provide an agent with any knowledge of an object. If this is the case, then the kind of knowledge that would be required, if Cornford and Chappell are correct, is not the kind that Plato locates in judgments. For as I have argued in Chapter 2, Plato draws a sharp distinction between *connaitre* and *savior* knowledge; the latter is restricted only to the senses whereas for Plato both *connaitre* and *savior* are necessary for making judgments about objects. If this is the case, then Plato is concerned with judgments about sense perceptions. For example, the passage is concerned with judgments (true or false) about what we perceive and how these judgments about our perceptions can match up (or fail to match up) with our knowledge recorded in memory. Plato is not, as Cornford and Chappell seem to want, concerned with perceptions or sense datum per se. The emphasis is on judgments not perception; while I may perceive something (e.g., the man in the distance) it is judgments that identify something under certain descriptions (e.g., the man in the distance is Socrates) and judge that these descriptions fall under what an agent already knows (i.e. by memory).

Even if we grant that there are some similarities between the Wax Block Model and an empiricist thesis, it does not follow from this that the Wax Block is not Plato’s own attempt at providing a solution to the problem of false belief or that he is arguing against someone else’s account. Elsewhere, in the *Philebus*, Plato offers a model of the mind that is similar to the Wax Block account in the *Theaetetus*.

Socrates: Do you share my view on this?
 Protarchus: What view?
 Socrates: That our in such a situation is comparable to a book.
 Protarchus: How so?
 Socrates: If memory and perceptions concur with other impressions at particular a particular occasion, then they seem to me to inscribe words in our soul, as it were. And if what is written is true, then we form a true judgment and a true account of the matter. But if what our scribe writes is false, then the result will be the opposite of the truth (38e9-39a5).

The analogy given here, that the mind is like a book whereby words (thoughts or perceptions) are inscribed on it, is similar to the Wax Block Model. The example used to motivate such an analogy is the same as the one used in the *Theaetetus* (191b3-7).⁶⁰

Socrates: Wouldn't you say that it often happens that someone who cannot get a clear view because he is looking from a distance wants to make up his mind about what he sees?
 Protarchus: I would say so.
 Socrates: And might he then not again raise another question for himself?
 Protarchus: What question?
 Socrates: "What could that be that appears to stand near that rock under a tree?" – Do you find it possible that someone might say these words to himself when he sets his eyes on such appearances?
 Protarchus: Certainly.
 Socrates: And might he not afterwards, as an answer to his own question, say to himself, "It is a man," and in so speaking, would get it right?
 Protarchus: No doubt.
 Socrates: But he might also be mistaken and say that what he sees is a statue, the work of some herdsmen? (38c4-d8).

Not only does this passage from the *Philebus* utilize the same example as the one in the *Theaetetus* but the underlying theses are the same as well. Like the example in the *Theaetetus*, the example in the *Philebus* argues that it is possible for an agent to mistake a present perception (i.e., the thing in the distance) with something he already knows (i.e., a man). True belief, according to this account, arises when there is a correct correspondence between what is the case (e.g., that it is a man in the distance) and an agent's beliefs about what is the case (i.e., that thing in the distance is a man). False belief, on the other hand, arises whenever there is an incorrect correspondence between what is the case (e.g., the thing in the distance is a statue) and an agent's beliefs about what is the case (i.e., that thing in the distance is a man).

The explanation of false belief provided in the *Philebus* is the same as the Wax Block's; false belief arises by mistaking a present perception with what an agent believes to be the case. Couched in the *Philebus*' terms, false belief arises by mismatching what is

⁶⁰ Plato also seems to accept the assumptions of the model at the end of the *Theaetetus* (see 209c4-9)

inscribe in the mind's book with what is presently being perceived. In this way, the underlying account of how false beliefs occurs relies on the same assumption explained above (WBK; Section 4.1). Furthermore, Plato's definition of judgments, which occurs in the Wax Block model, is utilized heavily in his account in the *Philebus*. In this regard, the overall contention is the same as the one argued for above; the emphasis is on judgments and how judgments can fail to accurately describe or provide accurate descriptions of what is given by sense perception.

So how is this similarity between the accounts given in the *Theaetetus* and the *Philebus* important for determining whether the Wax Block Model is Plato's own attempt at providing a solution the problem of false beliefs or if he is criticizing someone else's account? First, as Chappell admits the problem of false beliefs was, at the very least, not a problem for Plato at sometime in his career. If this is the case and it is assumed with Waterfield that the *Philebus* was composed earlier than the *Theaetetus*, then it may very well be the case that Plato is rethinking some (if not all) of his earlier assumptions about what constitutes false beliefs. The similarities between the accounts in the *Philebus* and the *Theaetetus* make it unlikely that Plato would accept the same account of false belief after he has already criticized it. His target, then, may not be empiricism, but his own earlier views about how to account for false beliefs. Second, even if we do not assume that the *Philebus* was written earlier than the *Theaetetus*, Plato may very well have found some of the Wax Block Model satisfactory (as Socrates and Theaetetus seem to say) and utilized what he does find satisfactory in a later dialogue. If this is the case, then it is hard to see why Plato would use, later in his career, something which he finds unsavory.

So, to sum up, it does not seem all that apparent that Plato is arguing against someone else's account of false belief. The evidence seems to suggest that this is Plato's own attempt at account for false belief. The reasons for this are first, there are some important disanalogies between the empiricism suggested by Chappell and Cornford, second, there is evidence from the *Philebus* that Plato held onto some of the same theses as he does in the Wax Block passage. As stated, above, if this is the case, it is hard to see Plato as arguing against empiricist versions of his own theses.

4.3. The “Gross Mistake” Again and the Rejection of the Wax Block

As I have stated in the previous chapter (Section 3.2.3), Plato is often thought to be guilty of fallacious reasoning in the *allodoxia* model. There (Section 3.2.4) I argued that Plato can be acquitted of any fallacy by supposing that he validly deduces a *de re* construction to a *de dicto* construction. This same charge has likewise been leveled against Plato in his refutation of the Wax Block. Since this is the case, let us review the charges.

At 196a1 – b6, Socrates and Theaetetus have the following exchange:

Soc: Well, now, take the case where a man is considering five and seven within himself – I don’t mean seven and five men, or anything of that sort, but five and seven themselves; the records, as we allege, in that waxen block, things among which it is not possible that there should be false judgment. Suppose he is talking to himself how many they are. Do you think that in such a case it has ever happened that one man thought they were eleven and said so, while another thought and said that they were twelve? Or do all men say and all men think that they are twelve?

The: Oh, good Heavens, no; lots of people would make them eleven. And with larger numbers they go wrong still more often – for I suppose what you say is intended to apply to all numbers.

Soc: Quite right. And I want you to consider whether what happens here is not just this, that a man thinks that twelve itself, the one in the waxen block, is eleven.

According to Bostock, Plato, in the refutation of the Wax Block Model takes the following two sentences as equivalent:

(1) *De Re*: Thinking of 11 that it is 12.

(2) *De Dicto*: Thinking 11 is 12.

Socrates certainly seems to suggest that in thinking that $5 + 7$ is 11 an agent is therefore thinking that 12 is 11 (196b5-6). But is this Plato’s argument? Bostock certainly thinks it is. As he argues,

No one in his senses would worry about how it is possible to believe that $7 + 5$ is 11 unless he also had an argument which appeared to show that this was not possible. Our text makes it quite clear what that argument is, namely a fallacious application of Leibniz’s Law. Since $7 + 5$ is actually 12, it seems that to believe that $7 + 5$ is 11 must be the same as to believe that 12 is 11, but surely no one could believe that (196a-b)? (Bostock, 183).

Similar to the same fallacious reasoning in the *allodoxia* model, Bostock argues that the same fallacious reasoning occurs here (196a1-b6). Since Plato derives (2) from (1) by taking (2) as *de re* (i.e., Theaetetus thinks of 12 that it is 11), Plato construes (2) as impossible only by taking (2) as *de dicto* (i.e., Theaetetus thinks that 12 is 11). So, like the reasoning in the *allodoxia* model, Plato is equivocating between the *de re* and *de dicto*

readings of (2). Bostock believes that this failure to distinguish between these two readings is problematic for Plato.

When someone believes that the number which is the sum of 7 and 5 is 11, it is not illegitimate to report him as believing that 12 is 11, so long as it is clear that this is to be taken as a *de re* report. That is, so long as one means by it that, concerning a number which is actually 12, he believes that it is 11, with no implication as to how he is thinking of the number in question. But of course it is equally possible, and perhaps more natural, to take the statement 'He believes that 12 is 11' as a *de dicto* report, meaning that he says to himself '12 is 11', and when it is taken in this way it does not follow from the premiss that he says to himself '7 + 5 is 11' (Bostock, 183).

The problem is much clearer when we consider bigger numbers, as Theaetetus suggests. Suppose that Heraclitus is thinking that $1230 + 1242$ is 2462, does it follow from this that Heraclitus is thinking that 2462 is 2472? According to Bostock, it is this type of reasoning which leads Plato down the wrong road and therefore is one of the reasons why he cannot find a satisfactory account of how false belief is possible.

Gokhan Adalier argues that Bostock's assessment is mistaken, that Plato is not confused and does not fallaciously utilize the *de re/de dicto* distinction (Adalier, 8-11). For Adalier, there is evidence in the Wax Block model and in the discussion of false belief that Plato is aware of the distinction between *de re* and *de dicto*. As Adalier argues, Plato is quite clear that "judges that" ought to read as *de dicto* (Adalier, 9). In the *allodoxia* model, Plato states that making judgments and thinking is "speaking to oneself." The same emphasis is again reiterated in the Wax Block model. As Adalier states, "And when we come to the section on the refutation of the Wax Block, the very section in which he is supposed to equivocate between the *de dicto* and the *de re* construals of judgment, we find the same emphasis on judging and thinking as speech" (Ibid). Adalier argues that it is because of a reliance and emphasis on judging and thinking as internal speech which makes it clear that Plato intends the refutation of the Wax Block to be construed as a *de dicto* construction.

Adalier is correct in his assessment of the Wax Block Model. There is sufficient evidence that Plato is aware of such a distinction. For instance, Socrates explicitly tells Theaetetus that in adding $5 + 7$, Theaetetus should not consider thinking of or judging that the sum of 5 men and 7 men is 11. "Well, now, take the case where a man is considering five and seven himself – I don't mean seven men and five men, or anything of that sort," (196a1-3). Plato does explicitly consider only cases in which an agent is

having an internal dialogue with himself. “Suppose he is talking to himself about them, and asking himself how many they are” (196a5-6).

As we will see in the Aviary Model (Section 4.5 & 4.6), the same example is used to support that model and to overcome the problem which the Wax Block model could not overcome, namely, how can the Wax Block Model account for *a priori* mistakes. As I shall argue in Section 4.6, the difficulty which Bostock levels against Plato can be accounted for because Plato holds that numbers such as seven and five are complex, i.e., that they are composed of individual units; in the case of the number five, five units; in the case of the number seven, seven units.⁶¹ Now, if an agent has the imprints of five and seven in his waxen block and knows that each is composed of five and seven units respectively, Plato argues that it is impossible for an agent to think that the sum of five and seven units is 11. In other words, the sum of five and seven units is twelve and to confuse this sum with 11 would be, as Case 1 of the first puzzle argues, tantamount to knowing and not knowing the same thing. For Plato if an agent is thinking of what the sum of 7 and 5 (and knows both) is, he must also be thinking of something else he knows, namely, 12. Plato takes 7 and 5 as equivalent to 12, so for an agent to mistake this sum as 11 would be to confuse two known things, namely 12 and 11. But this, as the first puzzle argued, is impossible; an agent cannot mistake two things which are known. Plato’s question in the refutation of the Wax Block is: how can an agent be thinking of the sum of 5 and 7 and not be thinking of 12? Plato’s answer is that an agent cannot; he cannot mistake it for 11. So, Plato here is not committing the “gross mistake” that Bostock attributes to him; but is merely treating the judgment that eleven is twelve as a *de dicto* belief report. So, Plato can be seen as taking (1) and (2) as equivalent if we read these as *de dicto*.

Furthermore, contra Bostock, Plato is worried how it could be possible for someone to judge that $5 + 7$ is 11 because he is trying to figure how conceptual mistakes may be possible. Remember that for Plato, the purpose of the false belief passage is to show, contrary to Protagoras, how mistakes may be possible. To show this Plato not only needs to show that perceptual mistakes are possible but also cognitive mistakes. His

⁶¹ This suggestion is similar to Cornford’s notion of complex ‘pieces of knowledge’ (see Section 4.6). However, contrary to Cornford, Plato does not miss this suggestion but argues against it (in partial agreement with Hackforth).

motive in the Wax Block is to figure how mistakes of both kinds can be possible. In this way, to completely refute Protagoras' denial of falsehood he would need to cover both.

4.4. Protagoras and the Wax Block

As I have stated in the first and third chapters, part of the reason for the discussion of false belief in the *Theaetetus* is that Plato wants to show that Protagoras is wrong to claim that false beliefs are impossible. In section 4.2 I argued that Plato is not refuting empiricists' attempts at explaining the possibility of false beliefs and that Plato accepts, in the *Theaetetus* and *Philebus*, the basic argument of the Wax Block. If this is the case, then something else must be happening if it is not an extended refutation of an empiricist's model of falsity.

In Chapter 3 I argued that the *allogoxia* is intended as a response to a Protagorean puzzle against the possibility of false belief. There I argued that Plato attempted to show that it is possible to 'judge what is not' about something which is. But this attempt failed because of the trappings of the first puzzle; Plato could not see how an agent could have two objects before the mind and yet mistake one for the other.

The same trapping happens in the Wax Block Model; it cannot account for *a priori* mistakes because an agent would both know and not know the same object (Case 1). However, prior to arguing that the Wax Block fails because it lacks scope, Socrates and Theaetetus seem satisfied with its results. They can overcome at least some of the problematic cases of the first puzzle, namely, that it is possible to mistake a known object for an unknown object. So, while the Wax Block is rejected because it cannot account for Case 1 from the first puzzle, some of the first puzzle's contentions can be rejected.

But contrary to Chappell, Plato does find most of the Wax Block satisfactory (Chappell, 181-82). However, Chappell's assertion that 196c4-6 tells us that Plato holds that "false judgment is not the interchange of understanding and perception" is clearly wrong (Chappell, 181). As Chappell states

On the more general proposal that the Wax Tablet is successful for perceptual beliefs, even if only for them, the obvious objection is to quote 196c4-6: "So then, we will have to show that false belief is something other than the interchange of thought and perception. For if false belief *was* the interchange of thought and perception, we could never be deceived in our thoughts taken on their own." This passage tells us quite plainly that Plato thinks that false belief is not the interchange of understanding and perception. "Is not" does not mean "is only sometimes": Plato's point is that

the Wax Tablet model for false belief does not work *at all*: not that it works for belief about perceptual objects but not elsewhere (His translation and italics, 181-182).

Chappell's assertion that Plato wholesale rejects cases of false belief as an interchange of perceptions and thoughts is wholly dependent on how one reads this quote. According to my understanding of Plato's claim here, he is arguing that *all* false judgments cannot be accounted for by supposing that false judgments are always cases of the mismatch of perception and thought; there are other cases which this explanation fails to cover, namely, the mismatch of thoughts with thoughts. Plato's argument here is a simple *modus Tollens*; if *all* false belief is the interchange of thought and perception, then false belief cannot occur *a priori*. However, false beliefs do occur *a priori*. So, *all* false belief is not the interchange of perception and thought. Plato's argument here is quite simple and points to the claim that some cases of false belief can be accounted for.

Furthermore, if Plato does not accept at least some cases of false belief as the mismatch of perception and thought, then it is hard to see why he does not directly refute that suggestion but instead argues that it leaves out other cases where false belief does occur. So, Chappell is wrong to assert that Plato is not satisfied with some of the Wax Block Model. As I have argued for in the previous section, it is because of this satisfaction with this aspect of the Wax Block that Plato adheres to it elsewhere (e.g., in the *Philebus* and *Theaetetus* 209c4-9).

Since Plato does find some of the considerations in the Wax Block satisfactory, there must be some reason why he thinks so. It may be supposed that one reason why Plato holds that the Wax Block is satisfactory to some extent is that he has found a way to counter not only some of the considerations of the first puzzle but also has found a way to refute Protagoras' denial of falsehood.

The presentation of the Wax Block is clearly the most positive part of the discussion of false belief. Socrates and Theaetetus' satisfaction with the claim that some false belief can be accounted for by supposing false belief to be a mismatch of perception and thought (cases 15-17) points to Plato's reasons for accepting it. If Plato is to fully refute Protagoras, he needs not only to show that it is possible to judge what is not about what is, but he will also need to show that false perceptions are possible. That is, he needs to show that an agent can be wrong about what he perceives.

The second puzzle includes such a denial; that false perceptions are impossible. And as I have argued in the third chapter, the second puzzle relies on the assumption that perceptions must be about something which is (Protagoras' Assumption; see Chapter 3). There Plato also made a distinction between judging what is not about something which is and judging what is not by itself. Plato attempts to reject the former in the *allodoxia* model. However, here his motivation is the same. Plato refers to the mismatch of perception with memory as *allodoxia*, that is, as thinking or judging something other than what something actually is. In describing how such a mistake may be possible, Socrates likens it to putting the wrong shoe on the wrong foot.

It is like people putting their shoes on the wrong feet, or like what happens when we look at things in mirrors, when left and right change places. It is then that 'heterodoxy' [*allodoxia*] or false judgment arises (193c6-d2).

Plato is here and elsewhere describing the mechanism for mistaken perceptions. Generally the explanation is *allodoxia*, thinking or believing that one thing is another. Here in the Wax Block model, the explanation of false perceptions is a particular instance of this general schema. False belief, as thinking or believing that one thing is another, occurs by judging that a perceptible object is something other than what it is. For instance, in seeing a man in the distance who is in fact Socrates, Theaetetus perceives Socrates as Theodorus and believes that Socrates is Theodorus. In this way then, the false perception of Socrates as Theodorus and any false perceptions which accord with the possible cases of misidentification (cases 15-17) can be accounted for by utilizing the mechanism as explained by the argument of the Wax Block.

This can be shown more explicitly by reconsidering cases 15-17. If Plato is to show, contrary to Protagoras, that an agent can have false perceptions and believe something other than what one perceives, he will need to show that such cases are possible. For instance, case 17 explains false perceptions by showing that an agent can know two objects (Theodorus and Theaetetus) and perceive both and yet still mistake one for the other. This occurs by putting one "visual perception" into the wrong memory imprint, i.e., by putting the Theodorus "visual perception" into the Theaetetus memory imprint. In this way, an agent can misperceive an object by misaligning (or metaphorically "putting the wrong shoe on the wrong") what is presently being perceived with what is recorded in memory.

Such cases of misidentification are denied by Protagorean Relativism. Every perception is subjectively true for the one who perceives. Now if Plato argues that there are cases in which an agent can be wrong about a perception by explaining false perceptions as a mismatch of a “visual perception” and the knowledge of an object, then Protagoras is refuted; there can be, contrary to Protagoras false perceptions and likewise false beliefs.

So, while the Wax Block fails to account for *a priori* mistakes, Plato seems satisfied with the account’s explanation of false perceptions. Since this is the case, Plato proposes a final model of false belief to account for *a priori* mistakes.

4.5 The Aviary Model Synopsis

After Socrates argues that the Wax Block Model is an unsatisfactory account because it does not cover every case of false belief, Socrates again chastises himself.

Well, then, don’t you think it is a shameless thing that we, who don’t know what knowledge is, should pronounce on what knowing is like? But as a matter of fact, Theaetetus, for some time past our whole method of discussion has been tainted. Time and again we have said ‘we are acquainted with’ and ‘we are not acquainted with’, ‘we know’ and ‘we do not know’, as if we could to some extent understand one another while we are still ignorant of what knowledge is (196d11-e6).

When Theaetetus agrees that it will be impossible to proceed with the discussion without first defining knowledge Socrates proceeds to offer a notion of “what knowing is like” (197a5-6).

Socrates makes a distinction between the “having of knowledge” and “the possession of knowledge”. Contrary to “what people are saying nowadays”, Socrates argues that it is more intelligible to say that an agent knows something whenever he possesses a piece of knowledge rather than the conventional notion of having knowledge. Socrates utilizes the following example to highlight the distinction:

Well, then, to ‘possess’ doesn’t seem to me to be the same as to ‘have’. For instance, suppose a man has bought a coat and it is at his disposal but he is not wearing it; we would not say that he ‘has’ it on, but we would say he ‘possesses’ it (197c1 – 5).

This third and final model that Socrates proposes seeks to explain the failure of the wax model, that is, it seeks to account for false belief arising from *a priori* considerations. As stated above, Socrates begins the explanation of this model by drawing a distinction

between having something and possessing something. Here he sees possessing something as the being in possession of it and distinguishes it from actually having something, in the sense of grasping it or having it at the present moment. For example, suppose I own a coat and I am not wearing it now, in this sense I have it, that is, I could grab it or have it at the present moment if I went over and put it on (197b9). So a preliminary distinction is made here between two senses of ‘having something’ (197c8).⁶²

As Socrates states we can, likewise, extend this distinction to claims concerning knowledge (197c1). That is, one could possess an item of knowledge, i.e., have it stored in one’s mind as a memory, and yet not have it, i.e., in the sense of not having that bit of knowledge before the mind. For example, I may inwardly possess the claim that ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’ in the sense that it is stored in my memory. In this way, it is known; I could recall that bit of knowledge if I so desired. But when I attend to the claim that ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’, i.e., have it before my mind, I know it in the sense that I am actively attending or thinking of the claim that ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’. Such a distinction is supposed to account for *a priori* mistakes. However, before doing so Socrates explains the process of attending to items of knowledge with another analogy.

According to this analogy, our minds are like an aviary full of birds.

Well a little while ago we were equipping our souls with I don’t know what sort of waxen device. Now let us make in each soul a sort of aviary of all kinds of birds; some in flocks separate from the other, some in small groups, and others flying about singly here and there among all the rest (197d6-11)

Plato wants us to imagine that the different birds represent different pieces of knowledge flying around in the aviary. Furthermore, the aviary is empty at birth and we acquire new birds or pieces of knowledge through learning. In this way then knowledge arises whenever we acquire a bird and ‘shut it up in the pen’ (197e4). So, whenever we want a bit of knowledge or bird that is stored in the aviary, we ‘catch it’ or attend to that bit of knowledge (198a). We can therefore apply the previous distinction between potential knowledge and actual knowledge to the aviary model. In other words, it can be said that I “have” knowledge whenever I have a bird or piece of knowledge trapped in the aviary,

⁶² As Russell Dancy has pointed out in conversation, it is mistaken view the distinction between two senses of ‘having something’ as a distinction between *actual* and *potential* knowledge. The reason for this is that Plato has no notion of such a distinction between *actual* and *potential* knowledge. Such a distinction is derived from Aristotle, not Plato. For more on this see Guthrie 111-113.

i.e., stored in my mind. Likewise, I can activate any of one these pieces of knowledge stored in the aviary by grasping for that item, that is, by activating one of the many birds flying around in my aviary, I can grasp any one of them and therefore be said to have that bird (198d), i.e., know that piece of knowledge.

Here, as Plato did in the Wax Block Model, he redefines what counts as knowing something. An agent knows something, according to the Aviary Model, in two ways:

(SK) S knows x whenever x is stored in memory and x can be recalled.

(AK) S knows x whenever S is thinking of x from memory.⁶³

Given this distinction between actual and potential knowledge, Socrates argues that false belief occurs whenever an agent catches the wrong piece of stored knowledge.

When he is hunting for one piece of knowledge, it may happen, as they fly about, that he makes a mistake and gets hold of one instead of another. It was this that happened when he thought eleven was twelve. He got hold of the knowledge of eleven that was in him, instead of the knowledge of twelve, as you might catch a ring-dove instead of a pigeon (199b2-7).

Since false judgment occurs by catching the wrong bird (e.g., 11 instead of 12), true judgment occurs by catching the correct one.

But when he gets hold of the one he is trying to get hold of, then he is free from error; when he does that, he is judging what is. In this way, both true and false judgment exist; and the things that worried us before no longer stand in our way (199b9-c2).

So according to the Aviary Model, true and false judgments can be accounted for. Since Socrates argues that false judgment occurs by a confusion of stored knowledge and activated knowledge, he states that the first puzzle's contention that it is impossible to mistake two known objects is wrong.

Yes; we have now got rid of this 'not knowing what one knows'. For we now find that at no point does it happen that we do not possess what we possess, whether we are in error about anything or not (199c5-7).

Plato here argues that Case 1 from the Knowing/Not-Knowing Puzzle is wrong. It is possible to mistake two known objects and judge that one is the other. But this can only be accomplished if we make the distinction between attending to what one knows (i.e., activating a piece of stored knowledge) and having what one knows stored in memory.

The only example used to explain how such mistakes may be possible is a reiteration of the example used in the Wax Block Model. In adding $7 + 5$, an agent catches 11 instead of 12 and therefore mistakes 11 as 12 (199b2-7). So, according to this

⁶³ Here (SK) and (AK) refer to stored knowledge and activated knowledge respectively.

example an agent has 7, 5, 11 and 12 stored in his aviary and when adding 7 to 5 he grabs 11 instead of 12 and therefore confuses 11 as 12.

But like all the other attempts to account for the possibility of false belief, the Aviary Model likewise fails. Socrates argues that even though this new attempt is promising, it still fails to overcome Case 1 from the first puzzle.

To begin with, it follows that a man who has knowledge of something is ignorant (ἀγνοεῖν) of this very thing not through want of knowledge but actually in virtue of this knowledge. Secondly, he judges that this is something else and that the other is it. Now surely this is utterly unreasonable; it means that the soul, when knowledge becomes present to it, knows nothing and is wholly ignorant. According to this argument, there is no reason why an accession of ignorance should not make one know something, or of blindness make one see something, if knowledge is ever going to make a man ignorant (199d1-9).

The refutation of the Aviary Model is obscure⁶⁴. However, it seems to argue that the solution to cognitive mistakes fails for two reasons.⁶⁵ First, when an agent reaches into his aviary to grab the 12 ‘bird’ and instead grabs the 11 ‘bird’, Socrates is arguing that an agent effectively is both ignorant of 11 and knows 11. That is, in having 11 and 12 stored in the aviary and thinking of what the sum of 5 and 7 is, the agent activates something he knows, namely 11, and thinks that 11 is the sum of 5 and 7. In this way, the agent both knows and does not know 11. Second, when an agent reaches into the aviary to find the sum of seven and five, he thinks that something he knows 12 is something else he knows 11. What this means is that whenever an agent mistakenly grabs 11 instead of 12, he both knows 11 because it is stored in the aviary and is ignorant of 11 because he thinks that 11 is the sum of 7 and 5. So, in this regard, the aviary model is no help in solving the problem of how *a priori* mistakes may be possible; we are still effectively trapped by the assumptions of the first puzzle.

After Socrates argues that the Aviary Model cannot account for the possibility of *a priori* mistakes, Theaetetus suggests that the way around Socrates’ refutation is to suppose that there are both knowledge ‘birds’ and ignorance ‘birds’ flying around in the aviary.

Well, perhaps, Socrates, it wasn’t a happy thought to make the birds only pieces of knowledge. Perhaps we ought to have supposed that there are pieces of ignorance also flying about in the soul along with them, and what happens is that the hunter sometimes catches a piece of knowledge and

⁶⁴ As Cornford states (136) (see below 4.5)

⁶⁵ Although as Adalier points out, it is hard to see how the two are different (Adalier, 30). Both reasons seem to rest on the same claim; that an agent is both ignorant and has knowledge of the same thing.

sometimes a piece of ignorance concerning the same thing; and the ignorance makes him judge falsely, while the knowledge makes him judge truly (199e1-7).

Theaetetus' suggestion is that whenever an agent mistakes 12 as 11 he reaches into his aviary and grabs the ignorance bird "the sum of 5 and 7 is 11" instead of the knowledge bird "the sum of 5 and 7 is 12". In this way, he judges falsely by grabbing the wrong bird in the aviary.

However, Socrates objects. He states that this falls to the same trappings as the previous objection.

So, after going a long way around, we are back at our original difficulty. Our friend the expert in refutation will laugh. 'My very good people,' he will say, 'do you mean that a man who knows both knowledge and ignorance is thinking that one of them which he knows is the other which he knows? Or is it that he knows neither, and judges the one he doesn't know to be the other which he doesn't know? Or is it that he knows one and not the other, and judges that the one he knows is the one he doesn't know? Or does he think that the one he doesn't know is the one he does?' (200a12-b8).

Socrates is arguing here that if we take Theaetetus' suggestion seriously we will suffer from the same claims leveled against false belief in the first puzzle. That is, if Theaetetus is right that there are ignorance and knowledge birds flying around in the aviary and an agent grabs an ignorance bird and thinks it is a knowledge bird he would be effectively either mistaking something known for something known, or something unknown for something known, or something unknown for something unknown. As Socrates states here, Theaetetus' suggestion falls to the consideration of the first puzzle.

Since the Aviary Model also fails to account for *a priori* mistakes, no other attempt is given. Socrates states that it is because of a lack of a satisfactory definition of knowledge that they cannot account for the possibility of false belief.

Then don't you think, my boy, that the argument is perhaps dealing out a little proper chastisement, and showing us that we were wrong to leave the question about knowledge and proceed to inquire into false judgment first? While as a matter of fact it's impossible to know this until we have an adequate grasp of what knowledge is (200c6-d3).

4.5. Complex and Simple Birds

Cornford thinks that Plato misses a key point in the refutation of the Aviary Model (Cornford, 137). As he argues, if the notion of "misfitting" two objects from the Wax Block is included in the Aviary Model, a satisfactory account of false judgments can be given. As he states,

To this we might reply that an analogous explanation by the misfitting of two pieces of knowledge could be given, of the unexplained term ‘piece of knowledge’ were taken in a sufficiently wide sense (Cornford, 137).

Cornford thinks that the expression “piece of knowledge” is ambiguous in the Aviary Model; it could either refer merely to 11 and 12 but also to the expression “the sum of 7 and 5.” Widening the scope of the expression “piece of knowledge” may have helped Plato find a solution. As Cornford further states,

The expression covers objects (such as numbers) that I am acquainted with, as well as truths that I have been taught. All these are in my aviary. Does it also include a complex object such as ‘the sum of 7 and 5’? This ought to be included; it consists in terms I am acquainted with and it is before my mind when I ask: what is the sum of 7 and 5? It is this object that I identify with 11 when I make my false judgment. If it is a ‘piece of knowledge’ and contained in the aviary, then the false judgment can be explained as the wrong putting-together of two pieces of knowledge, as in the waxen block false judgment was the putting-together of a fresh impression and the wrong memory imprint. The result will be a false judgment entirely composed of ‘pieces of knowledge’ (terms I am acquainted with). It thus seems that the aviary apparatus is, after all, as adequate to explain false judgment where no perception is involved as the waxen block was to explain false judgment involving perception (Ibid).

As the above quote indicates, Cornford holds the Aviary Model is a satisfactory account of false judgments only if ‘pieces of knowledge’ includes complex terms such as ‘the sum of 7 and 5’. Furthermore, if ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ is treated as complex, then mistaking this for 11 can be accounted for by supposing that an agent has the ‘piece of knowledge’ ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ stored in memory and 11 stored in memory and mistakes one for the other. That is, puts 11 into the wrong memory imprint.

Cornford argues that Plato has missed this suggestion. “It is hard to resist the impression that Plato has overlooked this explanation, because he does not recognise ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ as a ‘piece of knowledge’” (Cornford, 137-38). Hackforth argues that Cornford’s argument is not correct. As Hackforth argues, “the knowledge that $7 + 5 = 12$ and $7 + 4$ (or $6 + 5$) = 11 are respectively *included* in the ‘knowledge of 12 and 11’” (Hackforth, 28; his italics). Contrary to Cornford’s suggestion that ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ and ‘12’ are different ‘pieces of knowledge’, Hackforth argues that Plato treats these as identical; the sum of 7 and 5 is just 12 (the sum of 7 and 4 is 11, etc.). Since Hackforth argues that they are identical he does not hold that “there could be any question of ‘fitting together’ such a piece of knowledge as $7 + 5 = 12$ with a *different* piece of knowledge, viz., the ‘knowledge of 12’. They are no different pieces: they are the same piece (Ibid; his italics). Hackforth is arguing that Plato is stating that what makes the ‘fitting together’

of the imprints of ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ and ‘11’ is that ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ is the same piece of knowledge as 12 and to mistake ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ as ‘11’ is the same as mistaking 12 and 11. This, according to Hackforth, is Plato’s argument. So, contrary to Cornford, Plato is not “overlooking” anything, but is attempting find out how two equivalent pieces of knowledge can be mistaken (Ibid).

Lee objects to Hackforth’s contention that Plato treats ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ as equivalent to ‘12’. As Lee states,

For then the bird 12 becomes a very complex object indeed, as the number of sums of smaller numbers that make up 12 is large; and the suggestion becomes less plausible the larger the number, for we cannot exclude large numbers, as P. himself at 198b8 speaks of knowing all numbers (πάντα ἀριθμῶς). Further, in what sense can the knowledge of 12 or 11 be said to ‘include’ a knowledge of their sums? Does it mean that if I have 12 in mind in mind (as a bird in the hand) I must also be conscious of all the possible sums that make it up? (Lee, 209).

Lee’s objection against Hackforth is that if ‘12’ and ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ is equivalent, then it may also be conjectured that ‘12’ includes all the possible sums which make it up. Furthermore, if an agent is thinking of the number ‘12’, Hackforth’s claim may entail that an agent is also thinking of all the possible sums of the number 12 or 11 (Ibid). Lee, although he does not say as much, is attributing to Hackforth the view that if an agent is thinking of any number, then he knows everything about that number. That is, Lee appears to be attributing to Hackforth the view that knowledge of number is an all or nothing affair. An agent either knows everything about a number (e.g., all the sums which make it up, whether it is prime, etc) or knows nothing at all about. In this way, Lee is attributing to Hackforth an acquaintance view similar to the one defended by Fine.

However, while Lee may be right to suppose that knowledge of a number such as 11 or 12 need not include all the possible sums, he is wrong to suppose that Plato does not treat the expression “the sum of 5 and 7” and “12” as equivalent. Hackforth is right to suppose that this is Plato’s contention in the Aviary Model. But we need not treat the knowledge of the number 12 as entailing the knowledge of all possible sums of 12.

We can, however, limit what counts as knowledge of the numbers 11 and 12. It need not include knowledge of all the possible sums but merely the knowledge that each number is composed of individual units or ones. That is, we can treat 11 and 12 as complex birds, but not so complex as to entail an acquaintance model of knowledge. By treating knowledge of 12 and 11 as composed of 12 units and 11 units we can see why

Plato holds that such misidentification is impossible. If an agent thinks that the sum of 7 and 5 is 11 he is effectively thinking that something composed of 12 units is composed of 11 units. In this way, Plato argues that it is impossible for an agent to know 12, that it has 12 units, and to know that 7, as composed of 7 units, and 5, as composed of 5 units and make the mistake of thinking that the sum of 7 and 5 is can equal 11.

So, Hackforth's contention that we treat the complex birds "the sum of seven and five" and "12" as equivalent has merit. Plato is attempting to figure out how an agent can be mistaken about two pieces of knowledge, i.e., two things which are known. Like his question in the Wax Block, Plato in the Aviary Model is asking the same question, namely, how can an agent be thinking of the sum of 5 and 7 and not be thinking of 12? While the Aviary Model is intended to answer this question it falters. Plato, as he did in the Wax Block Model, argues that an agent cannot be thinking of the sum of 5 and 7 and not also think of 12. The notion of treating both the expression "the sum of 5 and 7" and "12" as complex "pieces of knowledge" (or as complex birds) highlights Plato's negative answer. For if an agent is thinking of the sum of 5 and 7 he must also be thinking of 12. That is, if an agent is reaching into his birdcage to find out the sum of 5 and 7 he must grab 12. The reason for this is because if an agent knows that the sum of 5 and 7 is 12 he cannot grab 11 since this would be the same as believing that what is 12 is not 12 but is 11. Or to put it another way, he would be thinking that something he knows is something he does not know. So, the overall purpose of the rejection of the Wax Block and the Aviary Model's is that cognitive mistakes are impossible; whether it is a confusion of two imprints in the waxen block or two birds in the aviary.

CONCLUSION: WHY DOES THE DISCUSSION OF FALSE BELIEF END IN APORIA?

Like the *Theaetetus* as a whole, the discussion of false belief ends without a satisfactory account of how false belief is possible (200c6-d4); it ends in *aporia*. Plato provides few reasons why no satisfactory resolution is found. However, at the end of the discussion Plato suggests that the reason why the explanation has failed is because of a lack of an appropriate definition of knowledge.

In this final chapter I will both summarize the main argument of this project and survey a few of the reasons offered by commentators for the failure of Plato's account of falsity. After doing so, I shall argue that Plato's account fails because of the assumptions of the first puzzle, namely, that Plato could not see how an agent could have an object before the mind and yet fail to know it in the sense of being able to mistake it for something else. In this regard it fails also because he does not have the appropriate syntactical and metaphysical notions⁶⁶ which can enable an agent to be thinking of an object (have knowledge of) and yet have false beliefs about it.

As I have stated previously (Chapters 1,2, and 4), Chappell holds that the discussion of false belief does not fail for Plato⁶⁷ but merely for his empiricist opponents. But as I have argued this reading of the discussion is mistaken for the following reasons:

First, there is good reason to think that Plato is the one bothered by the problem of false beliefs and not his empiricist opponents. As I state in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, Plato does not have an adequate account of how false belief can be possible if false belief is thinking what is not. The *alldoxia* model is an attempt to circumvent the claim that an agent cannot think about what is not about something which is. In Chapter 3 I state that this response fails because Plato could not see how an agent can be thinking of two things (i.e., have them before the mind) and yet mistake one for the other. For these two reasons

⁶⁶ By metaphysical notions I do not mean that Plato, as Cornford states, could have solved the problem of false belief in the *Theaetetus* by invoking the Forms. I merely mean that Plato does not have the analysis of the difference between being and non-being that he does in the *Sophist*.

⁶⁷ Apparently, although Chappell does not say this much, Plato has a solution up his sleeve but is not letting us in on it.

(that Plato is trapped by Parmenides' Assumption and that Plato could not see how someone could be thinking of something and be wrong about it) Plato's purpose in the false belief passage is to overcome these difficulties. In this way then Plato is the one in the aporetic state; not his empiricist opponents.

Second, even though Chappell argues that the Wax Block and Aviary Models are empiricist attempts to explain falsity, neither should be read as such. For example, Plato seems to accept most of what the Wax Block has to say about how false judgment arises. He does so not only in the *Theaetetus* but in the *Philebus* as well (See Chapter 4). Furthermore, I state there (Chapter 4) that the Wax Block is not the sort of empiricist picture that Chappell thinks it is. It is Plato's attempt to account for falsity. This attempt has a distinct purpose; show that Protagoras is wrong to assume that false perceptions are impossible. Part of the Wax Block's purpose is to show, contrary to Protagoras, that an agent can be wrong about what he perceives. So, Plato's target is an empiricist, namely Protagoras, but it is not an empiricist account of how false belief is possible, it is Plato's own. So, throughout this project I have argued that Plato is the one bothered by the problem of false belief and the puzzles and models of false belief are not empiricist accounts.

Likewise, as I have stated (Chapters 1 and 2), Fine holds that the purpose of the false belief passage is to reject a certain view of knowledge, namely an acquaintance model of knowledge, and that the passage ends in *aporia* because Plato is rejecting such a model of knowledge. According to Fine, it is Plato's pronouncement at the end of the passage which highlights Plato's rejection of an acquaintance model.

Theaetetus proposes that knowledge is true belief; Socrates then turns to a discussion of false belief and, when he fails to explain it, argues that Theaetetus' definition is faulty; 'it is impossible to know what [false belief is] until one knows what knowledge is' (200d). This suggests that the discussion of false belief is relative to Theaetetus' definition and that since the discussion ended in failure, the definition that guides it is defective (222).

Fine thinks that Socrates' statement at the end of the false belief passage shows that Plato holds that the definition guiding the discussion is faulty. However, this passage need not be read in this way. Socrates' pronouncement comes directly after two attempts to redefine knowledge in such a way as to allow falsity to occur. That is, in the Wax Block and Aviary Models, Plato argues that knowledge is the recalling of a stored memory and

that falsity can be accounted for either by mismatching a stored memory with a perception, or by activating the wrong piece of stored knowledge. Plato may be saying here, that neither account can explain the relationship between knowledge and its objects. In this way, then, Plato is arguing that without a satisfactory account of knowledge we cannot explain how knowledge and beliefs relate to their objects in such a way as to allow error to occur. But this does not mean that Plato is arguing against an acquaintance model of knowledge which Theaetetus' definition may entail. As I state in Chapters 1 and 2, there are serious difficulties with ascribing an acquaintance model of knowledge in Plato's treatment of falsity. So, I have argued that Fine's reasons for thinking that the explanation ends in aporia are mistaken.

While I have already argued against these two reasons for thinking that the account fails, there have been other reasons given by commentators. According to Cornford, the account fails because it excludes a Platonic definition of knowledge as acquaintance with Forms. As he states, "But the scope of the dialogue excludes all that Plato calls knowledge in the full sense. He breaks off here because he cannot go further without invoking the true objects of knowledge. Plato's own analysis of false judgment will be given in the *Sophist*, when the Forms have been brought into view" (Cornford, 140). So, for Cornford Plato cannot find a satisfactory explanation because of a lack of Forms.

McDowell, however, has a different view. He states that "This is an apt conclusion to the main part of the discussion of false judgment...the discussion has been concerned with the difficulty raised by the argument of 187e-188c. That difficulty depends on exploiting a certain conception of knowledge, and to solve it would require a clear understanding of the kind of knowledge which qualifies terms to be figured in judgements" (McDowell, 226). McDowell is certainly right to think that the discussion is concerned with the problems of the first puzzle and that these problems and assumptions lead to the failure of the account. However, McDowell agrees with Fine that the "conception of knowledge" under consideration is an acquaintance model of knowledge. This I have argued is mistaken. But McDowell is correct to assert that Plato needs an account of how knowledge can relate to its objects so as to allow for false judgments. Whether this requires an adequate definition of knowledge is unclear. But what is clear is

that Plato needs to figure what kind of knowledge will allow objects of our beliefs to be mistaken. That is, he needs an adequate explanation of true and false judgments.

While the account fails in the *Theaetetus*, in Plato's *Sophist* he does provide a positive answer to the problem of false belief. At 236d8 the Eleatic Stranger attributes the roots of the problem to Parmenides.

Stranger: Really, my young friend, this is a very difficult investigation we're engaged in. This appearing, and this seeming but not being, and this saying things but not true things – all these issues are full of confusion, just as they have always been. It's extremely hard, Theaetetus, to say what form of speech we should use to say that there really is such a thing as false saying or believing, and moreover to utter this without being caught in verbal conflict?

Theaetetus: Why?

Stranger: Because this form of speech of ours involves the rash assumption that that which is not is, since otherwise falsity wouldn't come into being. But when we were boys, my boy, the great Parmenides testified to us from start to finish, speaking in both prose and poetic rhythms that

Never shall this force itself on us, that that which is not may be;
While you search, keep your thought far away from this path.

So we have testimony to this (236d8-237b1).⁶⁸

As I stated in section 3.0, it is the reliance on Parmenides' Claim that provoked the Sophists to argue that falsity is impossible. Here, in the *Sophist*, Plato will argue that it is possible, in a way, to state or judge that which is not. But the discussion and solution is difficult and has been subject to much dispute. As Hackforth states "Plato's examination of False statement (*Sophist* 259d – 263d) is, like many of his discussions in the later dialogues, a mixture of complete lucidity and with extreme obscurity" (Hackforth, 56). In the final part of this project I shall briefly compare the solution in the *Sophist* with the failure to account for falsity in the *Theaetetus*. Doing so, will highlight some further reasons why the account may have failed in the *Theaetetus*, even though the purpose of this project is not to analyze the account of falsity in the *Sophist*.

As stated above Plato, in the *Sophist*, offers a solution to the problem of falsehood. Plato begins the solution by first arguing that all statements (*logoi*) are composed of elements, namely, a name (*onoma*) and a verb (*rhema*). As the argument goes, in order for a statement to signify or refer to something it must contain both a name and a verb.

⁶⁸ All translations of Plato's *Sophist* by Nicholas P. White.

With this grammatical distinction at hand, Plato argues, against Parmenides, that ‘what is not’ and ‘what is’ are not contraries (257b3-4). That is, in saying something which is not of something which is, an agent is not speaking of what is not but is saying something which is *different*. As the Eleatic Stranger states, “It seems then that when we say that which is not, we don’t say something contrary to that which is, but only something different from it” (Ibid). According to Parmenides, what is must be and what is not cannot be. Existence and non-existence are opposed to one another; they are contraries. For Parmenides it is not possible for what is to not and what is not to be. In this regard, speech and thought are relegated to what exists, that is, all speech and thought must refer to what exists. With this restriction, Parmenides’ claim entails that false speech is impossible because an agent cannot speak or think about what does not exist. Contrary to Parmenides’ claim, Plato, in the *Sophist*, argues that there is a way to speak and think about what is not. He does so, by arguing that what is not is equated with difference.

With the distinction between names and verbs and the metaphysical distinction between being and non-being as difference, Plato argues that a false statement says something which is not of something which is. That is, it says something about an existent object but attributes to it properties or characteristics which are not true of it. So, Plato treats false belief as *allodoxia*; as thinking/speaking what is not of something which is. The example used in the *Sophist* suggests that true statements/judgments⁶⁹ say something which is true of the things ‘which are’ about something which is and false statements/judgments say something about something which is but say something other or different than the things that are true of it. The Eleatic Stranger highlights this distinction by considering two sentences (A) Theaetetus sits and (B) Theaetetus flies. The former is agreed to be a true statement and the latter false. As the exchange goes,

ES: What quality should we say each of these has?

The: The second one is false, I suppose, and the other one is true.

ES: And the true one says *those that are*, as they are, about you.

The: Of course.

⁶⁹ Plato reiterates the claim in the *Theaetetus* that judgments are just a form of internal speech in the *Sophist*. “Aren’t thought and speech the same, except that what we call thought is speech that occurs without the voice, inside the soul in conversation with itself” (*Sophist*, 263e3-5). Compare with the *Theaetetus* (189e7-190a7).

ES: And the false one says things different from *those that are*.
The: Yes.
ES: So it says *those that are not*, but that they are.
The: I suppose so.
ES: But they're different things that are from the things that are about you – since we said that many beings are about you, and many are not (263b2-10).

In stating something false, according to this account, an agent is speaking about what is (i.e., things that exist) but is attributing those things wrongly to something else which exists. For example, in judging that 'Theaetetus flies' an agent is merely saying something *different* than what is true of Theaetetus. It is not the case that an agent is thinking of what is not "just by itself" when he judges that "Theaetetus flies" but is merely attributing the wrong existent property to something which is. So, Plato provides an account of true and false statements/judgments which can overcome the difficulties of the being/non-being puzzle in the *Theaetetus*. He does so by making certain metaphysical and syntactic distinctions.

So, what is the fundamental difference between the *Theaetetus*' account and the *Sophist*'s? The fundamental difference between these two accounts is that in the latter Plato utilizes certain syntactic and metaphysical notions to account for the possibility of false beliefs. However in the *Theaetetus* such an analysis is not offered. While this is the case, the roots of Plato's answer to the Parmenidian challenge that false speech is impossible can be found in the *Theaetetus*. As I have argued in Chapter 3, the *allogoxia* model is intended to account for beliefs in which an agent is thinking what is not about something which is. While that account fails, it may have failed because Plato lacked the proper metaphysical analysis of the relationship between being and non-being and the proper analysis of sentences which could have allowed him to see that false belief is merely attributing properties to something it does not possess.⁷⁰

I have argued throughout this project that part of Plato's reasons for discussing the possibility of false beliefs in the *Theaetetus* is to reject Protagoras' claim that falsehood is impossible. As I have stated in Chapter 4, Plato, in the Wax Block model seems satisfied with the rejection of Protagoras' claim that false perceptions are impossible. However, Plato argued there that the account does not cover every case of false beliefs and because of this failure to account for *a priori* mistakes the discussion

⁷⁰ See Sedley (131- 134) and White (xvi – xxvii).

ends without a satisfactory resolution to the problem. Part of the reason for this failure is that Plato lacks an appropriate account of how knowledge relates to its objects in such a way as to allow error to occur. Likewise, Plato in the *alldoxia* model has the beginnings of an attempt to overcome Parmenides' Claim that false judgments and speech are impossible because it is impossible to speak or think about what is not. While this claim has no satisfactory resolution in the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist* provides a resolution because of Plato's analysis of being/non-being and the structure of sentences.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I have been a student at Florida State University since 2001. While here, I have received both a masters and doctorate in philosophy. I have also been a graduate instructor since 2004. My research focus is primarily devoted to ancient philosophy, especially Plato. Originally from South Florida, I received my bachelor's degree from Florida Atlantic University in 2001.