Without begging any of the questions of reading or interpretation that arise in connection with *Phaedo* 74BC, we may express Plato's argument as follows:

(1) Particular ἰσα are ἰσα -in-some-deficient-sense.¹
(2) αὐτὰ τὰ ἰσα are not ἰσα -in-some-deficient-sense and ἤ ἰσότης is not deficient-ἰσότης.
(3) Therefore Particular ἰσα are not αὐτὸ τὸ ἱσον.

In view of the dual nature of line (2) of the reasoning, it is advisable to rewrite the whole in the form of two separate arguments.

A. (1) Particular ἰσα are ἰσα-in-some-deficient-sense.
    (2) αὐτὰ τὰ ἰσα are not ἰσα-in-some-deficient-sense.
    (3) Therefore Particular ἰσα are not αὐτὸ τὸ ἱσον.

B. (1) Particular ἰσα are ἰσα-in-some-deficient-sense.
    (2) ἤ ἰσότης is not deficient-ἰσότης.
    (3) Therefore Particular ἰσα are not αὐτὸ τὸ ἱσον.

Clearly, argument A is only valid if Plato means the same by αὐτὰ τὰ ἰσα as he does by αὐτὸ τὸ ἱσον. Argument B is only valid if ἰσα-in-some-deficient-sense is the same as deficient-ἰσότης. (and ἤ ἰσότης is the same as αὐτὸ τὸ ἱσον – which it is.). Now if ἰσα-in-some-deficient-sense were equal to deficient-ἰσότης, presumably for Plato deficient-τὰ ἰσα (as subject rather than complement of a proposition) would equal deficient ἤ ἰσότης (also as subject), and then the Form αὐτὰ τὰ ἰσα would equal αὐτὰ ἤ ἰσότης. Thus if we could show that for Plato αὐτὸ τὸ ἱσον, αὐτὰ τὰ ἰσα and (αὐτὰ) ἤ ἰσότης were three ways of describing one and the same Form and that Plato thought that they could be interchanged without affecting the logic of a problem, it would be clear how he could regard *Phaedo* 74BC as a valid argument.

As it could not be denied that αὐτὸ τὸ ἱσον and αὐτὰ ἤ ἰσότης are both expressions representing the Form of Equal, our problem resolves ¹ By ἰσα-in-some-deficient-sense I mean ἰσα in any way other than perfectly and self-evidently ἰσα at all times, in all respects and to all viewers.
itself into a re-examination of the meaning of \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \). As we have already observed, if this too refers to the Form, the argument in the *Phaedo* is valid for Plato. Such an interpretation, if it can be supported, is therefore the most logical one to accept – and it has been accepted by Mr. Geach,\(^2\) Professor Vlastos,\(^3\) M. Loriaux,\(^4\) Professor Tarrant\(^5\) and Mr. K. W. Mills.\(^6\) But Geach, Vlastos and Mills believe that since Plato uses the plural \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \), he is certain to have thought of this Form as consisting of two or more equal things. It seems to me that Mr. R. S. Bluck\(^7\) is right to cast very grave doubts on whether Plato could have held this view of any Form. Bluck however wishes to go further and believes that \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) is not the name of a Form at all, but is the name of a set of non-sensibles, one of which is the Form, the remainder being “Form-copies”. Although this account of \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) would still enable argument A above to be valid for Plato, it would render argument B valueless, since, as we have shown, that argument depends on the implied identity, for Plato, of \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) with \( \alpha\nu\tau\eta \, \eta\lambda\sigma\tau\nu\tau\varepsilon\).

Bluck’s hesitation at making the Form of Equal two or more equal things is justified, and we should look carefully at the alternative rendering of \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) that he offers. Yet we should be well aware that if his theory is right, Plato’s argument at this point is valueless. We must therefore first examine whether \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) can be interpreted in the way Bluck wishes, and, if it (they) cannot, find an explanation of \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) as the name of a Form which is not open to Bluck’s objections.

Bluck\(^8\) wishes to compare \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) with \( \tau\delta \, \eta\mu\iota\iota \, \mu\gamma\varepsilon\theta\gamma\omicron\varsigma \) at 102D-103D, and brushes aside the objections of Mills. But there is a further objection to this procedure –which, in any case, nothing in the context about \( \alpha\nu\tau\alpha \, \tau\varepsilon\, \iota\sigma\alpha \) would lead us to expect – and that is the “fleeting” nature of the “Form-copy” of greatness in us. *Phaedo* is called “great” (and thus has “greatness in him”) relatively to the smallness of Simmias (102C). Simmias is greater than Socrates because he has “greatness” relatively to Socrates’ smallness. Thus “greatness

---

\(^2\) P. T. Geach, “The Third Man Again”, *Philosophical Review* 65 (1956) 76.
\(^3\) G. Vlastos, “A Reply to Mr. Geach”, *Philosophical Review* 65 (1956) 91.
\(^7\) R. S. Bluck, “Plato’s Form of Equal”, *Phronesis* 4 (1959) 5.
\(^8\) R. S. Bluck, *op. cit.* 6.