

Fernando Pessoa

PHILOSOPHY OF PLATO

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Shall we say that acts (things) are just and good, and that justice and truth do not exist?

Can just acts, good actions precede justice, goodness? — Now either these acts are thus in themselves, just and good; or they are just and good only relatively, only in so far as they are perceived, that is to say, or it is the human mind or the human organization that produces them (at least in collaboration with the object). If the acts be in themselves just and good, since it is not only they which possess goodness and justness, how are they good and just?

If these acts be only relatively just and good how are they relatively just and relatively good? Because we have in us something to judge things thus. Now since one act is more just than another, since one thing is more extended than another, if this be the product of our mind plus the object, what part is the object's, what part our mind's?

Now we observe that in the objects as thus perceived, there are 2 elements: justice and a quantity of justice, in the one case; in the other, extension, space and a certain amount of space.

Which of these is the part of the subject, which of these has origin in the object? One of them, we notice, is constant; the other varies.

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Textos Filosóficos . Vol. I. Fernando Pessoa. (Estabelecidos e prefaciados por António de Pina Coelho.) Lisboa: Ática, 1968 (imp. 1993): 84.