

STUDIES IN PLATO'S METAPHYSICS

Edited by
R. E. Allen

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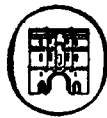
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PREFACE

MY thanks are due to the Clarendon Press for permission to publish articles XI, XVI, XVIII, XX, which originally appeared in *The Classical Quarterly*; to The Johns Hopkins Press for articles I and XVII, which originally appeared in *The American Journal of Philology*; to the Harvard University Press for article VII, which originally appeared in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*; to the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, for article IX, which originally appeared in their *Bulletin*; to the Editor of *Mind* for articles II, III, V, and VI; to the Editors of *The Philosophical Review* for articles IV, XII, XIII, XIV, XIX; and to the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies for articles VIII, X, and XV, which originally appeared in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*.

Bibliography may be found in Professor Cherniss' articles in *Lustrum*, 4 (1959) 5-308, and 5 (1960) 321-615. These contain a survey of the literature on Plato from 1950 to 1957, annotated and conveniently arranged by topic; they mention the main contributions to Platonism in this century.

I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. John L. Ackrill, Professor Alan H. Donagan, Mr. David J. Furley, and Professor Gregory Vlastos, for helpful criticism, encouragement, and advice; to Professor W. K. C. Guthrie and Mr. E. J. Kenney, for other kindnesses; to Mr. Martin Mueller for the *index locorum*; and to Indiana University, which kindly put at my disposal secretarial facilities which made the mechanical burdens of editing much lighter. My greatest debt, as always, is to Ann Usilton Allen, my wife.

R.E.A.

INTRODUCTION

R. E. Allen

THE articles which follow have been selected for their bearing on Plato's metaphysics, especially the metaphysics of the later dialogues and, however one proposes to date it, the *Timaeus*. All of them have been previously published in British and American journals, none before 1930 and most since 1950. It is hoped that, by bringing them together within the covers of a single book, they may be more readily available to a wider public.

These articles speak for themselves, and require no introduction; more accurately, perhaps, they are their own best introduction. The questions they raise are nearly as various as the questions of philosophy itself, for there is no neat budget of issues, precisely circumscribed, in contemporary discussions of Plato, and the reader who wishes to know what is in this book must read it.

There is, however, a general issue which runs through many of the articles which follow, and which may well bear remark. It has to do with the question of whether Plato abandoned or sharply modified the Theory of Forms in later life; or if he did not, whether he consigned it to the back of his philosophical lumber-room, an outworn piece of machinery whose workings his developing and increasingly sophisticated interests had rendered largely obsolete.

This is a historical question; but the answer one gives to it is liable to be much influenced by philosophy. If one believes that the Theory of Forms is in some sense true, and the questions it answers philosophically important, one will naturally be reluctant to think that Plato ever abandoned or discounted it. One will be less reluctant to think this if one supposes the theory false, or more than false, irrelevant—an answer to mistaken questions; for it will then seem reasonable to suppose that a philosopher of Plato's acumen came to see this for himself.

The later view has grown increasingly prominent in recent

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years, and is liable to become still more prominent in future. Its growth has been encouraged by recent developments in philosophy. The present century has seen extraordinary advances in formal logic and logical theory, and increased concern for the bearing of logic on philosophy. The effect of this has been to direct attention once again to the classical problem of universals, to the ancient issues of realism, nominalism, and conceptualism, and, among students of Plato, to prompt new debate on the nature and viability of the Theory of Forms. That debate has been complicated, in recent years, by the rise, primarily in Britain, but also to some degree in America, of conceptual, or non-formal linguistic, analysis. This movement has been heralded as a revolution in philosophy, and perhaps it is; but it is a revolution with a sense for the past, and many of its exponents have come to see in Plato's later dialogues, particularly the *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist*, an anticipation of their own methods and results.

The temper of this movement is diffuse. It does not lend itself to summary statements of doctrine, and its slogans, in so far as it has had slogans, have been mainly expressive of what it is against, not what it is for. In this it is perhaps like most other revolutions, and like them too in that its essence lies rather in an attitude of mind than in a body of doctrine. That attitude is inclined to treat the traditional problems of metaphysics, and especially problems of universals, as problems to be resolved rather than solved, problems which arise from misleading questions, and which yield, or generally yield, to analyses of concepts.

The critic of Plato who shares this temper of mind is liable to view the Theory of Forms as a simple mistake, and to suppose that Plato himself came to think it so. If he did, then the development of his thought in some measure recapitulated, or perhaps better, precapitulated, the development of philosophy in this century. In the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*, or so it is generally agreed, Plato held that universals exist, that they exist both independently of the mind and of the individuals which partake of them, and that abstract nouns are names of which those universals are the *nominata*. In short, the Theory of Forms in the middle dialogues was a realistic theory of universals, a theory with a strong family resemblance to the realistic theories which were prominent in philosophy in the early years of this century. But in the *Parmenides*, Plato subjected that theory to criticism; and the revolu-

tionary interpreter is inclined to believe that those criticisms were valid, and that Plato knew that they were valid. If this is true, the *Parmenides* marks a turning point in his thought, and a turning whose direction can be specified. Negatively, it may be argued, Plato came to realise that the Theory of Forms involved a confusion, in that it treated concepts as though they were somehow like the individuals to which concepts apply; he came to realise that concepts are not individuals, however lofty, that abstract nouns are not names, however strange. Perhaps he even came to realise that meaning is not itself a form of reference or naming. Positively, it may be argued, Plato became aware that there are radical differences in the logical behaviour of concepts, that concepts such as existence and unity, for example, differ in important ways from concepts such as justice or triangularity; and the later dialogues are the record of his attempt to analyse those differences. Plato's thought, then, moved in a new and vitally important direction after the *Parmenides*. It had been dominated in the beginning by a status question, by the question of how concepts were to be located in the world *vis-à-vis* the individuals to which they apply. It turned to a series of network questions, to questions of logical behaviour, logical relations, logical types. At the end of his life, Plato had begun to ask the questions that many philosophers ask today; speculative ontology had largely given place to logic—not formal logic, but the informal logic of concepts in ordinary use. The founder of the *ancien régime* had himself become a revolutionary.

To the revolutionary in philosophy, this portrait of Plato is liable to seem plausible, and perhaps more than plausible, natural. To more conservative critics it will seem implausible, the portrait of a man who abandoned a voyage of discovery for essays in county cartography. But matters of taste or philosophical preference apart, the revolutionary interpretation raises a variety of concrete and specific issues in scholarship. It may be that the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Politicus*, *Philebus*, and *Laws* may be so construed as to support it, or at least not contradict it. In large measure, that remains to be seen. But any view of Plato's development which implies that he abandoned the Theory of Forms, or radically modified it, or ceased to view it as crucial to his philosophy, must deal with the *Timaus* and the *Seventh Epistle*, and in dealing, it must deal radically. If the *Seventh Epistle* is genuine, as almost all

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editors in this century have thought, it was written towards the close of Plato's life; in it, the Theory of Forms, construed very much as in the *Phaedo*, is central in Plato's view of reality. Similarly, the *Timaeus* has been universally regarded as a late dialogue, written well after the *Parmenides*; in it, the Theory of Forms is made central to Plato's cosmology. Thus, if the revolutionary interpretation, even in attenuated form, is to be made good, the *Seventh Epistle*, or at least its 'philosophical digression', must be proved a forgery, and the *Timaeus* either shown to be mythical in such a way as to imply no literal commitment to Forms, or redated to a period before the *Parmenides* and ranked as a middle dialogue. Either that, or the revolutionary must proceed by *tour de force*, and undertake to show that the Theory of Forms was not a realistic theory of universals after all.

These claims will not pass unchallenged; they have already provoked debate and will provoke further debate in future. All of this is to the good. Issues in the scholarship of philosophy have always tended largely, though by no means wholly, to be governed by issues in philosophy itself, and nowhere has this been more true than with Plato. No doubt this has often placed obstacles in the way of learning what Plato actually meant; it has led to anachronism. But it has also immensely deepened our understanding, and in the end, the good outweighs the evil. In late antiquity, Plato became a Plotinian. In the middle ages, he became a Christian. In the last century he first became a Kantian and then a Hegelian. In this century, he became a realist, and then moved towards conceptual analysis. This need not be any matter for surprise. It is part of the genius of Platonism, which makes it perennial, that it can, like a leaping spark, kindle fire in minds of widely different outlook and impel interpretations of widely different kinds. And it is part of the genius of Platonic scholarship that it can absorb those interpretations, take from each of them something of value, and leave it as a permanent deposit for the future. Santayana once remarked that Platonism, if it were ever lost as a tradition, would presently be revived as an inspiration. The reason, perhaps, is that Plato, more than a philosopher, is philosophy itself. So long as men reflect, they will disagree about what he meant, and in their disagreement, or so one may believe, there is health and hope for the future.

I

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ECONOMY OF THE THEORY OF IDEAS

(1936)

H. F. Cherniss

THE objection with which in the *Metaphysics*¹ Aristotle introduces his criticism of the theory of Ideas expresses a difficulty which has tended to alienate the sympathy of most students who approach the study of Plato. The hypothesis, Aristotle says, is a superfluous duplication of the phenomenal world; it is as if one should think it impossible to count a number of objects until that number had first been multiplied. This objection, even tacitly entertained, distorts the motivation of the hypothesis; that it misrepresents Plato's express attitude towards scientific problems, the well-known statement of Eudemus quoted by Simplicius on the authority of Sosigenes amply proves.² The complications of the planetary movements had to be explained, Plato asserted, by working out an hypothesis of a definite number of fixed and regular motions which would 'save the phenomena'. This same attitude is expressed in the *Phaedo* where Socrates explains the method of 'hypothesis' which he used to account for the apparently disordered world of phenomena;³ the result of this method, he says, was the Theory of Ideas.⁴

The phenomena for which Plato had to account were of three kinds, ethical, epistemological, and ontological. In each of these spheres there had been developed by the end of the fifth century doctrines so extremely paradoxical that there seemed to be no

¹ *Met.*, 990a 34 ff. It is repeated almost exactly at 1078b 34-6.

² Simplicius, in *De Caelo*, p. 488, 18-24 (Heiberg).

³ *Phd.*, 99d 4-100a 8.

⁴ *Phd.*, 100b 1-102a 1.

possibility of reconciling them with one another or any one of them with the observable facts of human experience.¹ The dialogues of Plato, I believe, will furnish evidence to show that he considered it necessary to find a single hypothesis which would at once solve the problems of these several spheres and also create a rationally unified cosmos by establishing the connection among the separate phases of experience.

The interests of Socrates,² the subject-matter of the early dialogues, the 'practical' tone of Plato's writings throughout make it highly probable that he took his start from the ethical problems of his day. It is unnecessary to labour the point that he considered it fundamentally important to establish an absolute ethical standard; that the bearing on this point of the 'inconclusive', 'exploratory' dialogues could not have been obscure to his contemporaries is obvious to anyone who looks at such evidence of the time as is furnished by the *Δισσοὶ Λόγοι* (which discusses the relativity of good and evil, fair and foul, just and unjust, true and false, and the possibility of teaching wisdom and virtue) or by the papyrus fragment of Antiphon the Sophist³ (where conventional justice is called adventitious and generally contradictory to natural justice which is defined as that which is truly advantageous to each individual). The necessity for an absolute standard of ethics which would not depend upon the contradictory phenomena of conventional conduct but would be a measure of human activities instead of being measured by them was forcibly demonstrated by the plight into which Democritus had fallen. He had bitterly opposed the relativism of Protagoras;⁴ yet two of his own ethical fragments show how vulnerable he must have been to counter-attack. "They know and seek fair things," he said, "who are naturally

¹ Note the criticism and warning in *Phd.*, 101e: ἅμα δ' οὐκ ἂν φύροιο ὥσπερ οἱ ἀντιλογικοὶ περὶ τε τῆς ἀρχῆς διαλεγόμενος καὶ τῶν ἐξ ἐκείνης ὠρμημένων, εἴπερ βούλοιο τι τῶν ὄντων εὑρεῖν; ἐκείνοις μὲν γὰρ ἴσως οὐδὲ εἰς περὶ τούτου λόγος οὐδὲ φροντίς. ἱκανοὶ γὰρ ὑπὸ σοφίας ὁμοῦ πάντα κυκλῶντες ὁμῶς δύνασθαι αὐτοὶ αὐτοῖς ἀρέσκειν. They do not keep the 'universes of discourse' clearly defined but think it is legitimate, for example, to drag an epistemological difficulty into an ethical problem before they have completely canvassed the ethical phenomena and have set up an hypothesis to explain them. An example of this 'childish' confusion is outlined in the *Phil.*, (15d-16a; 17a).

² Cf. e.g. Aristotle, *Met.*, 987b 1 ff.

³ *Oxyrh. Pap.*, XI, 1364; Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 4th ed., vol. II, pp. xxxii ff.

⁴ Plutarch, *Adv. Colot.*, 1108f-1109a.

disposed to them.’¹ And, attempting to reconcile conventional law and natural good, he remarked, ‘The law seeks to benefit the life of men but can do so only when they themselves desire to fare well. For to those who obey it it indicates their proper goodness.’² This bald assertion of a difference between fair and foul things, virtuous and vicious actions offers no standard whereby to determine the difference, no reason for the similarity of all fair things *quâ* fair and for their difference from all that are foul. So long as these are only characteristics of material individuals no standard can be found, for to measure individuals against one another is to succumb to relativism. To compare and contrast one must have a definite standard of reference which must itself be underivative lest it become just another example of the characteristic in question and so lead to an infinite regress. The ‘dialogues of search’, by demonstrating the hopelessness of all other expedients, show that the definitions requisite to normative ethics are possible only on the assumption that there exist, apart from phenomena, substantive objects of these definitions which alone are the source of the values attaching to phenomenal existence.³ The possibility of ethical distinctions, then, implies objective differences which can be accounted for only by the hypothesis of substantive ideas.

While this hypothesis makes an ethical system possible in the abstract, the problems raised by conscious human activity involve the construction of a complete ethical theory in the questions of epistemology. That a consistent and practical ethical theory depends upon an adequate epistemology, Plato demonstrates in the *Meno*. The subject of that dialogue is *virtue*, but it is with one of the popular practical questions about virtue that Meno opens the discussion. Socrates protests that such questions as the teachability of virtue must wait upon a satisfactory definition of

¹ Democritus, *fragment* 56 (Diels): τὰ καλὰ γνωρίζουσι καὶ ζηλοῦσιν οἱ εὐφύεες πρὸς αὐτά.

² Democritus, *fragment* 248 (Diels): ὁ νόμος βούλεται μὲν εὐεργετῆν βίον ἀνθρώπων. δύναται δὲ ὅταν αὐτοὶ βούλωνται πάσχειν εὖ. τοῖσι γὰρ πειθομένοισι τὴν ἰδίην ἀρετὴν ἐνδείκνυται.

³ *Euth.*, 15c 11–e 2; *Laches* 199e (cf. 200e–201a); *Lysis*, 222e (N.B. 218c–220b 5: necessity of finding a *πρῶτον φίλον* which is the final cause of πάντα φίλα); *Charm.*, (176a); *Hippias Minor* (376b: if *anyone* errs voluntarily, it must be the good man [who, of course, as good would not err at all]). Cf. *Prot.*, (361c: the difficulties into which the argument has led show that it is necessary first to discover what ἀρετή is and *then* discuss its teachability).

virtue;¹ but Meno's failure to produce a definition makes him fall back upon the 'eristic argument' that one cannot search for either the known or the unknown.² To the implication here that ethical problems are not susceptible of investigation Socrates answers that one can escape this difficulty only by supposing that learning or discovering is really recollection of that which has already been *directly* known.³ Here Socrates is not concerned with the details of the process; his contention is simply that, since determination of the characteristics of virtue presupposes a definition of its essential nature and to give such a definition presupposes knowledge of the essence, we must assume that essential virtue exists and has been directly known unless we are to surrender all possibility of considering ethical problems. Socrates is forced by Meno's insistence to discuss his question anyway, but his repeated objection that such questions demand a prior determination of the nature of virtue itself is a warning and an explanation of the paradoxical outcome of the consequent discussion.⁴

If men act virtuously without being able to teach virtue (that is, without being able to give a consistent account of the causes of their actions), it is because they have 'right opinions' and so are virtuous by a kind of 'divine grace'.⁵ But such right opinions, though having results speciously identical with those of knowledge, are unstable, for they are haphazard, being unconnected by a chain of causality with the final cause. The recognition of this causal relationship, however, is knowledge and this is just recollection.⁶ Consequently until one bases his reasoning upon the knowledge of essential virtue, there can be no adequate solution of the problems of ethics.⁷ So it is that by argument and example the *Meno* demonstrates how, having to distinguish knowledge and right opinion in order to save the phenomena of moral activity, the ethical philosopher is forced to face the problems of epistemology.

But Plato was not satisfied with having proved that considera-

¹ *Men.*, 71a 3-7. It is in the light of this that I find the key to the riddles of the *Protagoras* in Socrates' remarks at the end of that dialogue (*Pro.*, 361c 2-d 2).

² *Men.*, 80e-81a.

³ *Men.*, 81d 4-5. Note the word used for acquiring the knowledge in the first place: *ἐωρακνῖα* (81c 6).

⁴ *Men.*, 86c 6-87b 5.

⁵ *Men.*, 99a-d.

⁶ *Men.*, 97e-98b.

⁷ *Men.*, 100b.

tions of ethics require the assumption of substantive ideas and an epistemology consistent with such an hypothesis. The pragmatic relativism of Protagoras' ethics was, after all, a necessary result of his subjective realism; and Plato had before him the example of Democritus who, though insisting upon the reality of definite moral standards, could not finally refute Protagoras since he had no adequate reason for giving mind the sovereignty over sensations. There is a winsome sadness in his confession of defeat expressed in the reply he makes the sensations give to the strictures of mind: 'unhappy Intelligence, with evidence we give you you attempt our overthrow; your victory is your defeat'.¹ The saving of the phenomena of intellection and sensation is the primary duty of epistemology; if, however, it should appear that these phenomena can be saved in their own right only by setting up the same hypothesis as was found to be essential for ethics, the coincidence of results would by the principle of scientific economy enunciated in Plato's phrasing of the astronomical problem lend added validity to the hypothesis in each sphere.

The epistemological necessity for the existence of the Ideas is proved by the same indirect method as was used in establishing the ethical necessity. Since the phenomena to be explained have first to be determined, it is essential to proceed by analysis of the psychological activities, to decide the nature of these activities and their objects. In brief, the argument turns upon the determination of intellection as an activity different from sensation and opinion. In the *Timaeus*,² in an avowedly brief and casual proof of the separate existence of Ideas, it is stated that if intellection is other than right opinion it follows that there exist separate substantive Ideas as the objects of intellection. The indications of the essential difference of intellection and right opinion are there said to be three. Knowledge is produced by instruction, is always accompanied by the ability to render a true account or proof, and cannot be shaken by persuasive means, whereas right opinion is the result of persuasion, is incapable of accounting for itself, and is susceptible of alteration by external influence. The difference here mentioned is vividly exemplified in the myth of Er³ by the horrible choice of the soul concerning whom it is said: 'he was one of those who had come from heaven, having in his former life lived in a well-ordered city and shared in virtue out of habit

¹ Democritus, *fragment* 125.

² *Tim.*, 51d-e.

³ *Rep.*, 619b ff.

without philosophy'.¹ The *Theaetetus*, in its attempt to define knowledge, treats as the last possibility considered the suggestion that 'true opinion' may be a constitutive element of knowledge, may in conjunction with a λόγος or 'account' be knowledge itself.² As this proposal is tested, it is shown that, of the various possible meanings which λόγος might here have, the most satisfactory is 'knowledge of the proper difference of the object known'.³ But if this 'knowledge of the difference' is not to be, in turn, mere 'right opinion' about the difference, an empty tautology, the definition is vitiated by a 'circular in definiendo'.⁴ In short, if 'true opinion' and knowledge are not identical, the former can not be an essential element of the latter, either. The common assumption of a relationship between 'right opinion' and knowledge is due to the external similarity of their results,⁵ but the rightness of any particular opinion is simply accidental as Plato succinctly shows.⁶ Right opinion is still essentially opinion; and this, the *Theaetetus* has already proved, cannot be knowledge, for it involves the possibility of error or wrong opinion which can be explained only as a mistaken reference to something known, although it is difficult to see how—if the term of reference be known—a mistaken identification is possible.⁷ Opinion, then, is different from knowledge and secondary to it, for no satisfactory account of error can be given until the process of intellection has been explained.⁸ Similarly the earlier part of the *Theaetetus* proved that knowledge can not be sensation or derived from sensation,⁹ because sensation itself implies a central faculty to which all individual perceptions are referred and which passes judgement on them all.¹⁰ As in the *Republic*¹¹ the proof that knowledge and opinion are different faculties is conclusive evidence for the fact that the objects with which they are concerned must be different, so here from the observation that the mind functioning directly without any intermediate organ contemplates the notions that are applicable to all things¹² proceeds the conclusion that knowledge is not to be found in the perceptions but in the reflection upon them, since

¹ In the parallel passage of the *Phd.* (82a-b) 'philosophy' is glossed by 'intelligence': ἀνευ φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ νοῦ.

² *Tht.*, 201c 8 ff.

³ *Tht.*, 208d.

⁴ *Tht.*, 209d 4-210a 9.

⁵ *Tht.*, 200e 4-6.

⁶ *Tht.*, 201a-c.

⁷ *Tht.*, 187b 4-200d 4.

⁸ *Tht.*, 200b-d.

⁹ Cf. *Tht.*, 186e 9-187a 6.

¹⁰ *Tht.*, 184b 5-186e 10.

¹¹ *Rep.*, 477e-478b 2.

¹² *Tht.*, 185e 1-2.

only in this process is it possible to grasp reality and meaning.¹ The attempt of the *Theaetetus* to define knowledge fails, and this failure demonstrates that the λόγος, the essential characteristic of knowledge, cannot be explained by any theory which takes phenomena to be the objects of intellection. That this is the purpose of the dialogue is revealed by the *Timaean* passage above which shows that the λόγος is the δεσμός of the *Meno*,² the mark which distinguishes knowledge from right opinion in that dialogue and which was there identified with ἀνάμνησις. The *Theaetetus*, then, is an attempt to prove that the theory of Ideas is a necessary hypothesis for the solution of the problems of epistemology; the constructive doctrine of the *Sophist* demonstrates that it is a sufficient hypothesis for that purpose.³ The process of abstraction and generalisation which Aristotle thought sufficient to account for knowledge⁴ was recognised by Plato,⁵ but he considered it to be inadequate. In the *Parmenides*,⁶ after advancing all his objections to the hypothesis, Parmenides is made to assert that it is still necessary to assume the existence of Ideas if thought and reasoning are to be saved; and in the *Phaedo*⁷ Socrates outlines the theory of abstraction almost in the very words which Aristotle was to use, connects it with the theories of the mechanistic physics, and rejects it in favour of the theory of separate Ideas. The possibility of abstraction itself, if it is to have any meaning, Plato believes, requires the independent reality of the object apprehended by the intellect. That is the basis of his curt refutation of mentalism in the *Parmenides*.⁸ So the process of abstraction and analysis outlined in the *Philebus*, which is there said to be possible because of the participation of the phenomena in real Ideas,⁹ and which in a simple example of its use in the *Republic*¹⁰ is called 'our customary method', is in the *Phaedrus*¹¹ designated as ἀνάμνησις and said to require the substantial existence of the Ideas and previous direct knowledge of them by the intellect. The successful 'recollection' of the Ideas by means of the dialectical process is in the *Republic*¹²

¹ *Thet.*, 186d 2 ff.² *Men.*, 98a.³ Cf. *Soph.*, 258d-264b and note the triumphant tone of 264b 5-7.⁴ *De Anima* 432a 3-14; *Post. Anal.*, 100a 3-b 17; cf. *Met.*, A, 1.⁵ *Charm.*, 159a 1-3; *Phil.*, 38b 12-13.⁶ *Parm.*, 135b 5-c 3.⁷ *Phd.*, 96b.⁸ *Parm.*, 132b-c.⁹ *Phil.*, 16c 10 ff. N.B. 16d 2: εὐρήσειν γὰρ ἐνοῦσαν.¹⁰ *Rep.*, 596a.¹¹ *Phdr.*, 249b 5-c 4. Cf. the extended demonstration of *Phd.*, 74a 9-77a 5 which is based upon epistemological considerations.¹² *Rep.*, 479c-480a.

said to constitute intellection as distinguished from opinion, and the man who is capable of such activity is there described in terms parallel to the 'mythical' description of the 'wingéd intellect' of the *Phaedrus*.¹

The nature of the mental processes, then, can be explained only by the hypothesis of Ideas. Since no mere addition to right opinion from the sphere with which it itself deals can produce knowledge or make intelligible the fact of error and since no combination of sensations can account for apperception, knowledge cannot be synthetic or derivative. Knowledge as a special faculty dealing *directly* with its own objects must be assumed in order not only to explain the fact of cognition but also to make possible opinion and sensation as they are given by experience. The special faculty of knowledge, however, is characterised by direct contact of subject and object; since phenomena cannot enter into such a relationship with the subject, mediating organs being required in their case, it is necessary that the objects of knowledge be real entities existing apart from the phenomenal world and that the mind have been affected by them before the mental processes dealing with phenomena occur. Only so can one avoid the self-contradictory sensationalism of Protagoras, the psychological nihilism of Gorgias, and the dilemma of Democritus.

The effort to save the phenomena of mental activity leads to the same hypothesis as did the attempt to explain human conduct, and the ethical hypothesis is supported by the independent requirements of epistemology. There is, however, another sphere naturally prior to knowledge and sensation and by which finally all epistemological theories must be judged. The Ideas are necessary to account for the data of mental processes; but the physical world and its characteristics are not dependent upon these mental processes, and it is no more sufficient to assume an ontology which will fit the requirements of epistemology than it is to construct an epistemology in order to account for the phenomena of ethics. It is with this in mind that Timaeus, when in a physical discourse he uses a résumé of the epistemological proof of the existence of Ideas, apologises for his procedure with the excuse that the magnitude of his main subject requires him to give the briefest possible demonstration.² The very language of this passage shows that Plato considered it as a requirement of sound method

¹ *Phdr.*, 249c.

² *Tim.*, 51c 5 ff.

to develop his ontological hypothesis according to the data of the physical world itself. This requirement is explained in the *Theaetetus* where a detailed theory of psychological relativism is expounded¹ by way of considering the thesis that knowledge is sensation. Such a doctrine, in spite of the objections that can be brought against its epistemological and ethical consequences, may still present a correct account of the nature of existence as nothing but a flux of motions. What seem to be individual objects and characteristics would then be merely the transitory resultants of the component motions. In that case, knowledge would really be vivid sensations which are the functions of clashing and passing movements.² To argue that no practical ethics or adequate epistemology can be developed from such an account is pointless, for there could be no *naturally* valid criterion by which to evaluate the different moments of evidence.³ Such a theory as that of Ideas would be a merely pragmatic hypothesis, and distinctions of good and bad, true and false would be at best only conventional and artificial. It is, then, necessary that the study of ontology be undertaken independently of the requirements of ethics and epistemology to discover what hypothesis will explain the data of physical phenomena as such.⁴ The data with which the investigation has to work are the constantly shifting phenomena of the physical world, and Plato accepts this unceasing flux as a characteristic of all phenomenal existence.⁵ This flux, however, is the datum which has to be explained, and his contention is simply that change itself is intelligible and possible only if there exist entities which are not themselves involved in the change. The argument in the *Theaetetus*⁶ attempts to show that the constant flux of phenomena involves alteration as well as local motion but that alteration requires the permanent subsistence of immutable abstract qualities. The relativism that asserts the constant change of everything, however, makes attributes and perceptions the simultaneous resultants of the meeting of agent and patient, while agent and patient themselves are merely complexes of change without independent existence,⁷ with the result that not only are all things constantly changing their characteristics but the characteristics themselves are constantly altering, and 'whiteness' can no more

¹ *Tht.*, 156a-160e.

² *Tht.*, 179c.

³ *Tht.*, 158b-e.

⁴ *Tht.*, 179d.

⁵ Cf. *Tim.*, 27d 5-28a 4.

⁶ *Tht.*, 181c-183b.

⁷ *Tht.*, 182b.

be really 'whiteness' than any other colour.¹ Similarly, if the qualities themselves are always altering, the sensations which are defined by these constantly altering qualities are undifferentiated.² Such an account of the world involves the denial not only of fixed states and determinable processes but also of the laws of contradiction and the excluded middle.³ The data of phenomenal change, then, logically require the hypothesis of immutable and immaterial ideas. The argument occurs again at the end of the *Cratylus* (where, however, it is connected with one form of the epistemological proof);⁴ and Aristotle accuses the Protagoreans, in the same terms as does Plato, of denying the laws of logic.⁵ In a passage obviously influenced by the *Theaetetus*,⁶ he explains the difficulties of the relativists as due to their failure to recognise immaterial existences and to note the distinction between quantitative and qualitative change. Like Plato, Aristotle felt that a logical account of physical nature required some hypothesis of qualitative existence as un-derived from quantitative distinctions.

The digression on mensuration in the *Politicus*⁷ has the same intention. There Plato distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative 'measurement', the former being only relative measurement and the latter measurement against a norm,⁸ and castigates those who think all the world susceptible of quantitative measurement; their error lies in the supposition that all difference can be reduced to quantitative distinctions.⁹ For this reason in the *Timaeus*, where the quantitative determinations of the minima of phenomenal air, fire, water, and earth are elaborated in great detail,¹⁰ Plato still insists that there must be substantive Ideas of air, fire, water, and earth, apart from phenomena, immutable, the objects of intellection only,¹¹ and that phenomenal objects are what they are because they are imitations of these real Ideas.¹² Indications of the ontological necessity of the hypothesis are not lacking in this dialogue either. The most certain and evident characteristic of phenomena is their instability; they are all in-

¹ *Tht.*, 182d 1-5.² *Tht.*, 182d 8-e5.³ *Tht.*, 183a 4-b5.⁴ *Crat.*, 439d 3-440c 1.⁵ *Met.*, 1008a 31-34; cf. 1009a 6-12.⁶ *Met.*, 1010a 1-37.⁷ *Pol.*, 283d-287a.⁸ *Pol.*, 283d 7-284b 2.⁹ *Pol.*, 284e 11-285c 2; cf. Rodier, *Études de philosophie grecque*, p. 48, note 1.¹⁰ *Tim.*, 53c 4-55c 5; 55d 7-57c 6.¹¹ *Tim.*, 51a 7-52a 4.¹² *Tim.*, 50c, 51a 7-b 1 (cf. Shorey in *Class. Phil.*, XXIII [1928], p. 358).

volved in the process of generation¹ and so imply a cause external to themselves.² Apart from the 'mythical' form of the explanation to which this leads, the argument is the same as the indirect proof of the *Theaetetus*. The instability of phenomena can be explained only by assuming a world of Ideas as the source of phenomenal characteristics. To dispense with such a superphenomenal world is not only to identify right opinion and knowledge but, in fact, to say that phenomena are stable.³ This brief remark of Timaeus sums up the results of the demonstration in the *Theaetetus* which shows that the relativistic ontology transgresses the law of the excluded middle and so can no more say that all is in motion than that all is at rest. To do away with stable qualities is tantamount to denying the possibility of change.⁴ Yet it is the possibility of phenomenal alteration that was to be saved, for phenomena have no stability at all;⁵ they are fleeting phrases without persistent substantiality,⁶ but such they can be only if apart from them there are substances of which somehow the phenomena partake.⁷

The physical phenomena, then, considered in themselves and not as objects of sensation or cognition still can be saved only by the hypothesis of separate, substantive Ideas. That the necessary and sufficient hypothesis for this sphere turns out to be the very one needed for ethics and epistemology makes it possible to consider the three spheres of existence, cognition, and value as phases of a single unified cosmos.

The apparently disparate phenomena of these three orders, like the seemingly anomalous paths of the planets, had to be accounted for by a single, simple hypothesis which would not

¹ *Tim.*, 28b 8-c 2.

² *Tim.*, 28c 2-3.

³ *Tim.*, 51d 6-7.

⁴ Aristotle reproduces the argument in his own language in *Metaphysics*, 1010a 35-7.

⁵ Cf. *Tim.*, 49d 4 ff. (βεβαιώτητα-d 7) and 51d 5-7.

⁶ *Tim.*, 49c 7-50a 4.

⁷ *Tim.*, 50b-c. That the mere configuration of space is not enough to produce phenomenal fire, etc., 51b 4-6 shows (N.B. καθ' ὅσον ἂν μμήματα τούτων δέχεται). All this, I think, makes Shorey's interpretation of 56b 3-5 certain (*Class. Phil.*, XXIII [1928], pp. 357-8). To interpret στερεόν γεγονός here as 'having received a third dimension' would be tautological, for the pyramid is *eo ipso* three-dimensional. Cf. also A. Rivaud in his introduction to his edition of the *Timaeus* (p. 26) in the Budé series.

only make intelligible the appearances taken separately but at the same time establish the interconnection of them all. The problem which Plato set others in astronomy he set himself in philosophy; the resulting theory of Ideas indicates by its economy that it proceeded from the same skill of formulation which charted for all time the course of astronomical hypothesis.

II

LOGOS AND FORMS IN PLATO

(1954)

R. C. Cross

IN the *Theaetetus*, in the search for an answer to the question What is knowledge? the suggestion is made at 201d that true belief with the addition of a logos is knowledge, while belief without a logos is not knowledge. Where no logos can be given of a thing, then it is not knowable; where a logos can be given, then it is knowable (ὦν μὲν μὴ ἔστι λόγος, οὐκ ἐπιστητὰ εἶναι . . . ἃ δ' ἔχει, ἐπιστητά (201d)). This view is then elaborated in Socrates's 'dream'. It is the view that the first elements (στοιχεῖα) out of which every thing is composed have no logos. Each of them taken by itself can only be named. We can add nothing further, saying that it exists or does not exist. None of the elements can be told in a logos, they can only be named, for a name is all that they have. On the other hand, when we come to the things composed of these elements, then just as the things are complex, so their names when combined form a logos, the latter being precisely a combination of names. Thus the elements have no logos and are unknowable, but can be perceived (ἄλογα καὶ ἄγνωστα εἶναι, αἰσθητὰ δέ (202b)), while the complexes (συλλαβάς) are knowable and storable (ρήτὰς) and you can have a true notion of them. The view is then summed up at 202b ff.—'whenever then anyone gets hold of the true notion of anything without a logos his soul thinks truly of it, but he does not know it; for if one cannot give and receive a logos of anything, one has no knowledge of that thing (τὸν γὰρ μὴ δυνάμενον δοῦναί τε καὶ δέξασθαι λόγον ἀνεπιστήμονα εἶναι περὶ τούτου), but when he has

also acquired a logos, then all these things are realised and he is fully equipped for knowledge.'

Theaetetus expresses satisfaction with this view. Socrates himself, it is interesting to note, remarks (202d) that the statement (that true belief with a logos is knowledge) taken just by itself may well be satisfactory; for, he asks, how could there ever be knowledge apart from a logos and right belief? He objects, however, to the 'most ingenious' feature of the theory, namely, that the elements are unknowable, while the complexes are knowable. On this point, using the model of letters and syllables, Socrates presents the theory with a dilemma which, cashing the model, runs like this; if the logos just is the names which compose it, each name being the name of an unknowable element, then it itself conveys no more than do its several words—it is a mere congeries of unknowables. On the other hand, if the logos is something more than the nouns out of which it is composed, a new linguistic unit which somehow conveys something more than is conveyed by the bare enumeration of the individual names in it, then this something more will itself be a new simple, which as such will be unknowable (as having no logos), and the logos will stand in the same naming relation to it as the individual nouns did to the original elements. Thus the logos will no more convey knowledge than do the names with which we began.

In a paper read to the Oxford Philological Society Professor Ryle has related the theory of Socrates's dream and the criticism of it in this part of the *Theaetetus* to logical atomist theories about words and sentences such as are to be found in Russell's early writings and elsewhere. With the larger bearing of this part of the *Theaetetus* on modern versions of logical atomism I am not here concerned, but with some remarks Professor Ryle made about its relevance to Plato's own theory of Forms. He argued that 'if the doctrine of Forms was the view that these verbs, adjectives and common nouns are themselves the names of simple, if lofty, nameables, then Socrates's criticism is, *per accidens*, a criticism of the doctrine of Forms, whether Plato realised this or not', and he added that 'if a Form is a simple object or a logical subject of predication, no matter how sublime, then its verbal expression will be a name and not a sentence; and if so, then it will not be false but nonsense to speak of anyone knowing it (savoir) or not knowing it, of his finding it out, being taught it, teaching it,

concluding it, forgetting it, believing, supposing, guessing or entertaining it, asserting it, negating it or questioning it'. It is these remarks I want to discuss.

What then are we to say of this criticism of the theory of Forms which Professor Ryle develops from the discussion in the *Theaetetus*? A number of possibilities suggest themselves. In the first place, we might say that what Plato is concerned with in the *Theaetetus* is knowledge in relation to perception. The unknowable elements there are, as he himself says, αἰσθητά, and he is not thinking of anything but perceptual 'simples', nor of any relation the argument might have to the theory of Forms. Still, it seems clear that the argument does hold for any simple nameables, whether objects of perception or objects of thought. Further, it is not easy to believe that Plato could have missed this, especially when so much of the language here echoes the language he has used elsewhere in setting out his own philosophical views. (Cf. e.g. *Thē.*, 202c τὸν γὰρ μὴ δυνάμενον δοῦναι τε καὶ δέξασθαι λόγον ἀνεπιστήμονα εἶναι περὶ τούτου with *Rep.*, 531e where the dialectician is contrasted with those who μὴ δυνατοὶ . . . δοῦναι τε καὶ ἀποδέξασθαι λόγον (οὐ δοκοῦσιν) εἶσεσθαι ποτέ τι ὧν φάμεν δεῖν εἰδέναι.) In any case, whether or not Plato was himself at this point aware of the possible effects of the argument on the theory of Forms, we ought to consider them.

It might be suggested, secondly, that Plato himself was aware that the arguments here were damaging to the theory of Forms, but was undisturbed by this, because he had already abandoned, or was about to abandon, the theory. Some scholars have certainly thought that the theory was either abandoned or fundamentally altered in the later dialogues. Burnet, for instance, maintains that 'the doctrine of Forms finds no place at all in any work of Plato later than the *Parmenides*'.¹ How much alteration there must be before we say that the theory is 'fundamentally altered' or 'abandoned' is, of course, a pretty problem. Stenzel sees a change from the form as a 'representative intuition' to the Form as something approaching a 'concept', but he would certainly not have wanted to say that Plato had abandoned his theory of Forms. So far as verbal expressions are concerned the language still occurs in the later dialogues which was used in the earlier in connection with

¹ Burnet, *Platonism*, p. 120. Cf. also p. 119, 'in the *Laws* there is no trace of the theory of "ideas"'.

the theory of Forms. This is true even of the *Laws*, e.g. 965b–c where there is the familiar contrast of the one and the many, and the necessity is insisted on of being able *πρὸς μίαν ἰδέαν ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν καὶ ἀνομοίων . . . βλέπειν*. Too much cannot be made of verbal similarities and we have Lewis Campbell's warning that 'in Plato . . . philosophical terminology is incipient, tentative, transitional'.¹ Still, they are there. Further, some of the familiar notions of the earlier dialogues are there too, e.g. knowledge and Forms, opinion and sensibles, and so on. The theory may have evolved, but the evidence suggests that there is enough left both linguistically and in content to make it rash to say that Plato had abandoned it. If, however, we are not prepared to say that Plato abandoned the Forms, we cannot adopt the device of reconciling Professor Ryle's interpretation of the arguments in the *Theaetetus* with the theory of Forms by the simple procedure of annihilating the latter.

A third possibility suggests itself, arising out of some things Mr. Robinson has said. His interpretation of this part of the *Theaetetus* is this—and here I quote from his article 'Forms and Error in Plato's *Theaetetus*' (*Phil. Rev.*, lix, (1950), 16): 'Here at the end of the *Theaetetus* he (Plato) offers strong arguments to show that *logos* does not entail knowledge, and, much worse, that some *aloga* must be knowable if there is any knowledge at all.' On the other hand, just above he has pointed out that it was 'one of Plato's own favourite doctrines', both before and after the *Theaetetus*, 'that knowledge entails *logos*'. Now two things about this. First, it is clear that Mr. Robinson interprets this part of the *Theaetetus* differently from Professor Ryle—he treats it as a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* argument in favour of the conclusion that 'a thing's being *aloga* does not make it unknowable'. Thus on page 15 he writes: 'the examination of the three senses of "*logos*" is immediately preceded by a discussion of uncompounded elements, the tendency of which is to conclude that, if elements are unknowable because they have no *logos*, everything is unknowable, from which anyone who thought that knowledge does occur would have to conclude that a thing's being *aloga* does not make it unknowable.' I myself am prepared to reject this interpretation and accept Professor Ryle's, partly for reasons which will, I hope, be obvious later, partly because within the *Theaetetus* passage itself

¹ *Plato's Republic*, Jowett and Campbell, vol. ii, p. 292.

the emphasis of the argument seems to be not that we should substitute for the low-grade 'pool' atoms of the sensationalist new high-grade 'branded' atoms, but that no sort of atoms or atomistic nameables will do. Secondly, Mr. Robinson reconciles his own interpretation with his admission that it continues to be a favourite doctrine of Plato elsewhere that knowledge entails logos, by the suggestion that this is a smaller example of what we find in the *Parmenides*—'namely a searching critique of one of Plato's own favourite doctrines, which he nevertheless continued to hold after writing the critique in spite of the fact that he does not appear ever to have discovered the answer to it'. We might then, while rejecting Mr. Robinson's interpretation of the argument, accept this self-criticism explanation for our own interpretation. We would then say that the doctrine of Forms does lead to the logical atomist difficulties which Plato exposed in the *Theaetetus*. Plato had no answer to these difficulties, but still went on holding his doctrine. But while it may be that there are parts of Plato's writing which defy any other explanation, this self-criticism story cannot but create some feeling of uneasiness. If a philosopher exposes damaging difficulties in central doctrines that he holds, and nevertheless, and this is the important point, apparently continues to hold them without ever answering the difficulties, his procedure is, to say the least, puzzling, and in the end might lead us to suspect his credentials. It looks then as though the self-criticism explanation should be adopted only in default of a better. There is, however, in the present case a fourth possibility. Professor Ryle's argument was that 'if the doctrine of Forms was the view that these verbs, adjectives and common nouns are themselves the names of simple, if lofty, nameables, then Socrates's criticism of logical atomism is . . . a criticism of the doctrine of Forms'. If we are already convinced that this *was* the doctrine of Forms, and if we accept, as I have been prepared to do, Professor Ryle's interpretation of the implications of the passage for that doctrine, it looks as if we must perforce fall back on the self-criticism explanation. But if on other grounds we were not so sure that this was the doctrine of Forms, the *Theaetetus* passage would encourage us further to see if the theory of Forms is not capable of a different interpretation. I want to suggest some other grounds for hesitation in accepting the interpretation of the doctrine of Forms indicated in the quotation from Professor Ryle.

Before, however, we come to these, let us first state the interpretation somewhat more fully.

It would maintain (no doubt among other things) that on Plato's view, apart from proper names, which stand for particulars, other substantives, adjectives, prepositions, and verbs stand for Forms or universals, are the names of these. Ross puts this clearly when he says: 'The essence of the theory of Ideas lay in the conscious recognition of the fact that there is a class of entities, for which the best name is probably "universals", that are entirely different from sensible things. Any use of language involves the recognition, either conscious or unconscious, of the fact that there are such entities; for every word used, except proper names—every abstract noun, every general noun, every adjective, every verb, even every pronoun and every preposition—is a name for something of which there are or may be instances.'¹ These universals exist timelessly in their own right apart from the sensible world; they are 'real entities', 'substances' (the phrases are from Professor Cherniss);² and to know them is, or involves some form of immediate apprehension in which we are directly acquainted with them. In Professor Cherniss's words again 'the special faculty of knowledge is characterised by direct contact of subject and object'.³ This is the interpretation of some of the essential features of the theory of Forms that is to be found, whether explicitly or implicitly, in the writings of a large number of the most distinguished modern Platonists—Ross, Cherniss, Taylor, I think Cornford, and many others. In fact, it is accepted orthodoxy. Two things may be said about it. First, it must be allowed that there is much in Plato's actual language that could be construed to support this interpretation. Secondly, if this is what Plato was saying, the theory of Forms is less illuminating than perhaps it once seemed. This remark is, of course, irrelevant to the question of the correctness of the interpretation, but it is worth making for this reason. A number (and I suspect a large number) of the propounders of this interpretation—and Ross is a clear and distinguished example of this—have not merely believed that this is what Plato meant by his theory, but that it is, by and large, a good theory. If it can be

¹ W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, p. 225.

² 'The Philosophical Economy of the Theory of Ideas', *Amer. Journ. of Phil.*, vol. lvii, 1936, pp. 452, 456. See above, pp. 8, 11.

³ Loc. cit., p. 452. See above, p. 8.

seen, and I think it can be seen, that as a theory it is unworkable and in the strict and non-abusive use of the word largely meaningless, we may be the less inclined to father it on Plato unless we must, and the more inclined to re-examine what he actually says. Since the merits of the orthodox interpretation as a piece of philosophy are irrelevant to the question of whether it is the correct interpretation, it would be out of place here to elaborate its demerits. It is enough to say that the suggestion that it is an unworkable and largely meaningless theory arises not merely from the logical atomist difficulties developed from the *Theaetetus*, but from many other considerations as well—e.g. to mention only one, the difficulty of giving any cash value to a phrase like ‘timeless substantial entities’. I repeat, however, that the merits or demerits of the theory are strictly irrelevant to its correctness as a piece of interpretation. There are, however, things in Plato that seem to me to suggest that he may have had other ideas in mind, and I shall now try to mention a few of them, turning first to the *Meno*.

Meno opens the dialogue by raising certain questions about the acquiring of virtue, and Socrates says he cannot possibly answer them until he knows what virtue is—τί ἐστὶν ἀρετή. Meno thinks this an easy question and proceeds to enumerate the virtues of a man, of a woman, and so on. Socrates objects (72a-b) that this is to give him a swarm of virtues when he asks for one, and carrying on the figure of the swarm points out that when the question is about the nature of the bee it is not a proper answer to say that there are many kinds of bees. Bees do not differ from one another as bees, as Meno readily admits, and what the questioner wants to know is what this is in respect to which they do not differ, but are all alike—ὥ οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν ἀλλὰ ταυτόν εἰσιν ἅπασαι, τί τοῦτο φῆς εἶναι; Similarly with the virtues—they have all one common form which makes them virtues, and on this he who would answer the question, what is virtue, would do well to keep his eye fixed. (ἐν γέ τι εἶδος ταυτόν ἅπασαι ἔχουσι δι’ ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί, εἰς ὃ καλῶς που ἔχει ἀποβλέψαντα τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ ἐρωτήσαντι ἐκείνο δηλῶσαι, ὃ τυγχάνει οὕσα ἀρετή (72c).) Meno is still not altogether clear about the existence of a common characteristic in the case of virtue, though he seems not to feel any difficulty in other cases—74a-b οὐ γὰρ δύναμαί πω, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὥς σὺ ζητεῖς μίαν ἀρετὴν λαβεῖν κατὰ πάντων, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις. Socrates

explains further by taking the example of figure. What we want to know here is what that is which is common to the round, the straight, and all the other figures—*τί ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῷ στρογγύλῳ καὶ εὐθείῳ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἃ δὴ σχήματα καλεῖς, ταῦτόν ἐπὶ πᾶσι;* (75a). Socrates then gives two answers to this question *τί ἐστι σχῆμα*, either of which he would regard as a satisfactory reply to the question. The first is that figure is the only thing which always follows colour (75b), and he adds that he himself would be satisfied if Meno would give him an answer of the same sort about virtue. Meno asks what answer Socrates would have given if a person were to say that he did not know what colour was, and Socrates then produces his second answer (76a), that figure is the limit of a solid. This is the sort of answer he wants to this sort of 'what is it' question; and Meno is encouraged to try, with no more success than before, to produce a similar type of answer to the question 'What is virtue?'.

Now there are three points of interest in this section of the *Meno*. First, Meno himself is not represented in the dialogue as being particularly acute or particularly skilled in philosophy—rather the reverse. Yet he does not seem to find any difficulty or anything particularly striking in the fact that we do use a word like 'bee' or 'figure' as a general term for any one of a group of particulars. No fuss seems to be made on this point either by Meno or Socrates. They both just seem to take it for granted that we do use words that way, or, to use the language of the present context, that there is something common to a group of particulars which are called by one name. Yet this something common is, on the orthodox view of the theory of Forms, a 'universal', and the discovery of universals and their relation to particulars is hailed as one of the achievements of the theory. But neither Meno nor Socrates seem much interested in this revelation. It is true that Meno is not so sure (73a) that virtue will be the same in a child as in an adult, in a woman as in a man, but his worry is apparently confined to the special case of virtue. He seems to have no difficulty over the one and the many elsewhere (cf. 74a-b quoted above). Secondly, what he has difficulty over, and what both he and Socrates are interested in, is in trying to discover what this one, in the case of each group of particulars—bees, figures, virtues—is. The whole emphasis is on this—i.e. not on the point that there is one over against the many, but on what this one, in

the case of each group of particulars, is. Thirdly, Socrates by the example of 'figure' illustrates the way in which he expects Meno to cope with this 'what is it' question. If he is asked 'what is figure?' the appropriate response is to say that, e.g. figure is the only thing which always follows colour, i.e. to use deliberately vague language, the appropriate response is to say something, to tell the questioner something, to make some sort of statement.

Now in all this the *Meno* is in no way peculiar. This 'What is X?' question appears in the *Republic*—'What is justice?', in the *Theaetetus*—'What is knowledge?', in the *Sophist*—'What is a sophist?', and so on, as well as in many of the early dialogues, and it is quite plain that Plato attaches the greatest importance to it. In the *Theaetetus* too, Theaetetus makes just the same sort of mistake as Meno does—when asked what knowledge is, he enumerates the different sorts of knowledge—knowledge of geometry, of cobbling, of carpentry, and so on, and Socrates makes just the same objection—146d 'you are generous indeed, my dear Theaetetus—so open-handed that, when you are asked for one simple thing, you offer a whole variety'. Further, here too Socrates, after remarking at 147b that a man cannot understand the name of a thing when he does not know what that thing is, gives an illustration of the sort of answer he wants; if he is asked what clay is, the simple and ordinary thing to say is that clay is earth mixed with moisture (147c). Theaetetus mentions a mathematical example, where he has been able to do this sort of thing in the case of roots (δυνάμεις), and Socrates exhorts him similarly *περὶ ἐπιστήμης λαβεῖν λόγον τί ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν* (148d) adding, in what I think an important remark, 'just as you found a single character to embrace these many roots, so now try to find a single logos that applies to the many kinds of knowledge'—*ὥσπερ ταύτας πολλὰς οὐσας ἐνὶ εἴδει περιέλαβες, οὕτω καὶ τὰς πολλὰς ἐπιστήμας ἐνὶ λόγῳ προσειπεῖν* (148d). Mr. Robinson in *Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, chapter 5 has some excellent remarks on the pitfalls and the vagueness of the 'What is X?' question. As he has shown, unless the question is put in some specific context, a number of quite different answers to it would all be equally legitimate, and as he says, quoting from G. E. Moore, 'the vague form "What-is-X?" is an especial temptation "to answer questions, without first discovering precisely *what* question it is you desire to

answer”¹.¹ The important thing for our present purposes is that there is evidence both in the *Meno* and elsewhere that when Plato asks this ‘What is X?’ question, e.g. as in the *Meno* ‘What is virtue?’, he will be far from content with the announcement that ‘there is a Form of virtue’ or that ‘virtue is a Form or universal’, or that ‘there are Forms as well as particulars, and virtue is a Form’. As I pointed out above both Meno and Socrates make practically no fuss at all of the point that there is an *εἶδος* for the group. To keep telling them that there is would be merely infuriating. This is not to deny that Plato elsewhere also raises what might be called status questions in connection with Forms in general—questions about their separation from particulars and so on. But it is quite clear in the *Meno* and elsewhere that when he asks this ‘What is X?’ question, he is taking it for granted that there is a form of X, and wanting to know what that form is. And as I have already insisted, from what he says it seems that he hopes to achieve this coming to know the Form by way of statements, *logoi*. I suggest, therefore, that it is misleading when Shorey writes: ‘except in purely mythical passages, Plato does not attempt to describe the ideas any more than Kant describes the Ding-an-sich or Spencer the “unknowable”. He does not tell us what they are, but that they are.’² From the early dialogues to the late it is, I suggest, one of Plato’s main motifs to try to tell what the *εἶδη* are. It may be that he never succeeds, but failure to emphasise that that is certainly one of the things he is trying to do, and that he hopes to do it by *logoi*, is liable to lead to the obscuring of an important element in this theory. In fact it leads to the orthodox view that Plato has discovered, and is well satisfied with the discovery of, universals—good sound entities of only too too solid flesh, of which words are names, and of which the fundamental mode of awareness is some kind of direct insight, Professor Cherniss’s ‘direct contact of subject and object’ or Russell’s ‘knowledge by acquaintance’.

Now in connection with this notion of knowledge by acquaintance in Plato, Diotima’s speech in the *Symposium*, which is usually taken as embodying views of Socrates or Plato, is of interest. As befits the speech of a priestess, it is highly enthusiastic, and here, if anywhere, we would expect the language of insight or direct contact or acquaintance. And this is what we do in fact find when

¹ Op. cit. (first edition), p. 62.

² *Unity of Plato’s Thought*, p. 28.

Diotima describes how the soul after a long training comes to see beauty itself. It is a sudden vision—*πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ἐξαίφνης κατόψεταί τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν* (210e), an act of contemplation and communion *θεωμένου καὶ συνόντος αὐτῷ* (212a). What is of interest, however, is that this moment of acquaintance with beauty itself, the goal of human life, is so strongly marked off from all ordinary experience. In particular in 211a, where this supreme beauty is being described, we are told that of this there is *οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη*—there is no logos of it and no knowledge of it. The suggestion is that it is above knowledge in any ordinary sense, and that with knowledge in its ordinary sense there always goes a logos. Beauty itself, on the other hand, is nameable, but not in any ordinary sense knowable. It is true that in the same passage there is a reference to a *μάθημα* of *αὐτὸ τὸ κάλον*, but here again this quite special *μάθημα* is distinguished from what are ordinarily known as *μαθήματα*—*ἀπὸ τῶν μαθημάτων* (not *τῶν ἄλλων μαθημάτων*) *ἐπ' ἐκείνο τὸ μάθημα τελευτῆσαι* (211c); true also that there is a reference to the vision of a 'single science, if it may be called that', which is of beauty itself, but this special sort of science or knowledge is marked off from knowledge or the sciences as ordinarily meant, and from the *logoi* to which the lover of wisdom is usually confined—*πολλοὺς καὶ καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τίκτηι καὶ διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ, ἕως ἂν ἐνταῦθα ῥωσθεῖς καὶ αὐξηθεῖς κατίδῃ τινα ἐπιστήμην μίαν τοιαύτην, ἣ ἔστι καλοῦ τοιοῦδε* (210d). I agree with Festugière¹ that this *μάθημα* and this *ἐπιστήμη* belong only to the moment of *ἐποπτεία* and go beyond the ordinary norms of knowledge. Ordinarily knowledge and logos go hand in hand, and of the ideal beauty *οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη*. If we like we can call this special knowledge of *αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν* knowledge by acquaintance, and there is no reason why we should grudge Plato his special moments of acquaintance. But these are not ordinary moments, nor is the knowledge the knowledge with which he is usually concerned. The knowledge that interests him in his non-enthusiastic moments is the knowledge in which logos is inextricably involved; it is of this knowledge that he primarily speaks in connection with the Forms; and it is not, I contend, knowledge by acquaintance. The point is frequently made that 'Plato constantly uses metaphorical

¹ Festugière, *Contemplation et Vie Contemplative selon Platon*, p. 231 (especially note (2)).

expressions taken from the senses of sight and touch to denote the immediate character of his highest knowledge'.¹ Lutoslawski, e.g., from whom I have just quoted, cites *ιδεῖν*, *ἅπτεσθαι*, *ὄρᾶν*, and so on from the *Republic*. This is a fair and scholarly point, but too much can be made of it. We too, in our language, talk, for example, of 'seeing' a problem, 'handling' it, 'grasping' it, 'grappling' with it, and so on, without wishing to convey anything about 'the immediate character of our highest knowledge' of the problem. Two examples may perhaps suffice to show how difficult it is to rely too much on Plato's 'seeing' and 'touching' language. Professor Cherniss, in his article in *American Journal of Philology*, to which I have already referred, in explaining the passage in the *Meno* 81d, where Socrates produces his theory of learning as recollection, says that on Socrates's hypothesis 'learning or discovering is really recollection of that which has already been directly known', italicising 'directly'; and in a footnote he adds 'note the word used for acquiring knowledge in the first place: *ἐωρακυῖα* (81c6)'.² But it should also be noted that four lines below Socrates remarks that it is not strange if the soul can remember what it knew before, where the Greek is *οἶον τ' εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀναμνησθῆναι*, *ἃ γὰρ καὶ πρότερον ἠπίστατο* where the verb *ἐπίστασθαι* would not suggest direct knowledge by acquaintance. Again Lutoslawski³ quotes *ἅπτεσθαι* in *Republic* 511b as an example of the metaphorical use of sight and touch expressions to convey the notion of immediate knowledge; but in the passage, which runs *τοῦτο* (this segment of the line) *οὐ αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἅπτεται τῇ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δυνάμει* the emphasis seems to be on hard argument rather than immediate knowledge, and to press the metaphor in *ἅπτεσθαι* coming as it does between *λόγος* and *διαλέγεσθαι* seems highly dubious. The truth seems to be that here, as I think often in Plato, it is dangerous to make too much of the particular linguistic expressions he uses. This linguistic argument then is not decisive enough to lead to our abandoning the contention that in Plato knowledge and *logos* go together, and that, except in exceptional cases like *αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν* which he specially marks off for us, he is not relying on the device of knowledge by acquaintance.

Two further points require attention. First, it must be stressed

¹ Lutoslawski, *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, p. 294.

² Op. cit., p. 448; above, p. 4.

³ Op. cit., p. 294.

how constantly throughout the dialogues knowledge, forms, and logos turn up together. We have already seen this in the *Meno* and have noted the ἐπιστήμη-λόγος connection in the *Symposium*. The same is true in the *Phaedo*, e.g. 78d αὐτὴ ἡ οὐσία ἥς λόγον δίδομεν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἐρωτῶντες καὶ ἀποκρινόμενοι, or again the famous passage 99e ff: ἔδοξε δὴ μοι χρῆναι εἰς τοὺς λόγους καταφυγόντα ἐν ἐκείνοις σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν, and so on; similarly in the *Republic*, cf. e.g. the description of the dialectician 534b: ἡ καὶ διαλεκτικὸν καλεῖς τὸν λόγον ἐκάστου λαμβάνοντα τῆς οὐσίας; καὶ τὸν μὴ ἔχοντα, καθ' ὅσον ἂν μὴ ἔχῃ λόγον αὐτῷ τε καὶ ἄλλω διδόναι, κατὰ τοσοῦτον νοῦν περὶ τούτου οὐ φήσεις ἔχειν; so again in the *Theaetetus*, e.g. 148d in discussing knowledge Theaetetus is told προθυμήθητι . . . λαβεῖν λόγον τί ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν; in the *Parmenides*, e.g. at the beginning of the exercise (135e) where Parmenides says that the exercise must not be directed to visibles but forms—ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐκείνα ἃ μάλιστα τις ἂν λόγῳ λάβοι καὶ εἶδη ἂν ἡγήσαιο εἶναι; *Sophist* 260a τούτου (sc. τοῦ λόγου) γὰρ στερηθέντες, τὸ μὲν μέγιστον, φιλοσοφίας ἂν στερηθεῖμεν; *Politicus* 266d τῇ τοιαύτῃ μεθόδῳ τῶν λόγων and 286a διὸ δεῖ μελετᾶν λόγον ἐκάστου δυνατὸν εἶναι δοῦναι καὶ δέξασθαι· τὰ γὰρ ἀσώματα, κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα, λόγῳ μόνον ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενὶ σαφῶς δείκνυνται. It would be tedious to continue this list into the later dialogues. As Mr. Robinson says in the article I mentioned earlier 'it was one of his (Plato's) firm convictions . . . that knowledge entails logos'. This trinity of knowledge, forms, logos appears throughout. Further, where Mr. Robinson shortly afterwards refers to 'the big matter of the Forms' and 'this little matter of logos', I want to insist that 'this little matter of logos' is just as big as 'the big matter of the Forms'—in fact, that the two are of equal importance and cannot be separated.

Secondly, before I try to amplify this, a little must be said about logos itself. I want to translate this word in a wide and indefinite way, keeping it closely connected with the verb λέγειν as 'to tell', 'state', 'say', and translating it as something like 'discourse' or 'statement' in a very wide sense in which hypothesis e.g. would be included. It would be foolish indeed to say that this is *the* meaning of logos in Plato; but perhaps less foolish, in tracing the intricacies of his use of the word, to insist on remembering the saying and statement connection. Brice Parain in his book *Essai sur le Logos Platonicien*, from which I have borrowed suggestions in what

follows, suggests the translation 'opération de langage'¹—I suppose 'linguistic operation'. This seems to me to have certain objections—in particular that one might call 'naming' a linguistic operation, whereas I want in Plato to attach *logos* to saying—but I agree with him in trying, if one likes as a hypothesis, but I think a salutary one, to keep *logos*, to put it vaguely, in the domain of language, and in emphasising the point he makes that 'le *logos* est un phénomène de langage'.² It is perhaps worth noting, as Parain does, that where Plato himself defines or describes *logos* (at *Crat.* 431b, *Tht.* 202b, *Soph.* 262d) he keeps it to the linguistic domain—e.g. in the *Cratylus* a σύνθεσις of ῥήματα καὶ ὀνόματα; though I do not think too much can be made of this, since the context in these passages demands some linguistic sense. More important are Aristotle's references to the Platonists, for example, as οἱ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις *Met.* 1050b 35—'the people who occupy themselves with verbal discussions' (Ross) (cf. 987b 31 of Plato: διὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις . . . σκέψιν (οἱ γὰρ πρότεροι διαλεκτικῆς οὐ μετεῖχον)); or again the interesting passage in Book XII of the *Metaphysics*, 1069a 28 ff. where he remarks that 'the thinkers of the present day' (Ross says "evidently the Platonists") tend to rank universals as substances (for genera are universals, and these they tend to describe as principles and substances, owing to the abstract nature of their inquiry)—διὰ τὸ λογικῶς ζητεῖν, where a better translation might be 'through pursuing their inquiry by means of *logoi*—cf. the οἱ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις in *Met.* 1050b 35 quoted above. What is of interest here is that Aristotle is contrasting people who get down to the brass tacks of things, with the Platonists who interest themselves in talk. It is also very clear that λογικῶς does not mean 'logically' in the sense of 'rationally', as though the others with whom he contrasts the Platonists proceeded irrationally in the sense of being poor at reasoning. To connect *logos* in Plato too closely with 'reason' or 'thought' seems to me likely dangerously to obscure the point of what he is saying. Jowett is an arch-offender in this,³ and I give three examples which are important in themselves: (1) *Phd.* 99e εἰς τοὺς λόγους καταφυγόντα ἐν ἐκείνοις σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν; Jowett's translation: 'I had better have recourse to the world of mind and seek there the

¹ p. 10.² Op. cit., p. 200.³ References are to *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated by B. Jowett (third edition).

truth of existence', where I should want to translate 'I had better have recourse to statements, etc.' (2) *Parm.* 135e *περὶ ἐκεῖνα ἃ μάλιστά τις ἂν λόγῳ λάβοι καὶ εἶδῃ ἂν ἡγήσαιο εἶναι*; Jowett 'in reference to objects of thought, and to what may be called ideas', and my translation 'in reference to those things which are especially grasped by statement' (or 'discourse' (Cornford)) and etc. (3) *Pol.* 286a *τὰ γὰρ ἀσώματα, κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα, λόγῳ μόνον ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενὶ σαφῶς δείκνυται*: Jowett 'for immaterial things, which are the noblest and greatest, are shown only in thought and idea, and in no other way', and the suggested translation 'are shown only in discourse (or statement), and in no other way'. All these translations of Jowett's blur what I think is the essential point, namely, the connection of knowledge, forms, and statement.

I shall now try to sum up, and set my suggested interpretation of the theory of forms over against the orthodox view. What lay at the basis of that view was, I said, the notion of the forms as simple nameables known ultimately by acquaintance. Now let us go right back to the *Meno* and take the very simple example there which we discussed in detail, when Plato asks what is figure, i.e. asks for the *εἶδος* of figure. How does he think this request should be met? Not, it is clear, by, as it were, holding up a substantial entity and saying: now look at this, this is named 'figure', have a good look at it, get thoroughly acquainted with it, and then you will know figure. Not at all. The move in giving the *εἶδος* of figure, in answering the question 'What is figure?', is to make a statement—'figure is the limit of a solid', and this is regarded as a satisfactory answer. The *εἶδος* of figure has been displayed in the *logos*, and displayed in the predicate of the *logos*. It is the same in the passage I quoted earlier from the *Theaetetus* where Theaetetus is proud of finding an *εἶδος* of mathematical roots, and Socrates says *ὥσπερ ταύτας πολλὰς οὐσας ἐνὶ εἶδει περιέλαβες, οὕτω καὶ τὰς πολλὰς ἐπιστήμας ἐνὶ λόγῳ προσειπεῖν*. Cornford translates 'just as you found a single character to embrace all that multitude, so now try to find a single formula that applies to the many kinds of knowledge'. It will be noticed that *ἐνὶ λόγῳ* is parallel with *ἐνὶ εἶδει*, i.e. to give an *εἶδος* involves giving a *logos* which embodies, using Cornford's word, 'a formula'. Thus we might say that a form, so far from being 'a substantial entity', is much more like 'a formula'. It is the logical predicate in a *logos*, not the logical subject. It is what is said of

something, not something about which something else is said. Thus it would be incorrect to say that we talk about $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\eta$, but correct to say that we talk with $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\eta$, and $\logoi$, pieces of talk, are necessary to display $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\eta$ to us.

A. E. Taylor in his *Varia Socratica* essay on the words $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$, $\dot{\iota}\delta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha$ (*Varia Socratica*, pp. 178 ff.) tried to show that in the Hippocratic writings $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ came to mean 'primary body', 'element', and, to quote Taylor himself, *Varia Socratica*, p. 243 'often appears to take on the associations we should connect with such terms as "monad", "thing in itself", "real essence", "simple real" '; and he believed Plato was influenced in his use of the word by these associations (pp. 243 ff.). Without going into the evidence here, I should myself say that, as Gillespie showed,¹ Taylor was wrong in seeing any meaning like 'simple real', 'thing in itself' in the Hippocratic use. An $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ there was an $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ of something, not a simple real. Ross in his introduction to his edition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* seems to approve of Gillespie's view, and adds that 'as regards Plato's usage it is important to notice that both words as used by him employ a dependent genitive, and he speaks of "the Forms" with an implied reference to the things of which they are the Forms';² and H. C. Baldry (in the *Classical Quarterly*, vol. xxxi, 1937, pp. 141-150) while agreeing with Gillespie detects a fairly general use of $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ and $\dot{\iota}\delta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha$ for 'quality'. Of course argument from the Hippocratic use cannot be pressed, because Plato may have been uninfluenced by this use, or have deliberately given $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ a new use. Still it is curious that Ross, with his insistence in the passage quoted that $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ implies a dependent genitive, i.e. cannot function in its own right, should then go on to say in the next sentence 'the Forms are for Plato simple entities, but that is not what the word *means*'. If, however, the word $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ always requires or implies a dependent genitive, and if Baldry is right in detecting a use where $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ means quality, I suggest that in both cases we might expect that an $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ would function as a logical predicate, not as a logical subject; and I suggest that that is what it does in Plato.

Suppose then that when we ask, what is figure or what is

¹ *Class. Quart.*, vol. vi, 1912, pp. 179 ff.: cf. especially p. 200, 'There is no case in which the word is an absolute name; it always requires a dependent genitive to complete its meaning.'

² *Op. cit.*, p. xlviii.

virtue or what is justice, i.e. when we ask for the *εἶδος* of any of these, the correct move is to produce a *logos*, in the predicate of which the *εἶδος* is displayed—suppose, that is, taking the rough illustration of figure which Plato uses, that when we ask what is figure, what is the *εἶδος* of figure, the correct move is to make the statement 'figure is the boundary of a solid', where the *εἶδος* of figure is displayed in the predicate of the statement. An interesting question now arises about the logical subject, about what the statement is about. We are clear that the *logos* is not about the Form figure. The Form is displayed in the predicate. The question then is still on our hands, and the simple and unsuspecting answer still seems to be that it is about figure, justice, and so on. But this tends to prompt the old question: what is figure, what is justice, and to start us again on the old process, in which we make a statement where the answer to the question is in the predicate of the statement which displays the Form of whatever is under discussion. When then we say that the sentence is about figure or about justice it looks as if what we must mean is that the sentence is about the word 'figure', 'justice', and so on. But then, of course, the whole process is ceasing to be 'real definition' and is becoming like 'nominal definition'—not, that is, defining a thing, justice—the thing justice has slid away into the predicate—but defining the word 'justice'. In this way we will arrive at necessary statements, but necessary because logically necessary, because it would be self-contradictory to deny them. They will no longer be truths about things, but logical truths about the way we talk about things. The 'What is X?' question is inherently ambiguous from the start. It may mean tell me about the thing X, or it may mean tell me about the word X—and Plato never clears up the ambiguity. I think it is pretty clear that he sets out with the idea that it is a 'thing' question, in some sense of thing; but it is also clear that he sets out with the determination to reach certainty, and if you want certainty you must pay its logical price.

This is, however, in some degree a digression. The main argument has been that in the end the forms are logical predicates displayed in *logoi* and not simple nameables known by acquaintance. This is not to deny that there are many things Plato says that can be construed to fit the 'simple nameables' view; and in particular I am not pretending that the view of the Forms as logical predicates displayed in *logoi* is to be found explicitly

formulated in Plato. Indeed, at any rate in the earlier dialogues, before he had begun his conscious examination in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* of the notion of logos, with its attendant notions of subject and predicate, he could hardly have had even the technical equipment for such a formulation. I have argued, however, that the view is there implicitly in the way in which Plato actually develops and operates with the theory of Forms. It might be suggested that it was because he himself was becoming conscious of this aspect of the theory that he felt it to be immune from the criticism of logical atomism in the *Theaetetus*. This might also help to explain why the Forms are apparently not jettisoned as a result of the criticisms in the *Parmenides*, which I should be tempted to take as an essay, in both its parts, in the folly of taking forms as simple reals and trying to talk about them as such—an essay directed as much perhaps to clearing Plato's own mind as to the instruction of his readers. However this may be, I suggest that the prominence throughout the dialogues of the logos-knowledge-Forms combination merits more attention than it has perhaps received.

Finally, since I have put the theory of Forms very much in the context of language and logic I append without elaboration four considerations which I think should be kept in mind in dealing with Plato:

(a) It is clear that there were many puzzles common at the time which at any rate in part were logical puzzles about language—the sort of puzzles raised by Parmenides, Gorgias, Protagoras, Antisthenes, and others; clear also from the *Euthydemus* onward that Plato was familiar with these puzzles.

(b) Throughout Plato there are clear indications of the influence of the Socratic elenchus, of the procedure of question and answer as the method of attaining Knowledge. But if this is to proceed, it must proceed by logoi, and the apparatus of simple nameables known by acquaintance seems an alien ingression.

(c) Plato was clearly interested in mathematics. But here again logoi and deductive procedures, and not simple entities known by acquaintance, seem to be what is wanted. He himself, for example, in the *Republic* seems to envisage deriving Forms by some process of deductive argument. This would seem to indicate that Forms cannot be simple entities. For how could

simple entities be either the premises or the conclusion of any sort of argument?

(*d*) It has to be remembered, perhaps at times with regret, that Plato has an affection for the material mode of speech, and for existential propositions. If we ourselves are to understand his meaning, we must discount these to some extent, though to what extent is a difficult point. It may be that I have over-discounted.

III

LOGOS AND FORMS IN PLATO: A REPLY TO PROFESSOR CROSS

(1956)

R. S. Bluck

IN an interesting article in *Mind*, (vol. lxiii, no. 252, October 1954 (see above, II)), Professor Cross raises a problem of considerable importance and says some very interesting things about it, but he is led to propound a view of Plato's Forms that seems to me untenable. To this I should like to reply.

Professor Cross begins by referring to *Tht.*, 202d sq., where Socrates argues that if a logos is simply the names that compose it, and each 'name' is the name of a simple and therefore unknowable element, then the logos is a mere congeries of unknowables, while if the logos is something more, a new linguistic unit, it will itself be a new simple, and therefore unknowable; and he quotes Professor Ryle as saying that 'if the doctrine of Forms was the view that these verbs, adjectives and common nouns are themselves the names of simple, if lofty, nameables, then Socrates' criticism is, *per accidens*, a criticism of the doctrine of Forms, whether Plato realised this or not', and again that 'if a Form is a simple object or a logical subject of predication, no matter how sublime, then its verbal expression will be a name and not a sentence; and if so, then it will not be false but nonsense to speak of anyone knowing it (*savoir*) or not knowing it'. Cross seeks to avoid the conclusion by denying the premiss, which he identifies with the view (described as 'accepted orthodoxy') that Platonic Forms are 'universals' which 'exist timelessly in their own right apart from the sensible world' as 'real entities' or 'substances', and are known by a kind of immediate apprehension or 'knowledge by acquaintance'.