

ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE OF THE IDEAS IN THE *PHAEDO*

In an earlier paper of mine on “Knowledge of Beauty in Plato’s *Symposium*” (The Classical Quarterly 33 [1983] 66–74), I compared the optimistic answer to the question of how to acquire knowledge of beauty in the *Symposium* with the pessimistic answer to the same question in general in the *Phaedo*. The theory in the *Phaedo* was stated there only as much as indispensable for the purpose of comparison. In the present paper I treat it in greater detail, especially hypothesis and recollection as two methods for the acquisition in question.

The theory deserves much attention because it was the source from which the optimistic theory was developed, first in the *Symposium* and then amply in the *Republic*¹). Yet the source as well as the developments is usually not much attended, or rather neglected. The present paper is meant to amend this situation. However, it has to concentrate on the *Phaedo* referring, instead of repeating, the earlier treatment of the *Symposium* and postponing the treatment of the *Republic* because it will require a long space to consider this in addition. The genetic relation between the theories in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, of which a short account has been given in my paper on “Education in General in Plato’s *Republic* (518c4–519b5)”, *Hermes* 115 (1987) 66–72, is briefly noted below in n. 9.

1) For the optimistic answer in the first, see 210e4–5; in the second see e. g. 516b4–7, together with 517b8–c1, 532c5–6, 540a8, the vision brought about by σύννοσις 537c2–3; for the development of both from the *Phaedo*, see Chen, op. cit. 72–74 and n. 9, below. I assume the chronological order of the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium* and the *Republic* to be as they are named here. For the view of scholars on the relative date of the first two, see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* IV (1975), 325 n. 1. If the earlier date of the *Symposium* is preferred, one has to explain how between the two cases of the same epistemological optimism with regard to the method for acquiring knowledge of the Ideas in the present life in the *Symposium* and the *Republic* the opposite view of the pessimism in the *Phaedo* has been developed. That the *Republic* is later than both of the other two dialogues is now the general opinion of scholars.

I

1. *The method in its basic form.* (a) In the *Phaedo* there are several methods for the acquisition of knowledge of the Ideas; the method in its basic form for acquiring knowledge in the primary sense, both logically and temporally primary, is indicated in Socrates' description of the genuine philosopher's pursuit of the knowledge he longs for (66b7, e2, cf. e3). So far as he can, the philosopher detaches himself from the body; his concern is with the soul (64e4–65a3); for the senses convey no truth and are deceptive²). The soul cannot grasp the truth in inquiring about anything when it is accompanied by the body. If any of the existents is revealed to it at all, it is in reasoning. The soul reasons best when it is not bothered by senses or emotions but when it is, as far as possible, alone by itself, having as little communication with the body as possible while it strives after real being (65b9–c9). Using thinking alone, the philosopher goes on hunting reality, i. e., pursuing the knowledge of each Idea, and so far as possible getting rid of sense-organs in particular and the body in general³).

(b) There are several points to be observed. The first concerns getting rid of the body as far as possible. This is to be understood in the light of a later passage: "so far as may be . . . habituating it [sc. the soul] to assemble and gather itself together from every region of the body" (67c7–8, cf. 80e4–5, 83a7–8, the translation is R. Hackforth's, *Plato's Phaedo*, 1955). According to a passage referred to above (n. 2), senses do not yield truth; in order to acquire true knowledge, the soul must draw back its attention from sensible objects and thus direct and concentrate it in itself. This is the meaning of the phrase quoted. Getting rid of the body, or the ἀπαλλαγὴ of the soul from the body, as far as possible in pursuing knowledge is this detachment from the body, i. e., making no use of sense. But the ἀπαλλαγὴ in question is not the com-

2) 65a9–11. For the body as general impediment to the pursuit of truth, 66b5–d7, cf. 82d9–83a1, 83b8–c1.

3) 65e6–66a10. ὄντων ὁ θηρεύειν τῶν ὄντων refers to δίκαιον αὐτό, καλόν, ἀγαθόν, further μέγεθος . . . ἐνὶ λόγῳ ἀπάντων τῆς οὐσίας ὃ τυγχάνει ἕκαστον ὄν 65d4–e1. N. P. White, *Plato on Knowledge and Reality* (1980), 65, thinks the difference between the information gained by the soul itself, without using senses, and that gained from the use of them is the difference between first-hand and second-hand information. But the text starting from 65a9 means that senses do not yield information about any truth; ἀλήθεια is grasped by the soul when it most possibly leaves the body (i. e., sense organs) alone. It is just because of this difference that the philosopher practices dying (67e4–5).

plete separation since it is modified by “as far as possible” or the like. The complete separation is the separation of soul from body at death of the human composite structure of the two; then it comes to be by itself (and so does the body, cf. 64c4–9).

Secondly, the description of acquiring knowledge of the reality which is pure is given in three different ways: “with thought alone”, “with the soul alone” and “through the man himself” (65e7; 66a1–2; e1; 67a8–b1). While the formulation varies, the meaning remains the same. Since man is the soul incarnated, the soul is the real man⁴). The soul may function either with the body, or without using sense-organs or senses, or in complete separation from it. In the third case, it acts by itself. The soul by itself then is the soul purified from the body, the soul which is pure and free from bodily infections – which are due to its blending with the body when it is incarnated – while the soul in the second case is the soul in the process of continually purifying itself⁵).

Thirdly, with these two points clear, the method for acquiring knowledge of the Ideas as revealed in the description of the philosopher’s search for reality can now be expressed provisionally in this form: Know the object in its purity by the subject purified. The object in its purity is Ideas (66a1–3, e1–2, cf. 83b1–2). Purity in this case is understood more readily from the description of the beautiful in the *Symposium*⁶). The subject purified is the soul in complete separation from the body.

Finally, several verbs and their cognates are used in this section to denote cognition of the higher order in general, e.g., γνῶναι 65e4, φρονῆσαι 66c5 in contrast to the cognition of the lower order. The first of these verbs is ἄπτεσθαι 65b9, c9 and its compound 65d11, 67b2. This sense verb is employed figuratively to denote in general intellectual cognition of Ideas. Then there are other groups of cognitive verbs: (I) λογίζεσθαι 65c2, 66a1 (substantive) and διανοεῖσθαι 65e3, 66a2 (substantive); (II) θεᾶσθαι 66e1 (84b1) and θεωρεῖν 65e2. λογισμός, “reasoning in general”

4) The different formulations refer to the same thing, namely, the soul. This is evidenced by the parallel expressions in the similar contexts in the *Phaedo* (see the passages just referred to in the text). For the proposition that the soul is the real man, see *Phaed.* 115c4 ff.

5) Cf. καθαροί and καθαρεύωμεν at 67a3–7. For συμπεφυρμένη ἡ ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχῆ, see 66b5–6.

6) 211e1–4, which recapitulates the first three of the four positive characteristics mentioned earlier in b1–2. εἰλικρινές – together with καθαρόν – corresponds to αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό. In the *Phaedo*, they are conjoined to describe Ideas, 66a2–3 αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό εἰλικρινές.

(see Hackford, op. cit. 46, n. 1) may be compared with Men. 98a3–5. *διάνοια* means also reasoning as its prefix shows that it is discursive; it denotes discursive reasoning. *θεᾶσθαι* along with *θεωρεῖν* is an instantaneous act, an intellectual seeing⁷). So is *καθορᾶν*, which is used in this context, as well as *ὄρᾶν* in a later passage⁸). All these verbs of seeing are used figuratively to denote, more definitely than *ἄπτεσθαι* does, the direct intellectual contact of the soul with reality, i. e., vision of the Ideas, or the *Ideenschau*.

The occurrence of the second group of the verbs in addition to the first makes it clear that to know truth, reasoning alone is not sufficient; *θεᾶ*, the vision of Ideas, must be added. Soul never loses its function of *νοεῖν*, of which it itself is indeed the organ. Even when it is incarnated, it reasons, only it does not do best. It reasons best when it is in itself. Its activity is even then still confined to the cognitive sphere; it does not extend to the ontic sphere of Ideas, to cross the border of the first so as “to touch” (*ἄπτεσθαι*) them, to have cognitive contact with them directly. This direct contact is the intellectual seeing, the *Ideenschau*⁹). To achieve the border-

7) That both of these terms and their cognates denote intellectual seeing, beholding, apprehending, is seen from their use in *Phaedr.* 247c6–e4.

8) *καθορᾶν* at 66d7, a derivative from *ὄρᾶν*, which appears in 83b4; words of the same family are frequently used in the methodology of apprehending Ideas both in the *Symposium* and the *Republic*. In the latter, *θεᾶσθαι* and its cognates occur repeatedly in referring to apprehending the Idea of the Good, while in the *Symposium* *κατόψεται* (210e4) is used in the final description of seeing the beautiful itself.

9) Certainly, it is not said thus systematically in the text, but the thought is there though its contents are found in a slightly different order. Its presence is clearly seen when we read a passage in the *Republic*, and from there look back to the *Phaedo*. There the soul in incarnation is compared to τῷ ὄντι ἐν βορβόρῳ βαρβαρικῷ τι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα κατορρωγμένον (533d1–4). The whole passage (533c7–d7 together with 532c3–6, which explains 533d2–4) takes up the *Phaedo* passage in question right from the beginning on the initial status of the incarnate soul. The *βόρβορος βαρβαρικός* is nothing else but the body with which *συμπεφυρμένη ἢ ἡμῶν ἢ ψυχῆ* (66b5–6). The re-direction of the soul’s eye is the *ἐθίσαι αὐτὴν καθ’ αὐτὴν πανταχόθεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος συναγειροσθαι τε καὶ ἀθροίζεσθαι* (67c7–8), i. e., the philosopher’s practice of dying (for detail see I, sect. 2). The reaching of the goal, the attaining of the τοῦ ἀρίστου *θεᾶ* is not the proper work of *διάνοια*, mathematical sciences, but with its help; the reaching of the goal in the *Phaedo*, the *καθαρῶς τι εἶσεσθαι* in the after life, Socrates definitely specifies as the activity of *θεᾶσθαι* with *λογίζεσθαι* or *διανοεῖσθαι* left unmentioned (66d8–e2). The specification is well founded because the goal is in fact the *καθορᾶν τάληθές* (66d7). *λογίζεσθαι* or *διανοεῖσθαι* is omitted not because it contributes nothing to the vision, but because the vision is not its proper work though it does help the soul attain the goal. For the *θεᾶ* is prepared by the practice of dying, which consists in the turning away from senses to reasoning in this life. The best reasoning the soul does in itself, is not yet the act of “touching” the

crossing, vision is indispensable. This is why the second group of the verbs of cognition is added. The purpose of the addition is seen from Socrates' concluding statement of the philosopher's pursuit of knowledge: If we are to know anything purely, he says, the soul must be released from the body to see the Ideas intellectually (θεατέον 66d8–e2), λογίζεσθαι or διανοεῖσθαι being left unmentioned because vision is not its work.

With this addition, the basic method for apprehending Ideas provisionally expressed above (p. 54) is now seen supplemented and its full formulation amounts to this: Know the object in its purity by the subject purified, viz., through soul's direct contact with reality, specified as the intellectual seeing. Except for the economy of treatment, the formulation of this method remains basically the same in the *Symposium* and the *Republic*.

2. *Practice of dying, the method actually available.* Socrates proceeds to draw the conclusion: So long as we have a body and our soul is mixed with this evil, we can never fully possess the truth we desire. Body produces countless distractions which impede our search for reality. Worst of all is that, even when we have some leisure for engaging in the search, the body "is always breaking in upon us, causing turmoil and confusion in our inquiries, and amazing us that we are prevented from seeing the truth" (66b1–d7, Jowett's translation). It is further understood that the greatest and thus worst of all evils is pleasure and pain. For when the soul of man is violently pleased or pained, it shares the same opinion as the body and believes, as the body does, that the objects of these emotions are the most real, when in fact they are not (83b8–c9, d6–7 with Hackforth, ad. loc., 93, n. 1).

Socrates continues: To acquire pure knowledge the soul must be released from the body and behold the Ideas by itself. This will be possible for us after death, not while we live. Then two alternatives follow: Either pure knowledge is not to be attained by us at all or if it is attainable, it will be after death since only then is the soul separated from the body. In this present life, it seems we shall come nearest to this knowledge if we have no more intercourse

reality, but a step preliminary to transcending the cognitive sphere to have direct cognitive contact with Ideas. In this sense it helps the soul reach the goal. Thus the same fundamental thought is first stated in sober words in the *Phaedo* and then in the form of a metaphor in the *Republic*. The conversion of soul and the education of the prospective rulers in the later dialogue are the ample elaboration of the metaphor and are to be traced back finally to the *Phaedo* passage.

with the body than is necessary¹⁰). This addition to the alternatives does not contradict them, but rather follows from them. Since our utter ignorance is due to the full connection of the soul with the body in its original situation, and it will attain the knowledge desired only in separation from the body, then its least connection with the body will result in the nearest approach to this knowledge.

To reduce the soul's connection with the body from the maximum to the minimum is further referred to as keeping ourselves pure and free from bodily infection (as far as possible) or purifying the soul (67a5–6). Purification is nothing but the separation, as far as may be, of the soul from the body, “habituating it to assemble and gather itself together from every region of the body, so as to dwell alone and apart, as far as possible, both in this present life and in the life to come, released from body's fetters.” This is the philosopher's practice of dying (67c5–d12, e4–5, Hackforth's translation). Practice of dying is the method actually available to the philosopher so long as he lives. It does not acquire the knowledge he longs for, but only prepares for its acquisition in the after life.

3. *The reply to a criticism.* Some scholar disregarding the text (66d7–67a6) takes the view just presented for my interpretation. He asks rhetorically, “Did Plato hold that only after death will such mathematical Forms become fully clear to us? And how could $2+2 = 4$ become clearer?”

From the viewpoint of nominalistic mathematics, mathematics based on definitions of terms, it can certainly not be denied that mathematical propositions, such as $2+2 = 4$, are fully clear and they cannot become clearer in any way. However, Plato was not a nominalist, but a realist. For him, mathematical relations are

10) 66d7–67b2. καθαρώς τι εἶσεσθαι is to be understood from 67a8 γνωσόμεθα δι' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν on the ground of 66e5 καθαρώς γινῶναι. In all these passages what is meant is the soul's direct unmediated cognition of the Ideas by itself without using senses. For that δι' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, αὐτῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ and αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ refers to the same things, see p. 54. – 67a3–4 (as well as καθ' ὅσον δύναται, e. g. 65c8) indicates that the effort has to be limited because there must be always a minimum connection of the incarnate soul with the body which is necessary and contrary to the will of the man (80e3–4). This necessity is understandable because it results *eo facto* from the incarnation. Because of this minimum connection, during his life time, the philosopher can be only purifying his soul and cannot have it completely purified. It is completely purified when it departs from the body, i. e., when this minimum connection is then removed (cf. 67a3–7). The completion follows *eo facto* from the separation of soul from body.

relations of things, πράγματα, not δνόματα. Mathematical knowledge is hypothetical; it assumes the odd, the even, three kinds of triangles, etc., without being able to give account of them. If they are clear, they are clear conditionally. The mathematician has clearer knowledge of them when he is given the account of them by the dialectician. Then they are clearer to him and become fully clear. Or to state the matter precisely, the cognitive state of the mathematician is διάνοια, that of the dialectician is νόησις or θέα; the second is clearer than the first. Higher than reasoning in the scale of clearness of knowledge is the direct cognitive contact, the *Ideenschau*, the θέα, which is possible for man, according to the *Phaedo*, only after death. Then mathematical propositions $2+2 = 4$ and the like are fully clear to him, not while he is alive.

My reply is based upon Rep. VI, 510b2–511e4. Certainly, there is a difference between the passage of the *Phaedo* and the passage of the *Republic*. According to the *Phaedo* knowledge, hence also mathematical knowledge, will be fully clear to us only after death; while according to the *Republic*, the mathematician may fully know the objects he assumes for his study right in the present life without waiting until after death. The change is because the way to the *Ideenschau* is found in the *Symposium* (see Chen, op. cit.) and in the *Republic* the prospective rulers are led to the vision of the Idea of the Good (537b8–c3, 540a6–9). But this difference does not invalidate my reply because in both passages – the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* – Plato held that mathematical knowledge as such is not clear, and will become clear to us after death according to the *Phaedo*, and in this life according to the *Republic* when its assumptions are given account of by dialectic. The basis of this view is Plato's realistic conception of mathematics; he could never be a nominalist (cf. Crat. 440c 3–5). It is this conception which the objector confuses with the modern nominalistic conception.

II

The section on the philosopher's pursuit of knowledge ends in the practice of dying as the method actually available to him for realizing his purpose in the present life. There are two other sections in the same dialogue, one on recollection and the other on hypothesis. Since as epistemological methods they yield knowledge, I go to see what knowledge they do and what knowledge

they do not acquire and relate the findings to the result reached in the earlier section to form the final conclusion concerning the acquisition of knowledge of the Ideas in the *Phaedo*. Nothing more than this will be done; to treat each of the topics more fully will require a special paper.

1. *Recollection as a method.* (a) The method of recollection is introduced in the *Phaedo* (72e3–73b5) to prove the existence of the soul before its incarnation. The argument consists of two steps. The first is a new proof of the thesis of learning (73c1 ff.), different from the proof in the *Meno* (to which 73b3 refers; for the difference see n. 12). The second step is an inference from the first to the conclusion that the soul exists before incarnation¹¹).

Socrates begins the first step with an explanation of ἀνάμνησις: when one perceives something, he knows not only this thing, but also has in mind something else, the knowledge of which is different from the knowledge of what he perceives¹²). Thus explained, ἀνάμνησις is used in the general sense. It covers recollection of sensible objects as well as Ideas. The three groups of instances first given are of sensible objects. The reminders and the objects of which we are reminded are all of this kind. The

11) The first step consists of (a) ἀνάμνησις proper (73c1–74d3) and (b) a προσπάθημα to the ἀνάμνησις ἀπ' ὁμοίων (74d4–75b3). The second step (75b4–76d6) starts from the first to the conclusion of the prenatal existence of the soul, followed by a further inference (76d7–77a5). The division and the subdivision are in the text not as clearly cut as we analyze them. προσπάθημα is first mentioned at 74a6 and then taken up after the interruption of b4–d3, and προσειδέναι is mentioned at 74e3 not until πρὸ τοῦ ἄρα ἄρξασθαι ἡμᾶς ὁρᾶν ... at 75 b4–6. But the articulation of the argument is unmistakable.

12) 73c4–d1. This is the explanation of the nature of ἀνάμνησις. The theory which is expounded in the *Phaedo* is indicated as different from its version in the *Meno* (see 73b3–4). The difference between the two versions is, among others, (a) that recollection in the *Phaedo* is the recollection of Ideas isolated from each other, not as in relation to each other, while in the *Meno* it is the recollection of an intelligible object in relation to some other intelligibles as exemplified by the revival of the prenatal knowledge of diagonal along the line of its relation to the side of a square, the square, etc. (b) The recollection treated in the *Phaedo* is instantaneous; that in the *Meno* consists of two stages (82b9–85b7 and 98a1–5), each again being a reasoning process. – D. Gallop, *Plato Phaedo* (1975), 115, distinguishes the two versions of the theory of recollection in this way: In the *Phaedo* “it is concerned with the understanding of the concepts, rather than [as in the *Meno*] with the proof of propositions.” Hackforth (op. cit., 75) understands that in the *Meno* “recollection in its fullest sense is a long and gradual process which includes both the prelude to dialectic and dialectic itself.” Both of them see the difference more adequately than N. Gulley, *Plato's Theory of Recollection*, CQ 4 (1954) 194 and 197, who thinks the difference between the two versions is the difference between the absence and presence of sense-experience in the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* respectively.

former may or may not be like the latter (73d3–74a1 and a2–4). The last of these instances – from seeing the portrait of Simmias one is reminded of Simmias himself – leads to the statement of another general characteristic of recollection: “An additional thought necessarily present itself to the mind, the thought of the presence or absence of any deficiency in the likeness” of the portrait of X to X himself¹³).

These general statements then are applied to the recollection of Ideas (74b4–6), e.g., recollection of the Idea of equality from seeing sticks which are equal. But they are equal only relatively: Sometimes they appear equal and sometimes not; whereas the Idea of equality is never unequal¹⁴).

Socrates then takes up the “additional thought” and observes that the particulars, though equal, fall short of the Idea of equality; they want to be and strive to be such as the Idea, but remain inferior to it¹⁵). This being so, (α) a man must have possessed knowledge of the Idea before the present time when he has it in mind and when in perceiving sensibles he refers them to the Idea; moreover, he must have possessed it before his birth – more precisely, before the incarnation of his soul into this body – since as soon as he was born, he began to use his senses (74e2–75c5). (β) He must have lost this knowledge at the moment of his birth because, if he did not lose it, he would have had it from the time of his birth on through his whole life – but this is not the case (75d7–e3, 76a1–c3). (γ) He is reminded of it later when he is

13) 74a5–7. προσπάσχειν is another πάσχειν in addition to ἐννοεῖν; it concerns what we are reminded of. It is not a part of the foregoing recollection, though it necessarily accompanies this. A detailed discussion of this additional πάσχειν has to be omitted for the sake of brevity. At present, I refer to J. Burnet’s explanation ad 74a6, Plato’s Phaedo, (reprint 1972, 55), which is quoted in the text. It brings out this point adequately.

14) 74b4–c6. There are different interpretations of αὐτὰ τὰ ἴσα and τῷ μὲν ἴσα ... τῷ δὲ οὐ, which are referred to by Guthrie, op. cit., 342, and others. A decision on these controversies is not necessary for our present study; we are not committed to any particular view, or rather we are avoiding commitment in this presentation. So far as αὐτὰ τὰ ἴσα is concerned, Guthrie’s view (ib. 344–345) seems most preferable, which he refers to Wedberg.

15) 74d4–75b2. 74c13–d2 completes the account of the recollection of Ideas. From d4 onward is the proof of the immortality of the soul on the basis of this account. The particulars are characterized with these words: ἐνδεῖ d6, e1, φαυλότερον e2, cf. 75b8, and ἐνδεεστέρας, 75a3 ἐνδεέστερα b2; βούλεται 74d9, ὀρέγεται 75a2,b1, προθυμείται b7. Here are two problems involved, the problem of inferiority of particulars to Ideas and the problem of teleology. We have no space to discuss them. The discussion is also not indispensable to our present purpose.

prompted by sense-perceptions (75e3–8). Hence learning is recollection¹⁶).

Socrates then completes his argument for the prenatal existence of the soul from his new version of the thesis of learning, and concludes that human souls existed prenatally when they had knowledge of Ideas (76d7–e7).

(b) Having presented the argument, I analyze it to see what knowledge ἀνάμνησις does and what it does not yield and then to relate the findings to the conclusion of the earlier section of the dialogue. I begin with the notion of ἀνάμνησις, upon which the argument is based. ἀνάμνησις of sensible objects is illustrated once at 73d7–e7 and again at e9–10. In the first passage (73d7–8, the first example), one is reminded of his beloved from seeing the lyre the boy commonly uses; the lover has now ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ τὸ εἶδος τοῦ παιδός. This εἶδος, of course, does not mean literally the physical form of the boy but the content of the lover's previous perception of it, or the image of the physical form, which is now revived in his mind. He does not see the physical form itself. In the second passage, one is reminded of Simmias himself when he sees the portrait of Simmias whose features were perceived before, and this previous sight is now revived in the perceiver's mind. He does not see Simmias in person. The two mental states, the state of having in one's mind the revival of the content of his previous perception and the state of being reminded of the object itself once seen, are different states. In either state, the content of the previous percep-

16) 76c4–5 concludes the new argument for the thesis of learning: ἡ καλουμένη μάθησις ἀνάμνησις ἐστίν (73b5). In this connection we like to discuss Gulley's comment on the role Plato assigns to senses. He finds inconsistency involved in the *Phaedo*. He says that we can see its full extent "once we consider assumptions necessarily to justify the role which Plato assigns to the senses." Of the four assumptions he lists, the last one is "that the senses are to be always trusted;" but this is again, "emphatically denied in the *Phaedo* itself" (op. cit., 198). According to the theory of the *Phaedo*, the general function of senses is two-fold. It is primarily to give information of what is perceived and secondarily to stimulate the mind to revive the knowledge once acquired and then lost, the one being always accompanied by the other. Gulley overlooks this duplicity. When it is seen, the supposed inconsistency *eo facto* vanishes. Senses are untrustworthy in rendering their primary function; in performing this function they never give us knowledge of the Ideas. The relevant passages are given by Gulley. But senses are trustworthy in rendering their secondary function of prompting the soul to revive the knowledge originally acquired before incarnation (whether the revival is exact or not, is another question). This is what is said in the section on recollection in the *Phaedo*. There is no inconsistency in the role assigned to senses in this dialogue because trustworthiness and its denial are attributed not to the one and the same function, but two different functions separately.

tion of an object is now revived and through this image the recognition is referred to the object once perceived, whereby the object is recalled. In neither state there is the direct contact of the mind with the object itself. Thus ἀνάμνησις does not acquire the original knowledge of anything, but only revives it.

The argument proceeds from the notion of ἀνάμνησις. Recollection of the like from the like has in the sequel the προσπάθημα in which the mind compares how much they are like each other (74a5–8). A distinction between two possible cases of comparison should be noted. (α) When Simmias, e.g., is present, one may look to his portrait and himself alternatively and compare them. (β) When he is absent, one may compare his portrait with him not in person but in the content of the previous perception of him now revived in the comparer's mind. In case (α), no ἀνάμνησις is presupposed; there are two direct cognitions of objects, one of the portrait and the other of the original. The comparison is of these two. Only in case (β) there is the προσπάθημα to the ἀνάμνησις ἀφ' ὁμοίων; case (α) is irrelevant. What is true of the ἀνάμνησις ἀφ' ὁμοίων, which are sensible objects, is equally true of the recollection of Ideas from their particular instances, e.g., from seeing sticks which are equal, one is reminded of the Idea of equality, and one also has the προσπάθημα that they fall short of the perfection of the Idea (74a9–d8).

Then Socrates concludes from the soul's prenatal knowledge of Ideas to its prenatal existence. The conclusion would not be necessary if Ideas could be somehow directly known also in its incarnate state. In that case the recollection of them would not be necessarily the revival of its prenatal knowledge, and the conclusion from this to its prenatal existence would not follow as it now does. The coercive force of the argument lies in the absence of all possibility of the soul's attaining the vision of Ideas in its incarnate state.

(c) I now sum up the results of the analysis. First, according to the notion of ἀνάμνησις, which forms the basis of the argument, when one recollects something, (1) a sensible object or (2) an Idea, he does not cognitively contact the object directly, but only revives the content of his previous cognition of it, in case (1), the previous cognition in the present life, in case (2), before his birth. Secondly, the προσπάθημα in question is not the necessary sequel of case (α) but case (β). In this case, when one compares a sensible object with another sensible object, e.g., the portrait of Simmias with Simmias the original, or equal sticks with the Idea of equal-

ity, one does not cognize directly the ontic object, but only the revived memory image of it, with which the sensible object (the reminder) is now compared, and this reminder itself. Thirdly, the coercive force of the argument itself presupposes that Ideas are absolutely not directly known by us in our present life, by means of recollection or in any other way.

All the results come to the same view as we read above, 66e3–4: The *Ideenschau* is possible to us ἐπειδὴν τελευτήσωμεν . . . ζῶσιν δὲ οὐ. We may put it precisely, ἀνάμνησις is not the proper method for attaining the vision of Ideas.

(d) Moreover, it is even not the proper method for the preparation for the acquisition of the desired knowledge in the after life because the preparation consists in purifying the soul from bodily infection, in detaching it from senses, while recollection requires sense-perception for its stimulation. The proper method in this case is the practice of dying. It is why this practice is still repeated after the section on recollection in the dialogue is completed¹⁷).

(e) There has been allegorical interpretation of the theory of recollection for the purpose of demythologization, which denies the literal meaning of ἀνάμνησις and regards the theory as a metaphor (see ns. 18–19). In this subsection I like to construct from the rationalistic standpoint a possible objection to my interpretation which understands the theory in the literal sense. This is done for a double purpose. First, for the purpose of considering whether the literal meaning of the theory as it is introduced to prove the immortality of the soul can be denied and secondly, seeing whether the allegorical interpretation can be applied to overthrowing my interpretation of the description – or rather the description itself – of the philosopher’s pursuit of knowledge in the *Phaedo*. The objection as it is to be worded is not a quotation from an actual writing though its parts may be paralleled in the literature of the rationalistic interpretation. As for its application, it is introduced as a thinkable denial of the pessimistic view in question (see e. g., above I,3).

It might be objected that my interpretation of the theory of

17) 80e1–81a3. The recurring to the “language of his [Socrates] opening discourse” cannot be simply attributed to the loss of sight of sense-experience occasioning recollection, as F. M. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge* (1957), 6, thinks. It is rather because Socrates believes recollection as a method does not yield the direct cognitive contact with Ideas; the only method available to the philosopher for acquiring his desired knowledge in this life is still the practice of dying.

ἀνάμνησις misses its figurative meaning because I cling too closely to the words in the text. When the theory is understood properly, i. e., in the figurative sense, then it is a metaphor which means the mind has the power for acquiring knowledge *a priori*¹⁸), and first-hand knowledge need not be denied to it. It is *sua natura* endowed with the power to gain knowledge of the Ideas¹⁹). When this power is activated by sense-perception, the mind moves spontaneously to acquire knowledge of the Ideas; the presupposition of prenatal acquisition of this knowledge is an allegorical device to present this mental power.

When the theory is thus understood, the philosopher in pursuit of the knowledge he desires need not practice dying; he can reach his goal right in the present life by turning to ἀνάμνησις in its demythologized sense.

The demythologization is the denial of the literal meaning of the theory of ἀνάμνησις. The gist of this interpretation is the substitution of – to use the later terminology – innate faculty for innate ideas. By innate faculty is meant a cognitive δύναμις by means of which knowledge is acquired *a priori*. However, until it performs its function, there is not yet any knowledge. Thus the pre-incarnational knowledge of Ideas, which is affirmed by the theory of recollection in its literal meaning, is denied to the soul by the allegorical interpretation. When the soul in the incarnate state perceives the instances of Ideas for the first time in its present incarnation, it has then no original knowledge to revive and also no possibility to recall the Ideas which it cognized before incarnation. The proof of the prenatal existence of the soul by the argument from recollection in the *Phaedo* is just based upon the soul's prenatal knowledge of Idea, the revival of this knowledge in its incarnate state and the recollection of the Ideas cognized pre-natally. With the denial of the primary premise and, in consequence of it, also the denial of the second and third premises, the allegorical interpretation makes the argument unable to serve the purpose for which it is introduced.

It is true, in spite of the denial, it assigns to the soul a faculty to acquire knowledge prior to sense-experience. But the endow-

18) Cf. R. E. Allen, *Anamnesis in Plato's Meno and Phaedo*, *Review of Metaphysics* 13 (1959–60), "an infant theory of the *a priori*" (170), and his predecessor, C. Ritter, *The Essence of Plato's Philosophy*, Engl. tr. (1933), pp. 121–123.

19) Cf. C. Hansing, *The Doctrine of Recollection in Plato's Dialogues*, *Monist* (1928), ap. R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Phaedo* (1955), 59.

ment with this power does not *eo facto* prove the soul's prenatal existence. Prenatal existence is basically a mythical notion; with the said demythologization it or, more exactly, the existence in the interval between every two successive periods of embodiment, is necessarily abandoned. Consequently, the allegorical interpretation destroys, in addition to its disabling the argument from recollection to prove the prenatal existence of the soul, the doctrine of its immortality in general, a doctrine which is taught repeatedly in Plato's dialogues.

From here it is obvious that the demythological theory cannot be applied to overthrowing the pessimistic interpretation of the philosopher's pursuit of knowledge in the *Phaedo* because it in itself cannot be justified as a correct interpretation of the theory of recollection in the dialogue.

2. *The method of hypothesis.* (a) This method is introduced into the dialogue in consequence of the transition from the mechanistic explanation of nature to the causal theory of Ideas (96a6–99d2). The change is described as taking refuge in λόγοι to study τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν (99d4–100a3). Socrates compares this transition to the change from looking at the sun during its eclipse to looking at its reflection in water.

This comparison needs elucidation. The subject to be inquired into is "the truth of beings". ὄντα are also called by two other terms²⁰). Since these ὄντα can be the objects of sight or other senses (99e3–4), they are members of the sensible world. "The truth of beings", as it is the truth, is compared to the sun, but since it is hidden in these beings, as it cannot be seen superficially, it is screened from us and compared to the sun during its eclipse. Our eyes or other senses cannot attain this truth. When we attempt to use them to acquire such knowledge, our sight is so blurred as to incapacitate our mind completely. To avoid becoming blind from looking at the sun during its eclipse, one looks at it in water. To avoid a similar fate in the search for the truth of sensible objects, one must not look at them directly but take refuge in λόγοι. Thus, λόγοι are compared to the reflections of the sun in water.

To this, Socrates adds an explanation: to inquire into the truth of sensible objects in λόγοι is not a study of image any more

20) πράγματα 99e3 and ἔργους 100a3. ἔργον is in contrast to λόγος (see Burnet, *op. cit.*, ad loc., but not as L. Robin, *Platon Phédon* [1926], XLIX, interprets it by referring to Aristotle). ἔργον belongs to the realm of ὄντα, and λόγος to the realm of knowledge in the broad sense. The first as an ὄν is objective while the second as a statement is subjective.

than the study of it in phenomenal objects (99e6–100a3). λόγοι are statements or propositions²¹), the referent of which is the truth itself. They only reflect it. In this respect, it is also an image-study – just as looking at sensible objects in the search for their truth is. The first way is not inferior to the second because the truth can be reached by the soul only when dissociated from the senses. The second method (which proceeds by means of sense organs) can never reach the truth (I,1). This is why Socrates took refuge in λόγοι.

(b) These λόγοι are to be used as premises to get a hypothetical solution of any problem. Thus, the method of hypothesis is introduced. Its steps *in abstracto* are the following: (α) To solve any problem, whether of causation or of anything else, set up a hypothesis which is chosen out of a number of propositions as the strongest for solving the problem at issue. What agrees with this hypothesis will be accepted as true; what does not, will be rejected as false. (β) To check the truth, or rather the falsity, of the hypothesis: inspect its consequences. Do they agree with one another or disagree? (γ) To justify the hypothesis, set up another hypothesis of a higher order and another, i. e., ascend to higher and higher hypotheses which will in turn establish the lower ones, and ultimately justify the original hypothesis. This ascent continues until one is reached which is sufficient (101d5–e1).

(c) The method of hypothesis in the *Phaedo* is a dual method. Its first two steps form a deductive reasoning from an assumed premise to the conclusion, so to speak, an ὁδὸς κάτω; the third step leads the hypothesis of the lower order back to the hypothesis of the higher order, or still higher if necessary, an ὁδὸς ἄνω. The reductive reasoning is only occasional, namely, when the hypothesis concerned is questioned. The conclusion of the deductive reasoning is a proposition, not a vision; the ὁδὸς κάτω does not attain the *Ideenschau*. How is it with the ὁδὸς ἄνω? This case needs discussion.

The termination of the reductive reasoning is τὶ ἰκανόν

21) λόγοι are not “definitions” as Bluck (op. cit., 113) and others translate, but “propositions” as Hackforth (op. cit., 133) and others do, or “propositions or statements” as Sir D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (1951, 27), does. Guthrie lists more translations to which he does not agree. He finds the escape into λόγοι to be “in line with the admonition of Parmenides to leave sight and hearing and other senses behind and ‘judge by *logos*’ reason.” (op. cit., 352 with note 1.) But the λόγοι here are not in contrast to senses; they are in contrast to πράγματα and ἔργα (see the foregoing note), i. e., to what are sensed, the sensible objects.

(101e1). What is that which is sufficient? The answer is found directly in the text. It is a hypothesis which is inter-subjectively sufficient for justifying other hypotheses which are questioned by the interlocutors, and which is itself accepted by them unanimously.

It is not the ἀρχὴ ἀνυπόθετος, the τοῦ παντός ἀρχή of Book VI of the *Republic*. There is no trace of such ἀρχή in the context of the *Phaedo*; instead, there are only the hypotheses of the higher orders which are set up for justifying the initial hypothesis, and they are accepted expressly by Cebes and silently by the audience. So far I agree with Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic (1953), 137–138, who understands the τὶ ἱκανόν at 101e1 as having no connection with the ἀρχὴ ἀνυπόθετος of the *Republic*.

There are, however, scholars who understand it differently. L. Robin, *Platon Phédon* (Assoc. Budé, 1926) e. g., p. LII, n. 1, refers τὶ ἱκανόν to the ἀρχὴ ἀνυπόθετος and also H. Cherniss, *Some Wartime Publications concerning Plato*, *AJPh* 68 (1947) 141–144, who takes it as equivalent to the said unhypothetical principle. To these scholars, I reply in general: The method of hypothesis in the *Phaedo* is a substitute for studying nature by turning to the sensible world; the new method is an escape εἰς τοὺς λόγους ... ἐν ἐκείνοις σκοπεῖν τῶν ὄντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν. The whole process from the positing of the initial hypothesis through the justification of it by positing hypothesis of higher order or hypotheses of higher orders to the arriving at the ἱκανόν moves within the scope of λόγοι; it does not go beyond this scope to reality itself, to the ultimate ontic principle.

The ἱκανόν as that which is accepted by all interlocutors is a proposition which is sufficient for them. The difference between it and the other hypotheses involved, including the initial one, is simply this: The latter are the λόγοι which are laid down by one interlocutor to solve the original problem and are in turn questioned by the other; the former is the λόγος which is laid down by him and agreed upon by his fellow participant. All λόγος *qua* λόγος is the same thing, namely a proposition. Even if the inter-subjective agreement in a discussion is extended to the agreement of all human beings, it makes no change on its status. It does not transcend its content so as to lead to knowledge of the Ideas hitherto unknown so that the *Ideenschau* would be attained.

I sum up the foregoing and draw the conclusion. The terminations of the ὁδὸς κάτω and the ὁδὸς ἄνω of the double procedure of the method of hypothesis are equally conclusions of reasoning,

in one case deductive and in the other reductive. Reasoning in neither way and also in no other way can yield vision²²). Hence hypothesis is not the proper method for the acquisition of the primary knowledge of the Ideas.

How is it with the starting point of both of its ὁδὸς κάτω and ὁδὸς ἄνω, the initial proposition? It is the strongest λόγος selected out of a number of λόγοι in the soul (100a3–4). Since the λόγος here concerns the Idea, the subject term of the proposition, so much of the Idea must have been known so that it can be spoken of. How is this knowledge acquired? It is not acquired by the deductive or the reductive reasoning. It is taken from another source and used for the formation of the assumption which is laid down to solve the original problem and serves as the starting point for further reasoning. What is this source? Or whence does the method of hypothesis get its needed material concerning the subject term of its initial assumption? In the *Phaedo* there can be no other source than ἀνάμνησις²³). The material which recollection supplies is the revival of the original knowledge the soul had acquired before incarnation. Consequently, the method of hypothesis, with respect to the acquisition of the θεῖα the philosopher pursuits, is still inferior to ἀνάμνησις because it is further remote from the *Ideenschau*.

22) One may raise the objection by pointing to Ep. VII. There at 341c6–d2 and 344b1–7 is mentioned the sudden enlightenment of the subject matter under discussion, the enlightenment which results from good-willed ἔλεγχοι. It is compared to the springing up of the flame from, say, rubbing together two pieces of wood for a long time. The discussion, the ἔλεγχοι the ἐρωτήσεις and ἀποκρίσεις, is reasoning; the enlightenment of the subject, φρόνησις καὶ νοῦς, is vision. However, the matter is not so simple as supposed: it needs more careful examination. There is indeed a series: discussion – springing up of the flame – the vision. Springing up of the flame which intervenes the two symbolizes the leap from the discussion to the vision. But between these two there is a hiatus which is bridged by the leap. This leap is similar to the leap in the *Symposium* (see Chen, op. cit., 68–69). The same significant adverb ἐξαίφνης is found in both passages (Ep. VII, 341c7 and Symp. 210e4).

23) Guthrie, op. cit., 353, finds the source in sense-experience (!), “whether or not an inductive argument is expressly and formally set out.” White, op. cit., 78, is right in saying “It is important to notice that the method is not pictured as starting from common or ordinarily accepted opinions” (cf. Ch. I, sec. 3). Rather, whoever wishes to begin a discussion on some topic may do so by “hypothesizing what seems to him ‘strongest’ (101a3–4).” I agree with White that the starting point is not ordinarily accepted opinions, but the “strongest λόγος”, but what is the source from which this λόγος get the material for its formation?

III

1. *Epistemological pessimism.* Since neither recollection as a method nor the method of hypothesis acquires the vision of the Ideas, the desired acquisition, as stated in the description of the philosopher's pursuit of knowledge, is impossible for him in his lifetime and for the realization of his purpose he must wait for death; meanwhile what is available to him is the practice of dying. And by this method he can only approximate his goal but not attain to it; exercise of the method is for the preparation for the attainment. This is an epistemological pessimism, more exactly distinguished, the pessimism with respect to the method for the said acquisition. This view is characteristic of the *Phaedo*.

2. *The consistency of the argument.* The argument for this pessimism is generally consistent. This is seen from the following summary. The incarnation of the soul is its blending with the body. The incarnate soul is *eo facto* impure. Its initial cognitive state is ἀφοσούνη. What the philosopher desires is σοφία, to which ἀφοσούνη is just the opposite (cf. Prot. 333b1–2), or, more exactly, the direct cognitive contact of the soul with Ideas, i. e., the θέα (vision). Since the impure cannot touch the pure, then unless the incarnate soul or the philosopher has become pure, that is, completely purified, the state of purity cannot be reached. The arrival at it does not happen earlier than the separation of the soul from the body, or at the death of the philosopher. During the life time he can only prepare for the complete purification by habituating his soul to gather itself together as far as possible, to detach it from senses, or by practice of dying. But the detachment in his life time has limitation; there is always a minimum connection with the body. This is removed only at his death (see n. 10). Hence so long as the philosopher lives, there is no way for him to attain the vision of Ideas.

3. *Detachment from body and detachment from sense-organs.* This being the case, I would like to find out what that was which caused the pessimism in the *Phaedo*. The answer is seen from the following consideration. Sense is the chief and basic hindrance to the acquisition of direct knowledge of the Ideas. Sense-perceptions are deceptive; pleasures and pains disturb the search for truth; opinions influenced by these emotions are wrong value judgments. The last two are reducible to the first one. Hence, as the argument proceeds, to attain the vision of Ideas, the philosopher must detach his soul from senses, to habituate it to gather itself together

from every region of the body (πανταχόθεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος 67c7-8). Since the complete detachment is possible only at his death, he must wait for it by practice of dying.

The requirement of the detachment from every region of the body goes too far. Following this line of argument, the exact requirement is only the detachment from all senses; since sense-perceptions are the activities of sense-organs, the detachment from all sense-organs alone is sufficient to facilitate the philosopher to reach his goal in the present life. There is no need of the detachment from every region of the body, which is the separation of the soul from the body, or the death of the man; other life processes than the sensitive can still go on as ever when he pursues the knowledge he desires.

Because Socrates in the *Phaedo* does not see the difference of the exact detachment needed from the general and knows no adequate method for the acquisition in question *via* the needed detachment, the above said pessimism ensues. When attention is paid to life alone instead of to the contrast of life and death, as first in the *Symposium* and then in the central books of the *Republic*, the method missed in the *Phaedo* is found there. The vision of Ideas is attained *via* the new method and the pessimism in the dialogue simultaneously turns into its opposite, optimism. I made it clear earlier how it happened in the *Symposium* and shall do the same in the *Republic* on another occasion.

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ENNIANA

In what follows I shall examine a number of verses from the dramatic works of Ennius, as well as a number of lines from what we may conventionally call, since the 1933 edition of Ettore Bolisani¹⁾, Ennius Minor, and compare them with corresponding passages from Greek literature in order to provide a fuller picture of the meaning of Ennian fragments²⁾.

1) E. Bolisani, *Ennio Minore*, Padova, 1935, 11.

2) The fragments of Ennius here presented are taken from the edition I. Vahlen, *Ennianae Poesis Reliquiae*, Leipzig ²1903.